

Building Awareness Around the New American Community in Concord NH.

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**Abstract**

The goal of this Capstone project is to provide an opportunity to learn more about resettlement in the Northern New England, with a focus on Concord, N.H. The research will attempt to understand the resettlement process in the context of researching immigration in the United States through a qualitative lens. The research will focus on Concord, New Hampshire, from the early 2010s to present an overview of resettlement practices. Moreover, the report is meant to draw attention to the need for further investigation of best practices and advocacy through civic discussion.

*Key Words:* resettlement, immigration, Concord, N.H., advocacy, refugees

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**Building Awareness Around the New American Community in Concord NH.**

This research paper has been written for the Winter 2022 capstone through Granite State College, and is written to explore resettlement in Concord, N.H. In offering a qualitative lens, the research will seek to understand the resettlement process in the context of exploring immigration in the United States. Research will focus on Concord, N.H. from the early 2010s to now and offer a look at refugee camps' experiences. The paper is also intended to highlight the need exploration of best practices and advocacy through civic conversation ("What is Advocacy", 2022).

Relocation is caused by multiple factors, such as war or other social upheavals such as religious persecution, poverty, economic instability, and natural disasters. ("Guides: A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Introduction," 2021). Research points to current resettlement practices and indicates these practices may lack the ability to provide services for New Americans that support sustainable living and good health (Langellier et al., 2021). According to the World Health Organization, chronic exposure to stressors results in a deterioration of health that is particularly severe among foreign-born Blacks and Latinx (Langellier et al., 2021). In addition, while resettlement agencies provide a short-term harbor in the storm for new arrivals, expectations are high for rapid assimilation into their new host country (Grace et al., 2017).

It is common for families to adapt to the American economic structure by combining nuclear families with extended families (Grace et al., 2017). However, broader structural inequalities to long-term success in the United States are not addressed. For example, in the study presented, New Americans struggled to acquire English while working full-time; families

lacked a guaranteed sustenance level and felt constantly threatened and insecure (Grace et al., 2017).

In capturing social structures of New American cultures, literature will review cultural differences that impact an immigrant's transition as they assimilate into a new host country. Furthermore, we will examine services available in the local community of Concord, NH, and the gaps that this community has faced in subsequent years following resettlement. In presenting research and data from existing programs in New England, the study will define and explore best practices for resettlement; this work hopes to disseminate ideas around advocacy to promote and engage a civic conversation within the Concord N.H. The concept of the civic conversation approach is in its inclusive nature, which allows for input from stakeholders, experts, and non-traditional and even visionary perspectives ("Civic Conversation - Glasgow", 2022). Civic conversations can promote the possibility of sustainable and effective change during the resettlement process and beyond.

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this coursework is to explore the New Hampshire community's resettlement history. Gaining knowledge about the resettlement process through a theoretical and practical lens, focusing on Concord, N.H., from early 2010's to now, and the perspectives of refugees that have settled in the Concord community. Research will explore gaps in current services related to housing, economic freedoms, mental health, and education. These service gaps impact a New Americans' ability to lead stable lives in their new country. The study will also highlight the rationale for best practices for New Americans education and advocacy through community discussion.

Concord is the state capital and third-most populous city in New Hampshire, with 43,019 residents. The city is 67.49 square miles and includes the village of Penacook ("Overview of Concord, NH," 2022). Refugees from over thirty countries and ethnicities have come to New Hampshire since the 1980's (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). Housing for new Americans is concentrated along Loudon Road in the Heights, chosen for its affordability (Brown, 2018).

### **Immigration History in Concord, NH**

Since 2012, 1,087 refugees have resettled in Concord, N.H, which is two percent of population in the capital city. (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). According to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, there were refugees from twenty-seven countries in New Hampshire during this time (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). To assist with refugee settlement, New Hampshire Refugee Program staff partner with Ascentria Care Alliance and the International Institute of New Hampshire, as well as other regional partners (New Hampshire Department of

Health and Human Services, 2022). The Refugee Program's main purpose is to help refugees achieve economic independence and integration (New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

Refugees who have resettled in New Hampshire originate from five continents. We see the most significant influx coming primarily from Africa, with refugees coming from fifteen African countries, primarily the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Bhutanese were the next largest group to resettle into New Hampshire between 2013 and 2021, with seven hundred and seventy new Americans arriving during this time (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

## **Resettlement Rational**

### ***The Democratic Republic of Congo***

While French is the official language of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), many other languages and dialects are also spoken; Christianity is practiced in the majority of the country and has been present since early Belgian rule (Culture of the Republic of Congo: history, people, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, social, dress, 2022). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, civil wars and violence are typical. The United Nations indicates that the Democratic Republic of Congo is and continues to be a crisis for those living in this region. Displaced citizens continue to seek refuge (New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

### ***The Bhutanese people***

The Bhutanese people speak Nepali and are primarily Hindu and lived without conflict in the country of Bhutan until the middle of the 1980's. A leadership campaign defines Bhutanese people as non-nationals began to prevent Bhutanese people from accessing education and employment (Bhutanese Refugee Health Profile, CDC, 2022). Laws were created by Bhutan's king and the ruling Druk discriminated against non-nationals (Bhutanese refugees in Nepal | European Resettlement Network, 2022). As a result of this cultural shift, the Bhutanese people started resettling in communities worldwide in 2007 (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

### ***Emergency Learning***

In general, refugees value education and see it as a key to future success (Children and Education in Refugee Camps, 2022). To establish a better life, "nearly all boys and girls and their parents saw formal education as a need." (Children and Education in Refugee Camps, 2022). Displaced individuals look to a host country's national education system to meet the goals of refugee education, and this agreement has been adopted in the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' 2012-2016 Education Strategy (Shohel, 2020).

As noted in *Are Refugee Children Learning*, the time individuals are displaced in refugee camps has grown since the 1990s (Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2016). A decade to a quarter of a century is a typical length of stay (Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2016). This period can span a person's entire primary and secondary school years (Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2016). In contrast, World Bank reports the time frame is based on the conflict and resources in the areas of

displacement. Forced displacement situations are intrinsically adaptable: annual figures change in response to diplomatic and social changes in the nation of origin. (Devictor, 2019). A displacement period of any length has refugee family's dependent on emergency education provided in camps (Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2016). According to UNHCR figures, the number of persons who have spent more than five years in exile has risen to 11.9 million. (Devictor, 2019). Typically, a decrease in the average time of exile is not indicative of an improvement, but rather of a deterioration in the worldwide situation (Devictor, 2019).

Due to the location of camps and conflicts, long education gaps occur (Shohel, 2020). Illiteracy is common in camps (Piper, Schroeder, and Trudell, 2016). Pre-literate people (refugees) come from a culture where writing is scarce, and reading is uncommon or non-existent. These individuals have not seen any written language. They are pre-literate because they must initially acquire visual discrimination, comparisons, and sequencing skills before reading (Elmeroth, 2003). Funding for emergency schooling can also be uncertain in camps, in which learning gaps also occur (Shohel, 2020). Although children and parents appreciate education, many refugee children, especially females, cannot attend school due to parental loss and must help care for younger siblings or prepare meals (Piper et al., 2020).

The majority of Congolese refugee children who attended school in Tanzania "expressed significant dissatisfaction and disdain" over the poor infrastructure and a lack of books, chalk, and other learning supplies ("Children and Education in Refugee Camps," 2022). In addition to a lack of resources, teachers are typically untrained, harsh, and demoralizing ("Children and Education in Refugee Camps," 2022).

### **Cultural Differences**

### ***Family structure***

Families experience change in family structures when relocating. Family members left behind may continue to be exposed to the hazardous conditions that prompted the family's desire to move ("Immigration and Child Welfare," 2015). Even if families can get out of regions inflicted with war and genocide, the traumas they have been through can still cause tension and strife ("Immigration and Child Welfare," 2015). Numerous refugees, particularly children, have endured trauma because of conflict and persecution. These traumatic experiences might occur while refugees are still in their home country or during their displacement. Once relocated in the United States, refugees may encounter stresses falling into four broad categories: trauma, acculturation, resettlement, and isolation ("About Refugees", 2022).

Several elements affecting refugee family structures have been identified in the study: *Karen Refugee Family Relationships a Qualitative Exploration Revealed*, include intergenerational inequalities, acculturation rates, parenting issues, and shifting family responsibilities (McCleary, 2017). The notion of acculturation (culture contact and change) states that perspective shapes the cultural transition process (Merali, 2005).

New Americans may find the cultural transfer process demanding or difficult if they see differences between their cultural standing and that of others or the expectations of their social environment (Merali, 2005). Additional research shows immigrants must leave behind family, friends, and customary support systems and learn a new language and culture ("Immigration and Child Welfare," 2015). Literature shows that immigrant parents used many descriptions to express their emotional anguish owing to their teenagers' behavioral adjustments toward Western standards (Merali, 2005).

Social support is essential to survival, shelter, income, and health care. It also impacts health and social opportunities. The importance of informal support does not negate the necessity of effective formal services that ensure equitable access to health care and social services (Simich et al., 2005). Public assistance should be a "steppingstone" for independence for immigrants and refugees (Simich et al., 2005). Research shows adequate public assistance and social supports benefit resettlement transitions. As a result of social support such as English as a second language instruction in school, helps young refugees to transition to a new educational setting and school culture (Oppedal & Idsoe, 2015). The literature finds practitioners, social workers, and school officials critical in supporting the acculturation process (Oppedal & Idsoe, 2015).

### ***Gender roles***

Migration profoundly affects gender relations and identity construction, particularly the role of women in households and communities (Shwayli, 2022). In many respects, migration enhances the independence and power of women (Shwayli, 2022). Education helps migrant and refugee women get outside employment; they may have access to financial resources that have never resulted from their labor, due to education experiences and opportunities. (Shwayli, 2022). However, women refugees are less likely to be employed than men, and that having children in the household is associated with lower economic achievement (Koyama, 2014). The objective that refugees become economically self-sufficient as quickly as possible funnels all refugees into vocational and career training programs (Koyama, 2014). Women with young children are often even discouraged from enrolling in such training, due to their responsibilities as mothers and social norms within their culture (Koyama, 2014). In Nepal, women frequently refer to themselves as "the lower caste" and generally hold a lower social position. Women from the

highest castes have restrictions on their public mobility, as their reputation is crucial to their family and caste reputation (Culture of Nepal: history, people, clothing, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, 2022).

The impact of on gender roles may be helpful, such as promoting independence and increasing possibilities, or negative, such as generating health problems, family disputes, and a loss of cultural norms (Shwayli, 2022). As mitigation occurs, men moving from developing to developed nations may struggle to sustain their families if their talents are not easily transferable to developed ones (Shwayli, 2022). Some men resent the changes, which may have damaged their self-esteem, while some women feel that they have lost their identity as women (Garwood et al., 2013). Refugee men, at times, have been underemployed and have not been able to fulfil their traditional gendered role as providers for the family (Garwood et al., 2013). Personal adjustment hurdles include family disputes, flight traumas, illiteracy, a lack of language skills, and religious and cultural restrictions (Shwayli, 2022).

### ***Marriage Differences***

Marriage traditions vary in the Congo and Nepal. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), family members presided over marriage arrangements. Although forced marriage is outlawed, (Culture of the Republic of Congo: history, people, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, social, dress, 2022). Adultery is outlawed in the Republic of Congo for women alone. Polygyny is permitted, but polyandry is prohibited (Culture of the Republic of Congo: history, people, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, social, dress, 2022).

Nepal is a patrilineal and patrilocal society (Culture of Nepal: history, people, clothing, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, 2022). In the dominant culture, arranged marriages are the norm (Culture of Nepal: history, people, clothing, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family, 2022).

Family functioning, including the marital relationship, is often negatively impacted by pre- and post-migration experiences. Migration-related stressors, acculturation factors, and existential factors combine to present complex challenges between spouses. In addition, cultural expectations and gender roles are refined quickly (Karageorge et al., 2018).

### **Resettlement Services and Barriers**

The New Hampshire Refugee Program is funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the US Department of Health and Human Services (New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). Refugees leave their countries seeking safety and security, but researchers discovered that refugee status does not always reduce stress (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). Both pre-and post-migration stress may be associated with distinct stressors in both children and adults. The understanding impact is crucial because, during the resettlement period, when stress levels are high, the refugee may be reminded of other traumatic events in their lives ("Traumatic Experiences of Refugees - Refugee Health TA", 2022). New stressors such poverty and adjusting to a cultural norm can impact resettlement however, having a job and a place to live helps refugees' mental health and stability after relocation (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). Many immigrants, including those who are well-educated in their native country, take manual labor employment when they work in the United States. Degrees from native countries do not transfer as accepted experience, and language barriers make working in previous professions a

struggle. Members of their immigrant communities are frequently able to connect them with these positions. Many refugees' agencies' main purpose is to help refugees achieve economic independence and integration (Zorokong, 2022).

There is pressure on new arrivals to support family members as a part of survival. Employment is a major goal of the US resettlement program since it aids assimilation. Some individuals are compelled to care for family members who are too elderly, too young, or unable to work. The measure of success (one individual getting a job, regardless of compensation). is detached from the everyday economic realities of sustaining and caring for a family (Grace et al., 2017). In this section, we will discuss additional resettlement services and challenges.

### ***Education***

Literature suggests, the education system is a critical component of the integration process, serving both as a provider of English language instruction and as a facilitator of interactions between the host society and refugee communities. According to one teacher, while a refugee kid may take up more of their time, they are "learning 10 times more" than other students in the same class. Due to the presence of children who are learning English in her classroom, she has established an environment that fosters "teamwork" (Ackerman et al., 2018).

Refugee students, however, may face challenges in many resettlement nations (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). Education facilitates comprehensive and successful integration into American society and productivity. Education, for example, assists migrant and refugee women in obtaining outside employment; they may gain access to financial resources that were not previously available to them as a result of their labor (Shwayli, 2022). Engaging in education allows refugees to avoid their unusual or outsider identity by engaging in the educational process

(Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). New Americans benefit from education because it promotes social cohesiveness, provides access to life-saving knowledge, addresses psychological issues, and creates a stable and secure environment (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). Although education is vital to many refugees' adjustment, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), fewer than 1% of refugees attend higher education institutions, a worrying ratio considering the group's young.

Refugee children are highly aware of their parents' struggle to find work, learn English, and navigate medical, transportation, and educational systems while keeping the family intact (Back to School: Challenges and Strengths of Refugee Students, 2022). They may skip school to assist their parents or have access to confidential information such as medical and financial matters (Back to School: Challenges and Strengths of Refugee Students, 2022). Due to a lack of interpretation services or other factors, refugee children frequently play a more mature role than they otherwise should.

### ***Housing***

Immigrants often stay with community members during transitional periods due to housing shortages. When refugees are helped by Ascentria, a local resettlement agency in Concord, N.H, they are first placed in market-rate accommodation before being placed on a waiting list for subsidized housing. If their credit remains in good standing, they will only be allowed to progress up the list if their housing costs, and travel loan payments (for their flights to the United States) are made on time (Brown, 2018). New Americans pay market rates on housing until subsidized housing is available (Brown, 2018).

A case study that focuses on Augusta Maine, shows that N.H. housing challenges are felt in other Northern England states. The study finds the housing in the area is dilapidated and complicates the resettlement process. Augusta faces a housing shortage generally, but with the arrival of more refugee populations, this problem is larger (Ackerman et al., 2018). The Augusta Housing Authority's client portfolio consists of about 600 families within a ten-mile radius of Augusta. Five hundred units were or are at the risk of being lost since 2013 due to fires or code issues. The Authority notes that it is constrained in what it can achieve with the current level of funding (Ackerman et al., 2018).

### ***Hospitals/Medical Care***

The Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) program provides short-term medical assistance to newly arrived refugees. The benefits, which are generally similar to Medicaid, last for up to eight months from the date of arrival in the U.S. or the date of the final grant of asylum. Services vary depending on state Medicaid programs and medical screening processes ("Ethnic Community Self-Help," 2022). Asylum seekers suffer from malnutrition, anemia, non-communicable illnesses including hepatitis A and B, and parasitic disorders (Langlois et al., 2017). Access to health care is limited in host nations, with varying rights. Screening programs frequently overlook mental health issues (Langlois et al., 2017). Refugees are more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, generalized anxiety, panic attacks, adjustment disorder due to long-term exposure to traumatic situations. ("Mental Health - Refugee Health TA", 2022). Awareness and access to mental health services can support New Americans with successful resettlement.

The Refugee Act of 1980 created the domestic medical screening system for all refugees arriving in the US. 2022, ("Refugee Domestic Screening Guidance: Key Considerations and Best Practices | Immigrant and Refugee Health | CDC"). These thorough medical checkups for a broad spectrum of infectious and non-communicable disorders. 2022, ("Refugee Domestic Screening Guidance: Key Considerations and Best Practices | Immigrant and Refugee Health | CDC"). The CDC recommends a patient-centered approach to refugee screening as crucial in assessing initial health requirements and assuring continuous treatment for each refugee. 2022, ("Refugee Domestic Screening Guidance: Key Considerations and Best Practices | Immigrant and Refugee Health | CDC").

Donor nations can help to strengthen health systems to promote refugee health fairness and efficiency (Langlois et al., 2017). Inadequate resources, lack of transportation, culturally insensitive care, and poor access to interpreters are among the barriers hindering refugees from accessing health care (Langlois et al., 2017). Research has shown that mental health concerns can be prevalent for New Americans as well. The resettlement process includes overcoming obstacles such as loss of culture, community, and language and adjusting to a new and unfamiliar environment. ("Mental Health - Refugee Health TA", 2022) Refugees' lack of access to basic health care can be recognized as a human right (Langlois et al., 2017).

In addition, children often straddle old and new cultures due to their rapid acquisition of new languages and cultural norms. These events may contribute to an individual's development of, or protection against, mental health disorders among a refugee community ("Mental Health - Refugee Health TA", 2022).

The COVID-19 epidemic has additionally brought to light existing inequities in health and access to health care in the United States, notably along racial and ethnic lines. However, research assessing COVID-19's influence on immigrant populations has been minimal. Horner concludes that these findings underscore the importance of improved data and policymaking that prioritizes the well-being of immigrant communities (Horner, K 2022).

### *Interpreter services*

Language accommodations are required by law in the United States. Individuals cannot be denied services because they do not understand English (Youdelman et al., 2022).

Title VI and HHS regulations, 45 C.F.R. Section 80.3(b)(2), require recipients of federal financial assistance from HHS to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to Limited English Proficient (LEP) people. Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, equipment donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Recipients of HHS assistance may include hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, managed care organizations, universities, and other entities with health or social service research programs, as well as state, county, and local health agencies. It may also include state Medicaid agencies, state, county, and local welfare agencies, programs for families, youth, and children, Head Start programs, public and private contractors, subcontractors, and vendors, and physicians and other providers who receive federal financial assistance from HHS ("Office for Civil Rights," 2022)

Interpretation of this law can vary, given an agency's understanding. Research shows using competent in-person interpreters saves time in the emergency department compared to

using telephone interpreters. Video interpretation understands diagnoses better than phone interpretation (Boylen et al., 2020). federal and state agencies. Receiving government assistance requires medical interpreters and patient document translations. such as Medicare and Medicaid (Youdelman et al., 2022).

Resettlement of refugees and access to key services and opportunities rely on transportation (Kim, 2019). A positive relationship between transportation access and economic welfare is established for immigrants as well as nonimmigrants across all racial and ethnic groups (Kim, 2019). Transportation is a critical element in job accessibility and medical care. (Mzayek, 2017). However, research on refugees has highlighted mobility as a major issue. (Okour and Yasmein, 2019). In the case study, "Your US Neighbor: The Experiences of Syrian Refugees in the American South," A Case Study of Refugees in Towns Austin, Texas, USA explores the challenges of transportation (Mzayek, 2017). In this study, some Syrian refugees didn't have cars or couldn't use public transportation because they couldn't read traffic signs (Mzayek, 2017). Even with cars, these groups worry about unintentional traffic violations that cost them money. Some of the refugees got tickets or had their cars towed due to inability to read signs (Mzayek, 2017).

## **Community of Concord, New Hampshire**

### ***Overview***

Ascentria Care Alliance's resettlement team is responsible to coordinate with landlords and furniture vendors, finding and furnishing an apartment, and purchasing household supplies. Barriers to integration are money, language, accessibility, and transportation (Brown, 2018). In Concord, the current political climate has severely limited resettlement and the resettlement

agency's ability to provide critical services (Brown, 2018). This is partially due to Trump administration cut the number of refugees admitted to the United States by more than 80 percent in the space of three years, according to the Center for Refugee Admissions and Settlement Services (CRAS), or U.S.RefugeeCenter.org (Mathema & Carratala, 2020).

Other agencies step-in after initial periods of resettlement. These include school districts and social service agencies (Brown, 2018). For example, Overcomers NH works with approximately 240 New American families, providing cultural orientation, employment counseling, and women's and youth programs. (Meeting the Needs of Refugees in Concord, 2022).

Refugees can apply for naturalization five years after arriving. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA). funds help refugees during their initial 8-month resettlement period into N.H. For the first eight months in the US, all refugees are entitled to RCA (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022). An applicant must be ineligible for TANF and other cash assistance programs to be considered (The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, 2022).

## **Defining Advocacy**

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, or argues for a cause ("What is Advocacy? Definitions and Examples," 2022). The New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees was founded in 2007 and is an example of an advocacy group for new Americans in New Hampshire ("New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees-MIRA Coalition", 2022). The New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees (NHAIR) supports immigrant integration. The group works to protect all New Hampshire residents' civil and human rights ("New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees-MIRA Coalition", 2022). Nonprofits can lobby for or against specific legislation. 501(c)(3) public charities can engage in a generous but limited amount of lobbying. Work within coalition groups whose goals resonate with a common issue to improve advocacy ("What is Advocacy? Definitions and Examples," 2022).

## ***Steps to build awareness and advocacy***

Several factors influence how safe and secure newly resettled refugees feel. Examples are interactions with critical systems, such as schools and social service authorities. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Integration Handbook, 2022). According to research, meaningful community engagement and effective advocacy require time and resources. Building trust, mutual respect, and transparency in community relationships takes time and care. ("Meaningfully Connecting with Communities in Advocacy and Policy Work", 2019).

Connecting is more than just "input" and "feedback". So "meaningful ways of connecting" in advocacy and policy circles means achieving social, racial, and economic justice

as well as societal change. Organizations need not stick to one connecting model ("Meaningfully Connecting with Communities in Advocacy and Policy Work", 2019). To advocate for new American populations, the process includes community and government understanding of migration and resettlement reasons (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Integration Handbook, 2022 Promoting welcoming and inclusive societies). Local agencies cooperating and participating in refugee integration can make a difference in resettlement. For example, support from schools, local government services, and refugee community organizations provides added buffers during resettlement (Refugees, 2022).

### ***Community Support***

Community support can assist New Americans with connection to their communities and creating an environment of healthy integration. The case study looking at Lowell Massachusetts New American population reports that a community Center for Africans in the U.S. (ACC) and the Lowell Alliance assist the city's disadvantaged populations, including low-income Americans and immigrants and refugees, by collaborating with a coalition of community leaders and local organizations to organize access to services. In addition, Concord New Hampshire has, Building Community in N.H.(BCNH) which was established in 2010 by a group of Bhutanese who decided that "organizing ourselves is the most effective approach to assist us in integrating into the community." (Brown, 2018). Building Community in New Hampshire is now involved in nine initiatives, including ESL lessons, nutrition education, career assistance, health insurance and mental health programs, among other things. (Brown, 2018).

In East Boston, the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement develops and implements projects aimed at integrating newcomers into the community on a municipal level.

Its present focuses include outreach and community engagement, which are at the forefront of its mission. A yearly citizenship clinic for the entire city, legal consultations at City Hall, and large-scale legal consultation clinics for migrants are also planned (Granados Mahato, 2020).

In laying a foundation of understanding, this work provides an overview of immigrants' experiences covering subject areas that impact their positive or negative resettlement process. Research provides peer-reviewed materials, government data, and information on local state agencies. The paper will provide a framework to contextualize the resettlement process in the United States.

Research has explored current housing, economic freedoms, mental health, and education gaps. These service gaps impact New Americans' ability to lead stable lives in their new country. The study has also highlighted the need for best practices for New Americans education to promote successful acculturation. In researching this topic, gaps have been found in areas that present barriers to refugees' long-term success. To answer the question, how to promote support for minority groups in a community. We will look to in-state and out-of-state programs to shed awareness on best practices for New Americans.

### **Methodology**

The research studied is part of an effort to understand and bring awareness to the resettlement process in Concord N.H. while discussing gaps in services. This data is qualitative as we rely on demographic information, articles, and case studies. For example, data from the New Hampshire Refugee Program shows the number of refugees settling in the Concord region from 2012 through 2021, providing a quantitative look at this data. In addition to this, looking at available state and local resources will provide a framework of available services, to provide insight to the research question: How to promote advocacy for minority groups in a community? Both quantitative and qualitative analysis will be used to identify significant contributions to fostering advocacy in communities while focusing on Concord N.H. as an example.

## **Results and Data**

### **Concord New Hampshire Resources for New Americans.**

#### ***Overcomers***

Assist clients in gaining access to necessary social services by identifying resources, making referrals to partner agencies, assisting with the completion of forms, interpreting mail, navigating the immigration process, assisting with the scheduling of appointments, and providing transportation to and from appointments (Services, 2022).

#### ***Building Community in New Hampshire***

BCNH provides an array of services required by diverse refugee and immigrant communities to help them adapt to a new life in Concord NH ("BCNHsquared", 2022).

#### ***Welcoming New Hampshire***

Welcoming New Hampshire was launched in 2012 as an initiative of the New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees (NHAIR). The NH branch of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA Coalition) Welcoming NH works to achieve a positive integration and inclusion of immigrants and refugees. ("Welcoming Concord Initiative | Welcoming New Hampshire", 2022).

#### ***Head Start***

Children enrolled in these programs get complete school preparation assistance. Pregnant women, their families, and children up to the age of five are served by these programs ("Home | bm-cap", 2022).

#### ***Second Start***

Students from all over the world learn English language skills through speaking, listening, reading and writing in Second Start's English as a Second Language classes. Refugees,

immigrants and visitors to the United States connect and support each other as they learn English. Classes are free of charge and organized by level of ability ("Second Start |", 2022).

### ***Multicultural festival***

The Concord Multicultural Festival brings together more than 70 cultures from around the world. Concord was designated a refugee resettlement city in the 1990s. Today, New Hampshire is home to many other cultures and ethnicities, becoming more diverse every day. This festival is meant to support healthy integration into the Concord NH community by celebrating native cultures (Festival, 2022).

### ***New American Driving School***

The New American Driving School is a program, begun by Second Start in the fall of 2018. Driver's education classes are primarily intended for New American adults. The goal of this program is to expand employment opportunities for refugees and immigrants, allowing them to become economically self-sufficient ("Second Start |", 2022).

## **Northern New England Resources**

### **Refugee and Immigrant Assistant Center Worcester, MA**

Provides School enrollment for children of school age and cultural orientation classes to support integration. Refugee and Immigrant Assistant Center also offer English courses. Employment programs assist New Americans in navigating the American workforce. Access to benefits is also provided to help connect immigrants with basic needs. Immigrants are greeted at the airport, set up in new apartments, and offered basic furnishings. Refugee and Immigrant Assistant Center Also provides access to ongoing ESL classes till proficiency ("Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC Boston, Lynn, and Worcester)/

### **The New American Association of Massachusetts**

The New American Association of Massachusetts offers multiple languages services, including English Language training for Integration, ESL classes, and English to work programs. In addition, employment programs are provided to establish temporary and long-term employment for new arrivals. The group also offers a citizenship program is to assist immigrants in navigating the naturalization application process. This assistance includes help with citizenship applications to qualifying refugees and immigrants who cannot complete their immigration procedures independently

### **The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants.**

Citizenship lessons are also available to students to help them enhance their understanding of American history, government, conversational, reading, and writing abilities in English ("New American Association of Massachusetts | Resources for Immigrants and Refugees", 2022).

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants which is funded by Massachusetts state government offers basic Personal Finance instructs New Americans on how to utilize a bank

account, comprehend the purpose of a credit report, and grasp the meaning of a credit score, among other things. Courses on the advantages and disadvantages of renting and buying a property are also offered. The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families within the state resources works to ensure that refugee adolescents achieve high academic and social achievement levels ("Office for Refugees and Immigrants", 2022). The Refugee Health Exam Program (RHAP) assures newly arrived immigrants get an initial health assessment and a connection to primary care in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. ("Office for Refugees and Immigrants", 2022) The Refugee Compensation Act (RCA) gives up to 8 months of monetary support to refugees who are income qualified and do not have dependent children who live in Massachusetts. The Refugee Jobs Programs (RES) offers tailored services to help refugees find employment and achieve long-term self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Provides targeted services for both early employment and long-term self-sufficiency through an integrated model that includes English and Literacy instruction; employment-related case management; job readiness; access to vocational skill training; and job placement and retention ("Office for Refugees and Immigrants", 2022).

### **N.H. Department of Health and Human Services**

N.H. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Provides New Americans with access to English as a Second Language programs such as Second Start in Concord N.H. New Hampshire Department of Health and Humans also Provides Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) for eight months. In addition, DHHS provides access to resettlement agencies. All refugees are entitled to Refugee Medical Assistance for their first eight months in the U.S. However, to be eligible for RCA, a refugee must be ineligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). DHHS provides access to resettlement organizations. Interpretation services are offered

during state-assisted programs ("Office of Health Equity, NH Department of Health and Human Services", 2022).

### **Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS)**

Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS) works with New Americans as they strive to learn English, find employment, understand American healthcare and banking systems.

Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS) has found New Hampshire New Americans are left without the same level of engagement they had through the initial resettlement agencies. Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS) provides case management services to New American families, and case managers accompany their clients to doctor's appointments, training, job interviews, home visits, and community gatherings to keep them informed ("Our Mission & History - ORIS", 2022).

In addition to these services, ORIS offers a collective brand for immigrant and refugee farmers participating in the New American Sustainable Agriculture Program. ORIS works alongside new American farmers to bring farm-fresh ingredients to neighborhood farmers' markets and stands ("Our Mission & History - ORIS", 2022).

### **The International Institute of Refugees and Immigrant Integration (Manchester Site)**

The International Institute of Refugees and Immigrant Integration (IINE) is a non-profit organization that offers aid and support to the refugee and immigrant populations in Manchester. (International Institute of New England, 2022). The Refugee and Immigrant Settlement Program in New Hampshire assists refugees and immigrants in making a successful transition to their new life in the United States. Job placement and career development, school and classroom help for refugee children and youth, cultural adjustment programs, and other services are available (International Institute of New England, 2022).

	Health	Citizen	Housing	Language	Transportation	Adaptation	Education	Employment	Finance	Money	Interpretation
Overcomers	X	X		X	X	X		X			X
BCNH						X	X				
Welcoming NH						X					
Head start	X			X		X	X				
Second Start				X							
Multicultural Festival						X					
N.A. Driving School					X						
Refugee Imm	X		X	X		X		X			
NA-Mass		X		X				X			
MA office for	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X
NHDHHS	X			X						X	X
ORIS	X			X		X	X		X		
International Inst						X	X	X			

## New Hampshire Refugee Resettlement: Country of Origin (2012-2021)

Region/Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
<b>Totals</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3,029</b>
<b>Europe</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>
Russia											0
Serbia											0
Ukraine					2		1		3	5	11
<b>Africa</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,542</b>
Burundi	7	6	3	25	22	9				6	78
Democratic Republic of Congo	43	85	108	184	222	136	103	218	42	20	1,161
Egypt										1	1
Eritrea						11					11
Ethiopia				1							1
Nigeria											0
Rwanda	7	6		8	7	1				13	42
Senegal					5			1			6
Sierra Leone											0
Somalia	2	15	20	32	47	13	8	6			143
Sudan		8	24	12	12	7		4		2	69
Tanzania									8	8	16
Togo											0
Uganda								4		2	6
Zambia										8	8
<b>Asia</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1,095</b>
Vietnam											0
Bhutan	241	176	112	66	60	85	30				770
Nepal							1				1
Burma-Rohingyan	31	52	25	51	85	48	19	13	8		332
<b>Near East &amp; Asia</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>376</b>
Afghanistan			1	2	5	14					22
Iraq	34	77	80	61	36	24		2		4	318
Pakistan				5		3					8
Syria				3	14	7					24
Yemen						3					3
Iran					1						1
<b>Central America</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>							
El Salvadore											0
Guatemala									5		5

("Office of Health Equity, NH Department of Health and Human Services", 2022)

New Hampshire Refugee Resettlement: Receiving Community (2012-2021)

	FY12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY20	FY21	TOTAL
MANCHESTER	115	136	130	132	189	153	73	150	39	49	1,166
LACONIA	3										3
CONCORD	206	199	189	178	188	97	57	53	9	11	1,187
FRANKLIN											0
KEENE						3					3
EXETER			1								1
NASHUA	41	90	53	140	140	108	32	45	10	4	663
DOVER					1					5	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>3,029</b>

## **Conclusion**

### **Discussion and Analysis**

This paper aimed to build awareness around the New American community in Concord, New Hampshire while exploring how to promote advocacy ideas we have explored throughout this paper focus on the resettlement process and the challenges found in integration in looking at Concord, N.H. work discovered There were refugees from twenty-seven countries in New Hampshire since 2010. Various circumstances may trigger resettlement, including war or other societal changes such as religious persecution, famine, global recession, or ecological disasters. ("Guides: A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Introduction," 2021). While resettlement allows immigrants to seek safety, the resettlement process can come with other stressors that affect all facets of a New American's experience, including health. (Langellier et al., 2021)

Research has shown when families relocate, and they often notice a shift in their family arrangements. Once they have been resettled, refugees may experience stressors that fall into four major categories: trauma, acculturation, resettlement, and isolation, among others. ("About Refugees", 2022) In addition, we learned refugees need social assistance to survive, find housing, earn a living, and receive health treatment. ("Immigration and Child Welfare," 2015). If there are significant discrepancies between their cultural position and others', New Americans may find the cultural transfer process challenging or difficult to navigate. (Merali, 2005).

To summarize, men who migrate from poor to developed countries may find it challenging to support their families if their skills are not readily transferrable to the developed world. In addition, women refugees are less likely than males to be in paid employment and

having children in the home is linked with worse economic accomplishment than single men. (Garwood et al., 2013).

A job and a place to reside may be beneficial to refugees in maintaining their mental health due to stress relief from having a consistent daily routine. Therefore, the primary goal of the United States' resettlement program is to provide employment opportunities. (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018). In addition, some persons are obligated to provide care for family members who are either too elderly or too young to work or unable to work due to age, disease, or impairment to support themselves. (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2018).

Research also found, Ascentria, a local resettlement agency in Concord, N.H, helps refugees find market-rate housing. Housing waitlists are years long, while New Americans pay market rates on limited budgets. (Brown, 2018).

The Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) program provides short-term medical assistance to newly arrived refugees. The benefits, generally similar to Medicaid, last for up to eight months. Services vary depending on state Medicaid programs and medical screening processes. (Refugee Domestic Screening Guidance: Key Considerations and Best Practices Immigrant and Refugee Health"). Research also highlights Transportation to Resettlement access to critical services and opportunities rely on transportation. Sighting transportation is a crucial element in job accessibility.

Advocacy is defined as any activity that speaks out in support of, recommends, or argues for a certain cause or cause of action. Efficacious lobbying and meaningful community participation, according to studies, need the investment of time and money. In order to advocate

for new American populations, the process requires a better knowledge of the causes for migration and resettlement by the community and the government. Local organizations that collaborate and participate in refugee integration may make a significant impact in the process of resettlement. Affirmative action from the community may aid New Americans in feeling more connected to their communities while also fostering an atmosphere of healthy integration.

This research aims to answer the question, how to promote advocacy for minority groups in a community? New Americans need social help to live, obtain accommodation, make a living, and get medical care. New Americans can find the cultural transfer process difficult or impossible to manage. Local groups that cooperate and assist in refugee integration could substantially influence the resettlement process. While the outcome of resettlement is to have New Americans find employment, enter school, secure housing, and become contributing members of their new host countries, they are dependent on host countries' local and state for support in leading healthy and sustainable lives.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

In completing this research, we know that New Americans need a diverse set of resources as they integrate into a host country long after the initial resettlement process. It is seen in the research that many state groups such as The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrant provide targeted services for both early employment and long-term self-sufficiency.

Resettlement programs offer an integrated model that includes English and Literacy instruction; employment-related case management; job readiness; access to vocational skill training; and job placement and retention. ("Office for Refugees and Immigrants," 2022). In addition, these programs support resettlement beyond the initial settlement of housing and cash assistance. As the research has shown, this is important in the healthy resettlement process.

In Concord, N.H., it is left up to local agencies to meet the needs of New Americans after the initial resettlement period. These groups offer Support to New Americans to move forward in their quest for stability.

The research looks at how local agencies provide insight in the process of advocating for these groups at a state level in New Hampshire. The research looks at how local agencies provide insight into the process of advocating for these groups at a state level in New Hampshire. For example, Clement Kigugu credits much of his success to Second Start in Concord, N.H., an alternative education organization that offers English language programs for adults. Clement Kigugu, a Concord N.H. community member that started Overcomers N.H. This agency supports refugee integration as a long-term process rather than rapid assimilation. Clement's story is an example of successful integration when New Americans access programs that focus on long-term sustainability, versus quick assimilation. (O'Grady, 2022).

Now in running his non-profit, Clement Kigugu reports, "Our goal is really to educate people, to teach them how to fish, so that way they can fish themselves and kind of keep receiving what we give them, but they can also do by themselves and help other people who come after them." (O'Grady, 2022).

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