Refugee Youth:
Good Practices in Urban Resettlement Contexts

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May 2016

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The Centre for Youth and Society at the University of Victoria, Canada, promotes research and action that contribute to the wellbeing of youth from diverse social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds in evolving societal circumstances.

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*Being a young refugee involves growing up in contexts of violence
and uncertainty, experiencing the trauma of loss, and attempting to
create a future in an uncertain world (young refugee quoted in
Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010, p. 1399).*

The world is experiencing a global refugee crisis. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the total number of refugees worldwide has passed 20 million - an unprecedented number (UNHCR, 2015a). Recent images of refugees from Syria and elsewhere have galvanized public attention. Among this continually growing population, young refugees are an extremely vulnerable group. Overall figures are approximate due to the difficulties in obtaining statistical data on populations in flux, however, the reported numbers of refugee children and youth are particularly concerning. Data on the actual numbers of displaced youth is inaccurate because of transiency, lost or destroyed records, and incomplete information. While many organizations do not collect specific data on youth, a third (33%) of the population of displaced individuals is thought to be between the ages of 10 and 24; over half (51%) are under 18 (UNHCR & Global Partnership for Education, 2016). Refugee youth aged 15 to 24 years comprise approximately 35% of the total refugee population (UNHCR, 2016). Evans, Lo Forte and McAslan Fraser (2013) call refugee youth the "invisible" population (p.15). A disturbing number of refugee youth are orphans or travelling alone, thus, they are very vulnerable to exploitation (UNHCR, 2015b).

This paper addresses the particular challenges and capacities of refugee youth in resettlement contexts. How refugee youth are welcomed – *what* health, housing, language, recreational and employment supports are available and *how* these services are designed and delivered will play a significant role in creating social cohesion and equity. The discussion focuses on good practices, that is, descriptions and examples of appropriate and effective processes, programs, and services that have been developed and delivered specifically addressing the wellbeing of young refugees.

According to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, n.d.). The United Nations definition of *youth* is used in this paper – "the period of transition between childhood and adulthood, the nature and length of which vary from one individual or society to another" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2007, p. xxvi). Despite fluidity within the category youth, the age range adopted is 15 to 24 years of age, following the UN age range used for statistical purposes (UNDESA, 2013).

The paper reviews the current state of knowledge concerning good practices in welcoming refugee youth in the hope that host country systems and initiatives intersecting with youth (in mental health, education, housing, recreation, employment) will employ informed and considered approaches in supporting refugee youth resettlement. These good practices are not prescriptive; they will be most effective when tailored to specific refugee contexts. *Our aim* is to focus on the distinct skills and knowledge that inform better responses to welcoming refugee youth in resettlement contexts. Programs and activities can then be developed that are cognizant

of what works and that provide spaces for refugee youth to build their own capacities, foster resilience and, importantly, participate in their host communities.

Our guiding question is: What evidence informs good youth settlement practices within the domains of language learning, mental health, housing, employment support, and arts and sport based initiatives?

The scope of the paper is limited to urban young refugees – most refugees arrive and are settled in urban areas; the experiences of refugees in rural and small communities is different and beyond the scope of this paper. Also the experiences of refugee youth during flight and in transit are important and deserving of attention but beyond this paper.

Focus on youth resettlement is critical not only because of their escalating numbers and their vulnerability but because their capacities and skills are resources that can contribute to effective resettlement. Refugee youth face multiple transitions as they resettle – transitions upon arrival, in living spaces and fluctuating household composition, disrupted schooling often means out of norm school transitions, and transitions in family roles and toward employment. The process of resettlement is not linear (McBrien & Day, 2012); daily interactions between refugee youth and non-refugee peers and professionals occur in neighbourhoods and public spaces and institutions. The complex nature of the resettlement process and the opportunities for interaction between youth and multiple systems suggest that key youth related civil society organizations and public institutions have an opportunity to ensure that the skills and capacities of refugee youth are recognized and utilized. The sharing of learnings about good and effective practices across settings is warranted.

Indeed, there is growing evidence that resettlement experiences can have a greater impact on refugee youth wellbeing than pre-displacement experiences (Porter & Haslam, 2005). The influence of host community receptivity and the skills with which refugee youth are welcomed and supported matter. The resettlement experience, while not negating the challenges youth encountered within their country of origin and during flight from persecution, can set the course for life.

Key Considerations

Broad good practice principles have been articulated by international non-governmental organizations with UNHCR. It is suggested that programs should: reflect human rights law, advocate for implementation and protection of refugee rights, be mindful of participation of the most vulnerable within the community, foster coordination and collaboration across sectors and levels of host country government, leverage existing capacities of civil society groups and recognize and build on refugees existing skills, be offered within existing local services (rather than creating parallel services), include risk assessment (including gender based violence risks), and contribute to refugee self-sufficiency (Urban Refugee Task Team, n.d.).

Many of the good practices identified within the youth related literature conform to these principles. The focus in this paper lies in *how* these principles are reflected on the ground with refugee youth programming within the specific realms of gender, language learning, mental health, sports and arts based initiatives, housing, employment preparation. While the literature identifies a range of good practices unique to youth work within each area, there are several *overall key points to consider* when working with young refugees. These are listed below and briefly described.

- There is no universal refugee experience.
- Agency is emphasized, in contrast to being passive recipients of services

- Attention to gender is critical.
- Participation
- A resiliency lens is more helpful than a vulnerability or deficit lens.
- A continued connection to cultural identity (rather than assimilation) is assumed.
- Cultural competency is a key requirement for resettlement workers.

No universal refugee youth experience. Experiences in their country of origin, in periods of conflict and in flight from persecution vary greatly. They may arrive in resettlement countries with family members or unaccompanied; some are already young parents. Refugee youth arrive with important differences in gender, class, race, language, trauma, education, and family backgrounds. Imagining a universal refugee youth is a fiction, as is identifying a single "best practice". Consequently this review is broadly based, recognizing that there are differences in developmental stages, youth capacities, challenges, circumstances, and experiences within the urban refugee youth population.

Agency. Many good practices identified throughout this paper are focused not only on refugee youth receiving quality services – although certainly these are needed. There is an emphasis on opportunities and programs that view refugee youth not as the object of services but as capable agents – building on their existing knowledge, skills, and obvious resiliency without negating their very real economic, health, housing and language learning challenges. Deficit lens are seen as less helpful than strength-based approaches across contexts.

Participation. For young people such as refugees whose voices and agency have often been ignored or silenced, participatory engagement is a way to be recognized and valued by peers, organizations, and governments (Couch, 2007). Refugee youth possess perspectives and knowledge that have the potential to contribute greatly to building inclusive communities. They have often developed innovative ways of addressing challenges specific to their daily lives. Engaging youth in community initiatives and program design acknowledges their right to be respected and involved, helps improve programs to better serve youth, and supports youth development (Head, 2011). Youth engagement within an anti-oppressive framework entails a commitment to recognize and challenge attitudes, behaviours, and practices that create barriers to the participation and empowerment of youth due to oppression and discrimination (City of Toronto, 2006). Youth engagement programs provide opportunities for skill development and capacity building, facilitate opportunities for leadership, encourage reflection on identity, and support the development of social awareness.

For example, promising practices in pre-arrival approaches include multi-stakeholder collaborations –initiatives that prepare for refugee arrival and aim to build welcoming and inclusive communities. Within these pre-arrival preparations and collaborations across health, education, housing, recreation and employment sectors – the inclusion of youth focused and youth led organizations is vital. Furthermore, anticipating refugee youth participation and recognizing the potential of their contributions means that communities can *plan* for refugee youth participation and create spaces and platforms where they can share their ideas with each other and community leaders.

Resiliency. Resiliency, Positive Youth Development, and asset building (Correa-Velez, et al., 2010; Easter & Refki, 2004) approaches underpin strong and effective refugee resettlement programs and initiatives. Many traditional programs oriented towards refugee youth "fail to recognize and build on the considerable resources these youth bring to their new country and miss opportunities to develop their leadership potential" (Correa-Velez et al., 2010, p. 1399). The most effective practices to address this lack stem from strengths-based approaches that focus on

the knowledge and abilities that youth have acquired through previous experiences and the agency that they have within their own lives (Easter & Refki, 2004; Correa-Velez et al., 2010, p. 1406). Examples of the assets identified by successful programs include: 1) the strength given by cultural traditions and developing biculturalism; 2) bilingualism; 3) the struggles during migration can often lead to youth development; finally, 4) the need to move between two cultures increases resiliency, flexibility, and ability to assess human interactions (Easter & Refki, 2004).

Gender. Although women and girls comprise 50% of the world's refugee population (Torress, 2002), forced migration policies have largely been presented as "gender-neutral" (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). Policies originally developed for uprooted men have been extended for use with women without systematic consideration given to their distinct needs (Berman et al. 2009). According to the UNHCR "specific action in favour of women and girls" may be required to address inequalities (UNHCR, 2006, para. 3).

Connection to cultural identity. Culture includes a constellation of factors, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, spirituality, and socioeconomic status that all fold together to form attitudes, beliefs, and values (Harris, Thoreson, & Lopez, 2007). For instance, what may be perceived as a strength or asset in one culture (e.g., individualism or independence) may actually be viewed as a deficit or problem in another (Grothaus, McAuliffe, & Craigen, 2012). Pickren's (2014) research suggests that refugees' continued connection to their cultural identity is often a source of strength and resilience for them individually and within the family unit. For young refugees, emotional support among family and community members that involves exploration of spirituality, religion, ethnicity, and family beliefs can be a protective factor.

Cultural competency. Cultural competency is a key priority in developing successful resettlement services. Refugees are more likely to engage with service providers who are accepting of their cultural values (Jiwani, Janovǐcek, & Cameron, 2001). To provide the most culturally relevant services for refugees, it can be useful to employ intermediaries such as interpreters, translators, bilingual/bicultural workers, or even former refugees (O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014) in certain contexts. In order for youth workers to establish relationships of trust they must be aware of their own cultural biases and positions of power, sensitive to refugee contexts, and understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds of refugee youth (Isakson, Legerski, & Layne, 2015).

Overview

This paper begins with a discussion of good practices in language learning –instrumental as it is to many resettlement tasks. The next section argues for special attention to the specific situation of resettling refugee girls and young women. Although there is a dearth of literature on youth specific practices related to refugee housing support, the third section pinpoints some housing-related good practices. The paper then turns to the pivotal role of employment in the path to resettlement and good practices that contribute to work outcomes. Good practices in mental health and wellbeing are discussed next – drawing attention to both the mental health challenges and resources within refugee youth populations. The opportunities to support youth innovation and participation in sport and art based initiatives are then explored. Finally, the report closes with a summary of key findings, implications for supporting refugee youth in resettlement contexts, and suggestions for future research.

Language

It is often assumed that the language needs of refugees or immigrants are simple: attend second language classes and learn to speak, read, and write in a new language. This assumption not only ignores the complex and diverse experiences of refugees, but also perpetuates the idea that language needs are separate from other needs. Refugee youth certainly face challenges when integrating into their new communities, many of which are influenced by their language abilities and needs. They also have knowledge and abilities that will influence their acquisition of a new language. Further, language learning is a means to acquire cultural capital and practical skills for effective functioning in a new culture.

This section addresses both common and specific aspects of refugee youth language learning while at the same time acknowledging that there is no one universal refugee experience. First, an overview of refugee youth language needs is provided, including a discussion of integration and empowerment through language learning. Next, the role of schooling is discussed, along with language assessment, measurement of performance, diversity of learning strategies, assumptions of intellectual ability, and the provision of pragmatic and relevant instruction. Using digital media inside and outside the classroom is explored. Lastly, the important role of the community is discussed. The term *target language* will be used to describe the language being learned in new communities. Many refugees are already fluent in more than one language prior to relocation; target language is a more accurate descriptor than "second language".

Refugee Youth Language Needs

Of key importance is the recognition of the diverse experiences of refugee youth. School age youth are required to attend school in their host country, sometimes with no prior knowledge of the target language. Some have previously attended school in their home country, others have received an interrupted education, and some may have had virtually no access to formal schooling in their home countries or in transit. Even refugee youth from the same country come from diverse backgrounds in terms of cultural heritage, regional origin, and socio-economic status. Teachers, settlement workers, and other support people must keep this in mind. There is no universal best approach to language learning; adaptability and flexibility are critical (Woods, 2009).

Refugee youth aged 15 to 24 encompass secondary school and post-secondary age groups as well as what in most developed countries is thought of as *early adulthood*. Experiences within this age range differ widely, and also differ from those of children, younger adolescents, and older adults. In addition, these youth typically enter transitional phases with regard to formal education such as vocational preparation or entrance examinations (Yu, 2012).

Refugee youth are expected to learn a new language, often including an entirely different writing system, at the same time as they work on acquiring the content and skills to catch up to their non-refugee peers (Yu, 2012). These youth may also be dealing with trauma recovery and family separation. Sometimes it is taken for granted that they and their family members are familiar with navigating institutions such as schools, health centres, and government organizations. Older youth and young adults would be expected to choose a career path. Thus, language instruction and institutional support for refugee youth will haves a significant impact on their futures. The opportunities available to them during this key developmental period will influence their ability to support themselves and their families, which may include parents, siblings, extended family, and their own children (Thorstensson, 2013).

Integration and Empowerment through Language Learning

Proficiency in the target language helps young people to be successful in school, develop social relationships, establish contacts in the new community, and find current and later employment (van Tubergen, 2010). Becoming proficient in the target language necessarily occurs in tandem with other life processes and requirements such as dealing with official paperwork (for example, visas and citizenship applications) and navigating unfamiliar and cultural and social activities (such as going on a school field trip, attending a religious institution, or joining a sports team). Effective language programming for refugee youth, therefore, not only imparts vocabulary and grammatical competence, but also addresses these complex and contextual linguistic needs (Woods, 2009; van Tubergen, 2010).

Refugees coming from situations of deprivation (in terms of safety, shelter, food, and healthcare) generally show higher levels of motivation to learn the target language than those who consider themselves temporary residents (Iversen et al., 2012). Moreover, refugees who do not intend to stay in a host community may have a higher motivation to retain their first languages. Encouraging the maintenance of a first language is culturally empowering for refugee youth who are navigating complex new identities (McBrien, 2005; Gibson, 1997). It positively impacts their mental wellbeing. Language acquisition increases skills and strategies for coping with trauma and improving mental health, which in turn further increases motivation for language learning. Thus, effective language programming goes hand-in-hand with fostering positive coping and resilience (Iversen et al., 2012).

The Role of the School

Teachers and school support staff are often among the first people with whom refugee youth come into contact in their new communities. Teachers are especially important in the lives of young refugees who have experienced trauma. Providing teachers and staff with better tools and support for addressing refugee students' needs through curriculum development, investigation of new approaches, professional development, and communication will make target language and skills development programs more effective (Woods, 2009). School is an environment where refugee youth can acquire skills to integrate, thrive, and support themselves in their new community. Schools can provide education to support more than print literacy; they can also foster development in digital, health, and social literacies. Moreover, schools offer a relatively safe space for identity exploration and development (McBrien, 2005).

When refugee youth enter schools, they have to acquire and retain a substantial amount of information quickly in order to catch up to their peers. They can also benefit from access to social capital (Toohey, 2000). Often one of the first points of contact for refugees in their new community, schools are responsible for providing a safe space where refugee students can reconcile their own culture with the culture of their host communities (Woods, 2009). Schools can foster reconciliation and resilience following upheaval, and providing support for refugee youth and their families, including linguistic support. By adopting a model of socially just education, schools can acknowledge and celebrate the diverse knowledge, lived experiences and cultural histories of all students, including refugee students (Woods, 2009).

The difficulties faced by refugee youth in adapting to their new community and in learning a new language are compounded by pre-settlement and during-transit traumatic experiences that can impede their academic success (Yu, 2012). These difficulties can be mitigated by providing a safe space where students are encouraged to adjust to the new cultural

environment and expectations, but still maintain connections to their heritage (McBrien, 2005). Understanding and acceptance can improve refugee students' psychosocial wellbeing and prevent alienation from their peers. Providing an environment in which these students are encouraged to blend multiple aspects of their identity supports them in the integration process and facilitates their school success (Gibson, 1997). Supporting them to maintain ties to their homeland, heritage, and cultural knowledge empowers them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their new communities (Yu, 2012). Acknowledging and building upon refugee students' prior knowledge assists in achieving this.

Ideally, bilingual instructional strategies enable students to engage with literacy and language curriculum more effectively by building on their pre-existing knowledge (Cummins, 2005). These strategies, however, are not always feasible or practical in the current educational framework. Community groups and religious institutions can assist schools to identify local people who speak refugee youths' home country language. Government offices and health services also have access to interpreters and translators.

Language transfer occurs when aspects of a previously acquired language (a word, inflection, phrase, discourse, or theme) interfere in the production of the target language (Huang, 2009). A certain amount of cross-language transfer is natural, and attempting to rigidly separate students' use of their existing languages from their use of the target language is unrealistic, especially when they are just starting to learn the target language. It is difficult to predict how previous linguistic knowledge will influence the production or acquisition of a target language because language transfer is heavily context-dependent, however, awareness and recognition of language similarities and differences can help inform successful teaching practices. Helping the students themselves to become aware of these influences can be an effective tool for language learning (Huang, 2009)

Teachers, resettlement workers, and other professionals in schools, community centres, and libraries have developed creative programs and strategies for engaging refugee students' existing knowledge. Curriculum and ideas can be taught in ways that acknowledge and validate refugee students' cultural practices, family ties, previous experiences, existing knowledge, and understandings of the world. An example was the instigation of an intergenerational bilingual storytelling program in a Canadian elementary school (Marshall & Toohey, 2010). Engaging with these family stories helped facilitate critical literacy instruction and student awareness. It also encouraged students to engage with their grandparents' knowledge, facilitating the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and cultural understanding. As part of this study, students were also instructed in bilingual literacy practices, using storybook-writing and translation strategies. While many difficult topics arose in the stories (such as genocide, slavery, inequality, and ethical dilemmas), these issues provided opportunities for productive conversations about conflict resolution, inequity, and cultural diversity among refugee and non-refugee students and their families, teachers, and other community members.

Language Assessment and Cognitive Performance

Accurate needs assessment is vital to developing effective language programming and curriculum. Anxiety, depression, anxiety, and PTSD are recognized as having an effect on students' achievement because they interfere with multiple aspects of learning: self-confidence, motivation, capacity for creativity, response to guidance, anticipation of success or failure, and the ability to self-regulate emotions and behaviours (Kaplan et al., 2015). Unfortunately, settlement adjustment and mental health issues are often either not recognized or taken into

account during language needs assessment. As a result, refugee students tend to be over-diagnosed with learning difficulties and disorders. Cognitive performance assessment is typically conducted in the target language, which is useful for measuring abilities and progress in that language. However, such measures often do not provide a fully accurate or fair description of a refugee youth's true academic or linguistic competence (Kaplan et al., 2015). Inappropriate decisions can result if only target language assessment measures are used for grade placement or special needs designation.

Refugee youth arriving with little or no knowledge of the language required for full participation in schooling will not have the necessary vocabulary for discussing their level of comprehension or difficulties. Moreover, they may fear reprisal in discussion of sensitive topics or issues in which social desirability is a factor (Lee et al., 2014). In assessment contexts, building rapport is easier when student and assessor share some linguistic and/or cultural understanding or background. This increases the likelihood that sensitive topics will be openly discussed. Employing intermediaries such as interpreters, translators, or bilingual/bicultural workers can assist in providing contextual information to students (and their families) as well as to assessors, teachers and support staff. Broader understanding of contexts can enable a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of refugees' linguistic, academic, and personal needs.

Refugee youths' linguistic and academic performance are often measured by the same standards and requirements that apply to their target language peers, without taking into account their experiences and backgrounds. Cognitive testing in a language that a student is only starting to learn will typically underestimate linguistic and academic competence. A number of factors affect cognitive performance, particularly in a test situation, and should be taken into account when assessing student needs or performance. These factors include: previous schooling, proficiency in other languages, the language of the assessment, familiarity with testing procedures, familiarity with host country classroom procedures and educational institutions, the assessor or test administrator (a bilingual psychologist, a familiar teacher, or a qualified interpreter), and cultural similarity between host and home country test procedures and materials (Kaplan et al., 2015).

It takes longer to acquire the necessary level of proficiency for learning curriculum in mathematics, literature, science, and other school subjects than it takes to acquire basic conversational proficiency (Yu, 2012). It is beneficial if teachers in schools and other public or private settings can communicate about refugee youths' needs and performance as well as share strategies and resources. Language teachers are also hampered by the scarcity of age-appropriate material for teaching refugee youth (Woods, 2009). There is an urgent need for more age-appropriate teaching resources to facilitate literacy skill development at all levels. Ideally, these materials should be relevant to the interests and life experiences of refugee youth and build on some of their existing knowledge (van Rensburg & Son, 2010; Woods, 2009).

Combatting Assumptions

Lack of proficiency in a new language can lead to assumptions of intellectual inferiority for refugees; these assumptions can be manifested in the form of marginalizing or racialized discourse (Thorstensson, 2013). Youth who are led to believe that they are less cognitively capable than their host country peers may begin to construct identities around the perception that they do not have the ability to achieve the same goals. Self-efficacy and identity are important issues for refugee youth as they become familiar with their new country, given the upheaval and changes they have experienced. Curriculum and pedagogy that are culturally responsive engage

the real-life issues that students face (Gay, 2000; Pennycook, 2001). Successful and effective language programs aim to validate and support the multiple identities and life experiences of refugee youth (Thorstensson, 2013).

Cultural norms influence how students behave in a classroom setting. Refugee students may engage with curriculum in ways that are different from those of their host country peers (Gay, 2000); they may be silent, or appear to be passive or disengaged. This is not necessarily due to lack of language proficiency or cognitive deficit. It could be what was expected of them previously in school. Of particular importance are differences in norms and expectations that govern power relations, interaction with people in powerful positions (such as teachers and principals), and interaction with peers. It is important for teachers and language facilitators to recognize that what signals disengagement for one student may, for another student, simply be a different mode of observation or reflection (Thorstensson, 2013). Instructors and staff who wish to help refugee students to engage with curriculum can benefit from information about students' cultural contexts (e.g. schooling, language background, expectations, and cultural norms).

Inclusive approaches are important for the successful integration of refugee youth into their new communities. Inclusion encourages communication among refugees and host country youth (Gay, 2000). Encouraging dialogue can also help to combat assumptions of intellectual inferiority. Separation of refugees can lead to the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, and can also breed fear, distrust, and resentment (Thorstensson, 2013). Inclusion also contributes to the wellbeing of the school and the community as a whole.

Language Learning using Digital Media

Incorporating digital technology into new language learning has several benefits. Diverse forms of media can be used to show common literacy practices, introduce new vocabulary, demonstrate the application of grammatical rules, and illustrate the cultural context of the language (van Rensburg & Son, 2010). Through computer-assisted programming, language acquisition can be more learner-centred and individualized, taking into account each learner's particular needs and educational background. Individualizing can be particularly helpful for students who are less vocal in class. In addition, computer-assisted language programming enables young learners to improve both language skills and computer literacy at the same time. It also provides learners with an opportunity to engage with activities that are relevant to their lives, using real-world materials available on the Internet (van Rensburg & Son, 2010). Learner motivation is often high with these programs because of the learner-centred approach, interesting and engaging activities, the use of authentic and relatable materials, and the immediate applicability of newly-acquired skills to learners' lives.

Digital technology can be a valuable resource in other aspects of refugee youth integration that intersect with language needs and literacy development. A study of three teenage refugee siblings found that digital literacy served four functions: building and maintaining co-ethnic relationships, such as friendships formed in transit; connecting to their broader community; bolstering solidarity; and creating and disseminating digital works through creative media (Gilhooly & Lee, 2014). Digital media provided a safe space where the siblings could not only improve their language skills, but also build confidence, find a sense of belonging, negotiate their complex identities, and cope with trauma. Outside the classroom, the Internet also serves important pragmatic purposes, such as accessing information about medical resources, public services, driver's licenses, citizenship, school requirements, and a host of other daily life activities, as well as maintaining ties to family members and homeland. Access to digital media

can provide refugee youth with the freedom to express themselves and communicate with their peers, both fellow refugees and peers in their new home.

Television. Television can be used for both educational and social purposes. Programming provides information about the cultural context of the new community, including pop culture, historical information, current events, norms, attitudes, expectations, and values (Ina, 2014; Perry & Moses, 2011). Television can serve as a means for refugee youth and their families to stay connected to their culture and heritage, while providing information about their new cultural surroundings: it can reinforce language learning, and extend the community of support for newcomers.

Educational television programming is not a new concept; however, Perry and Moses (2011) maintain that its value for language learning at all ages has been underestimated. Watching television programs in the target language is helpful for language learners, particularly at the beginning stages; even children's programming has been shown to have a positive impact on older learners. Such programs demonstrate pronunciation rules, abbreviations, symbols, language conventions, and vocabulary that the viewer might not otherwise be exposed to either in the home or at school.

Youth can also be exposed to real-life literacy practices such as navigating commercial websites through television programs; they tend to engage with print materials related to programs they have seen (Perry & Moses, 2011). Television programs can introduce linguistic concepts with real-life situations (Ina, 2014). Parents and older language learners can also use television as a resource for language learning and acquiring literacy skills. For example, adults can practice reading news bulletins and captions out loud as they appear on the screen, and then connect these captions to the reports they are seeing and hearing (Perry & Moses, 2011). For refugee families, television can be a resource for learning to speak and understand the target language (vocabulary) and also for learning to read and write a new alphabet (orthography and grammar). Youth and adults use information they learn from television programs in everyday situations as well as for enjoyment.

Media as Social Practice. Media can also be viewed as social practice. It can be used to welcome and support refugees in the new culture, as well as to help them maintain ties to their heritage and homeland. Through internet, television programs and video, refugee families can use stories, to connect to their homeland, share their cultural beliefs and values, and teach their children about their heritage (Perry & Moses, 2011).

Media can also be used for creating community over distances. Religious expression is often an important part of cultural heritage and identity; religious programming can help foster a sense of community across distances and assist with target language learning (Perry & Moses, 2011). At the same time, these types of programs can also be used for maintaining refugees' cultural and linguistic practices and connections to their homelands.

Language Learning in the Community

It is the responsibility of the entire community to welcome refugees and assist them in adjusting to life in a new cultural environment. Youth who are beyond the age for public schooling or who are unable to attend due to family obligations or employment need community programs to address their language needs. Community programs and services aimed at skills training, integration, and support can address linguistic needs as well (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008; Thorstensson, 2013). This requires coordination with government-sponsored language services

and programs that can provide accurate and sensitive needs-assessment and multiple levels of target language instruction.

Religious institutions are often instrumental in welcoming and supporting refugees and providing services that contribute to their overall wellbeing (Ives, Sinha, & Knaan, 2010). Churches, mosques, and temples can encourage connections and friendship among refugees and community members, and provide a meaningful practical context for informal language learning. These settings foster connections to home culture and heritage, while also bridging gaps between cultures (Iversen et al., 2012).They are also a source for language interpreters and mentors.

Many community libraries have developed language programs for refugee children, often offered during the summer, to help them further develop literacy skills (Lee, 1999). As well, many communities offer intensive language courses through local colleges, generally intended for adult learners. Older youth can be forgotten in community programming. Too often, services are separated into child- or adult-focused programming that may not fully address the specific needs of youth.

There has been very little research into arts-based approaches to language learning that specifically address the diverse needs of refugee youth (Dunn et al., 2012). Arts-based programs can address multiple needs at once in creative ways that do not reduce the diverse experiences of refugee youth to a single universal application. For example, theatre education can be used not only for language learning, but also for digital literacy and fostering resilience (Dunn et al., 2012). These programs hold significant potential for providing a safe space for youth to explore their identities, introducing coping strategies for trauma recovery, teaching valuable real-world skills such as digital literacy, fostering language learning in diverse and creative ways, and encouraging relationship-building with fellow refugees and non-refugee peers.

Conclusion

The language needs of refugee youth are complex and diverse. Refugee youth face many challenges when settling in a new community: catching up to peers in their new school; acquiring the language skills they need to pursue their goals in the new country, learning how to navigate the new culture, learning how to communicate their needs in a new language, healing from traumatic events; retaining their heritage language and culture and (re)negotiating their identity in the new community; and often, meeting basic needs, such as food, shelter, documentation, etc. Addressing these needs will necessarily involve considering language needs and language needs will, reciprocally, impact these other challenges.

At the same time, refugee youth arrive with their own knowledge, skills, resources, and supports that may transfer to new settings. Schools can explore new ways of integrating second language learning into specific content areas of the curriculum. Schools and community organizations can use multiple strategies, such as bilingual approaches, to build on and validate students' pre-existing knowledge in the classroom. Incorporating technology in the language classroom and developing tools for use outside the classroom, using widely available media such as television and the Internet, is instrumental in addressing refugee youths' complex needs. Including supportive descriptions and discussions of refugee issues in the existing curriculum is important to combat negative attitudes and stereotypes towards refugees in their new community. Additionally, community programming provides an opportunity to explore non-traditional language programming such as arts-based instruction as well as to foster awareness, acceptance, and integration in the community, among residents and new arrivals.

Gender

> *While acknowledging that forcibly displaced men and boys also face protection problems, women and girls can be exposed to particular protection problems related to their gender, their cultural and socio-economic position, and their legal status. This means that they may be less likely than men and boys to be able to exercise their rights, and therefore that specific action in favour of women and girls may be necessary to ensure that they can enjoy protection and assistance on an equal basis with men and boys (UNHCR, 2006, para. 3).*

This section explores key issues and opportunities in resettlement practices for refugee adolescent girls and young women. First, the policy aspects of resettling refugee young women are discussed. Second, a strengths-based framework for resettlement that challenges the narrative of refugee women as vulnerable is proposed. Finally specific considerations for resettlement services that address the unique needs of refugee girls and young women are provided.

The Policy Context

When thinking about how to best support refugee young women aged 15 to 24, it is important to consider the existing supports, challenges, and opportunities within local community settlement contexts. At a broader level, in order to best support these young women one must also understand the macro-context – the policy-level aspects of resettlement practices.

Although women and girls comprise half of the world's refugee population (Torres, 2002), forced migration policies have largely been seen as gender-netural, meaning that policies originally developed for uprooted men have been extended for use with women without particular consideration given to their distinct needs (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). This uniformity in policy does not adequately account for the specific ways that women are impacted by forced migration. For example, upon re-settling, many refugee men are already accustomed to the role of financially providing for their families. However, refugee women who take on the role of heading a household may be assuming this position for the first time. In settlement contexts, these women may be challenged to take on a new financial provider role, in addition to their traditional child-rearing role. Because newcomers may lack community and social support in the settlement country, the work burden for refugee mothers escalates substantially in the face of these new roles. Young refugee women benefit from having settlement workers who can be advocates for equitable policies within their agencies and local communities. Policy advocacy is also needed at national and international levels (UNHCR, 2006).

Those involved in resettlement policy and practice spheres are advised to take a more nuanced approach to thinking about uprooted young women. While gender seems the most obvious difference when considering resettlement practices for boys versus girls, the identities of refugee young women are typically more complex. Understanding this issue means developing an understanding of the *intersectionality* of young women's identities (Beck, Williams, Hope, & Park, 2001). Thinking about the experience of refugee girls means thinking about current barriers and challenges through the intersecting lenses of gender, class, race, language, trauma, and educational background (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). Appreciating the impact that all these different levels have on the experience and identification of young women, one can begin to better tailor settlement supports to meet their needs as individuals.

Challenges in Resettlement for Young Women

     Gender inequities. Gender inequalities experienced prior to arriving in settlement countries can put young women at a disadvantage. Hatoss and Huijser (2010) report on the inequality of educational opportunities using the example of Sudanese refugees. At a time when imminent threats to the lives of young boys necessitated their evacuation to refugee camps, girls remained in Sudan longer because they were deemed less likely to be killed. Upon arriving in the settlement country, these young women typically had less formal education and poorer English skills when compared to young men (Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). When countries adopt resettlement practices that do not consider the specific needs of young women, they do not have the same opportunity to catch up. In this case, *equal* (uniform) as opposed to *equitable* policy actually perpetuated education inequality. Thus, local refugee serving organizations in settlement countries need to be keenly attuned to the specific educational, cultural and linguistic needs of the girls they serve and provide outreach and programming that can help to close this gap.

     Home and family responsibilities. Supporting refugee young women in practical and tangible ways requires an understanding of the specific types of responsibilities and demands placed on them. Home responsibilities typically follow the gender norms of their home country (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003). As a result, girls often take on more household responsibilities than boys do. This means more indoor time and less interaction in the community. Because home responsibilities keep girls in private spheres, they may have fewer opportunities to develop the support of peer social circles. Ellis and colleagues (2010) found that refugee girls had fewer friends than non-refugee children, thus, outreach for young refugee women that provides opportunities for social connection during and after school hours would be of benefit.

     Many refugee parents have trouble finding jobs that provide adequately for their families. With parents working long hours in multiple jobs, and without a network of extended relatives in the resettlement country, many girls are expected to help care for younger siblings (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003). As a result, girls may have fewer opportunities to become involved in extra-curricular educational programs held during after school hours**.** Settlement programs hoping to reach these girls may need to approach programming with increased flexibility (e.g., offering programming for younger siblings at the same time to support participation for girls who care for younger siblings while parents work).

     Some refugee women may arrive as the head of a household, a position that they may not have previously held (Torres, 2002). In these situations, women who migrate with children find themselves needing to contribute financially to their families, as well as attend to the needs of their children, all while undergoing their own acculturation process. Young women living with parents may be expected to work low-paying jobs and allow boys in the family to purse education. Thus, it is important to consider the increased burden that many of these young women face in terms of new and varied responsibilities. Addressing some of the competing needs may enhance engagement in resettlement programs. For example, providing transportation to service organizations as well as childcare will increase the accessibility and thus the effectiveness of settlement supports for refugee women. Moreover, allowing increased flexibility for accessing educational resources outside traditional business hours is key to making education accessible to young women working long hours.

     Navigating cultural tensions and competing expectations. Uprooted young women often struggle with navigating the cultural tensions among the expectations of their school, community, and home environments (Jiwani et al., 2001). Family acculturation gaps can be a source of considerable stress -- when youth and parents acclimate and adopt key aspects of the

settlement culture at different rates. These gaps have been linked with increased family conflict (Marsiglia et al., 2009) and decreased family cohesion (Ho & Birman, 2010).

Because refugee youth may also learn the language of the settlement country more quickly, many refugee girls are called upon to language broker for their parents. The research on language brokering, described in some research as predominately female activity (Morales & Hanson, 2005) shows mixed impacts. Language brokering has been linked with developing higher levels of cognitive ability, and enhanced school performance, however it can also be linked to increased child stress and family conflict (Umaña-Taylor, 2003). In either case, the very act of translating for parents can disrupt family power dynamics. Youth may suddenly find themselves involved in translating family financial documents and other sensitive materials that parents may not normally want to share with their children.

While many refugee young women take on increased responsibilities at home, this should not be viewed exclusively in a negative light. Rather, research with refugee youth has found that these youth often develop a sense of maturity, competence and confidence (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003). Thus, in settlement work, it is critical to learn about the specific impact of these responsibilities on individual refugees.

Discrimination. In their day-to-day lives, young refugee women identify racism as one of the most significant forms of violence faced at school (Jiwani et al., 2001). In confronting discrimination, they may rely on a strong sense of cultural identity and pride in their culture, ethnicity, and upbringing to cope (Ellis et al., 2010). However, school environments intolerant of cultural diversity can make it even more difficult for girls to fit in (for example, they may experience discrimination and exclusion at school for wearing a hijab). This situation can leave girls with few relational resources. Outreach efforts that cater to their specific needs and proactively work to build strong cultural identities and maximize opportunities for peer connection are warranted to address these inequalities.

In addition to a strong sense of cultural identity, many refugee girls have a strong spiritual identity. Some research has found that refugee youth are twice as likely to frequent places of worship compared to non-refugee youth (Candappa & Igbinigie, 2003). Partnerships with religious organizations may thus be a good way for settlement workers to make connections with youth and provide opportunities for enrichment and integration into the settlement society.

Gaps in support services. In terms of their place in the broader community, research indicates that some refugee young women feel excluded from resettlement services on the basis of their gender. In their study with diverse groups of women, Beck et al. (2001) found that refugee women believed the resettlement services they received were generally not as practical or comprehensive as the services provided to their male counterparts. They felt that service providers seemed to think of them as invisible (Beck et al., 2001). According to these participants, what is needed is an organization that is run for and by women and caters to the specific needs of women and mothers of varying ages (Beck et al., 2001). While such organizations do exist, sustaining them is a challenge, given the piecemeal funding for non-profit settlement organizations.

When developing initiatives specific to refugee women, resettlement programs can draw from feminist organizing practices that make visible and central the experiences of marginalized women. These practices guide organizers to distribute responsibility and power equitably and to focus on strengthening communication and connection with the women in order to create meaningful change. One large-scale example of this is the *Strong Girls, Powerful Women* Program developed by the Women's Refugee Commission (2016). This program empowers

refugee girls by building employment-readiness skills that are key to supporting a successful transition to adulthood.

        Focusing on how to facilitate further growth is also key. In a qualitative study about the experiences of refugee and immigrant girls, Berman et al. (2009) report how uprooted girls often live their lives in marginalized spaces. One example of this is the home environment – usually subsidized public housing comprised of almost exclusively immigrant and refugee individuals. The young women in Berman's study identified these spaces as barricades, roadblocks between them and the privileges of mainstream society. Despite this marginalization, they learned to negotiate these spaces in relational ways that fostered a sense of belonging and community and created alliances. Beyond the critical work of making settlement services available for individuals, professionals must also advocate for refugee young women by recognizing and challenging structural barriers, such as those that exist in local communities.

        Cultural competence. Developing culturally competent settlement services is a key priority. Research with settlement workers has found that many refugee individuals are hesitant to engage in community services because they view social workers as unaccepting of their cultural values (Jiwani et al., 2001). The practice of separating of settlement work from mainstream social work in many countries keeps these workers from being able to advocate for anti-oppressive and anti-racist practices that continue to marginalize refugee communities (Jiwani et al., 2001). As part of the non-profit sector, settlement agencies are typically dependent on uncertain levels of government funding. They often employ a large number of part-time staff and volunteers who are not connected to other divisions of social work. Settlement programs often receive funding for service provision to specific cultural groups for specific programming (for example, language training) (Jiwani et al., 2001). These limitations keep settlement work and advocacy for refugee women apart from the rest of the world of social work.

Adopting a Strengths-Based Perspective

        By the time refugees arrive in settlement countries, they have already lived through violation of their sense of security, disruption and renegotiation of their identities, and loss of their homes and countries. These are obstacles many in the developed world cannot even fathom overcoming – settlement workers and scholars are questioning the tendency in developed countries to over-emphasize the vulnerability of young refugee women (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2008; Hatoss & Huijser, 2010). They suggest that it is time to make an intentional shift from a vulnerability lens to a strengths-based lens. Identifying where young refugee women need support is an important part of settlement work. However, this work should begin with understanding the strengths of each individual that have helped her get to this point and then building from existing strengths to meet her specific needs. Such practices can restore a sense of agency for young women. Some scholars who study the experiences of uprooted women speak about the process of reclaiming a sense of agency as *re-selving* (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2008). Through this process women are able to reclaim power in their sense of identity. Providing opportunity for young refugee women to discuss the shifting pieces of their identities, to have a voice, and to address how their agency may be marginalized in the settlement context is important.

Conclusion

        Refugee girls and young women have distinct strengths and needs that can go unrecognized within the context of a long history of male-centered refugee settlement policies.

Those in settlement work can do much to support young women. First, a perspective shift to identify refugee girls' and women's needs in the context of their existing strengths is critical to restore a sense of agency and ultimately a sense of self to uprooted women. Second, adapting programming to accommodate the specific home and family responsibilities refugee girls and young women have can promote greater access to settlement services and education. Refugee young women are part of family and community networks. To support them, it is critical to design programs that will address their needs within the family context. By understanding the needs of the whole family, program developers can better design programs for girls. Third, those working in settlement are uniquely positioned to advocate for refugee women and girls in local communities. This can be done through addressing and challenging structural barriers that segregate and devalue refugee women and girls in schools, agencies, and community settings.

Housing

The United Nations recognizes housing as a human right that includes "the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity… at a reasonable cost" (United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1991, p. 2). Finding stable, affordable, good-quality housing is a major challenge for refugee youth and families as they enter extremely pressed rental housing markets in many resettlement countries. At the same time, good-quality, stable housing is essential as a foundation for participation in the job market, education, and the community (Preston, Murdie, & D'Addario, 2011; Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Carter & Osborne, 2009).

This section outlines some of the challenges facing youth and families in finding and maintaining housing for refugees arriving in settlement countries. It describes good practices on housing related supports that have been identified to assist refugee-serving groups and organizations. Keeping these in mind will contribute to refugees finding and securing long-term safe and affordable housing that will enable them to become active members in their new communities.

The Social Impacts of Housing

Housing means much more than a place to stay; home provides a sense of security (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013) and the connections formed with neighbours in the community are essential to wellbeing (Bérubé, 2010). The need for more affordable and stable housing for refugees is part of the overall development of safe and inclusive communities (Carter, Polevychok, & Osborne, 2009). Without a sense of safety, support, and stability in their housing circumstances, many refugees may be unable to participate in other aspects of society such as employment and education. Having left situations of extreme instability and conflict, refugees need a place to call home that feels safe, stable, and comfortable. Since youth are often dependent on and living with family members, housing issues affect them directly.

The social and cultural impacts of different housing environments are often of concern to refugees, sometimes even more than actual housing conditions (Ager & Strang, 2008). Refugees who must make frequent housing changes or live in areas with high rates of social problems experience a lower sense of safety and security (Keller, 2011). Those who are residents of public affordable housing projects that undergo upgrades or redevelopment are susceptible to forced relocation and the resultant severing of community ties, social support networks, and sense of place. Additional challenges occur when refugees have to live in neighbourhoods with high crime rates that are often racially segregated (Teixeira, 2008; Carter & Osborne, 2009).

It is important for refugees to find safe housing for the long term in order to form stable relationships with others in the neighbourhood (Ager & Strang, 2008). Social housing projects are one way in which refugees can access affordable housing (Carter & Osborne, 2009). Stable housing maximizes the potential for social and community ties and is linked to a higher sense of security and better mental health.

Financial Considerations

Many refugees do not have jobs or are unable to find well-paying jobs, have limited credit history in their settlement countries, and do not have friends or family in a position to help them with housing costs (Preston et al., 2011). While employment is a significant positive predictor of housing outcomes, few housing support programs address employment considerations (Shier, Graham, Fukuda, & Turner, 2016). Once in their new host countries,

refugees often feel obligated and are expected to send remittance money back to family in their countries of origin (Ives, Hanley, Walsh, & Este, 2014). This additional financial responsibility makes their financial situation more challenging when compared to other low-income residents of their settlement country (Ives et al., 2014). Many refugee families have large numbers of children, which also increases financial obligations and strain (Larios, 2013).

Host countries sometimes lack systemic support to help refugees find stable housing; public policy typically lags behind demonstrated needs and housing allowances are often inadequate to cover all the costs of accommodation (Wayland, 2010). As a result, refugees are frequently settled in neighbourhoods with low-quality housing, high crime rates, and exposure to environmental hazards and degradation due to low rental costs (Poppe, 2013; Teixeira & Li, 2009). Refugees have to spend a large portion of their income on housing, which can leave them in a position of housing and financial insecurity (Preston et al., 2011). Refugees living in temporary, unstable housing situations are part of the hidden homeless population or are considered to be living with housing precarity (Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Shier, et al., 2016). Some must use homeless shelters when they have nowhere else to go (Kissoon, 2010).

The availability of affordable housing must be assured, otherwise, services to support refugees to secure housing will be much less effective (Wayland, 2010). Public policy must address funding for accommodation in the initial settlement stage that adequately covers the cost of living. When a region lacks affordable housing, refugee-serving organizations can make connections with private landlords, housing associations, and real estate developers to help coordinate improved access (Wayland, 2007). This may entail, for example, providing vouchers towards rent in the private market for refugee tenants on a wait list for social housing.

Discrimination

Refugees can face housing discrimination based on lack of financial resources, low social support and social capital, language barriers, and racial discrimination (Reid, 2009; Murdie, 2010; Phillips, 2006; Teixeira, 2008). They are also vulnerable to housing exploitation such as above-market rent, illegal rent increases, eviction without notice, and unsafe dwellings (Teixeira, 2011; Ives et al., 2014; Francis & Hiebert, 2014). Unfortunately, refugees who have experienced discrimination or exploitation may not report this due to fear of eviction or other repercussions, a lack of familiarity with the language of their settlement country, and no knowledge of where or how to report such problems (Teixeira, 2011).

Providing Information

Refugee housing support is largely filled by non-profits operating on a combination of government and private funding and relying on significant volunteer support, and by individuals and community groups such as churches or community centres who privately sponsor refugees and agree to provide housing for their initial period in the settlement country (Poppe, 2013; Wayland, 2007). Settlement services and other community groups offer instrumental support for refugees to increase their chances of finding adequate housing; they may or may not also provide financial support (Wayland, 2010). They help refugees find housing through, for example, exploring different types and areas of accommodation along with their associated costs, explaining the rights of housing tenants, and providing legal advice and advocacy (Wayland, 2010). Such assistance is important because it has been shown that refugees who make contact with some type of resettlement service secure permanent housing more quickly than those who do not (Murdie, 2010).

Refugees often lack information about landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities due to the multiple differences between their countries of origin and settlement country laws (Carter & Osborne, 2009). Some governments produce print and web-based materials explaining housing rights and regulations to newcomers to the country, and offer housing help centres with various services such as legal advocacy, assistance signing leases, support finding rental accommodation, and referrals to other services (Wayland, 2010). Having this information available in multiple languages greatly improves access and understanding (Wayland, 2010). Providing some information visually, using pictures in conjunction with words for example, has been found to be an effective way to increase comprehension of written materials (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013). Additionally, because web sites and long written documents can be intimidating and alienating, information communicated orally through trusted mediators such as settlement workers or community members tends to increase understanding as well as the social inclusion of refugees (Lloyd et al., 2013).

Considerations for Youth and Families

Refugee parents raise children in environments and cultures that are different to the ones in which they grew up (Keller, 2011). Their families are often larger than most in their settlement country and include extended family members such as grandparents (Hiebert, 2009). This makes it difficult for refugee families to find housing with adequate space since there are typically few rental options with more than two bedrooms (Larios, 2013; Carter & Osborne, 2009). Landlords in settlement countries may be uncomfortable with multiple generations living in the same household, especially if they perceive it as being overcrowded as compared to their own cultural standards (Teixeira, 2011). This is a major area of housing difficulty and is compounded by refugee families' often strained financial situations.

It is often a challenge to find affordable housing that is within reasonable distance to work or school (Francis & Hiebert, 2014). Housing for refugees should be selected with the ability to connect to networks of social, religious, and community services (Wayland, 2007). This is especially important for refugee mothers and families who need access to schools, childcare, and health care nearby (Ives et al., 2014). Financial concerns for immigrant and refugee families are compounded by the need for safe, reliable and affordable childcare. Refugee mothers may have difficulty meeting employment obligations, taking language classes, or finding work if they cannot find childcare, if it is unreliable, or if it is provided by friends or family members with similarly challenging lives (Thurston et al., 2013; Sherrell, 2010).

Refugee families have a high proportion of lone-parent families, which also contributes to housing affordability difficulties (Hiebert, 2009). Some researchers have reported that refugees with children, particularly single women, face greater rates of housing discrimination from landlords than refugees without children (Ives et al., 2014). Refugee women with children are at particular risk for domestic violence if they have limited financial means (Thurston et al., 2013). Longer stays in transitional housing has been suggested as one promising means to improve the outcomes of young mother refugees through providing access and connections to much-needed services and ensuring stability (Ives et al., 2014).

Embedding Programs and Services within Housing

Government-operated temporary refugee housing programs constitute ideal sites for providing other services for refugees within the same facility. This practice makes transition to the settlement country easier and also reduces the time, money, and stress associated with

multiple sites and transportation to and from various services (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Programs that take place where refugees live are both more accessible and more visible to residents, promoting use (Wayland, 2007). On-site supports can include services such as housing help,, legal assistance, workshops on the settlement country's fire and safety codes, and mental health counselling (Wayland, 2007). Programs that have childcare on site are particularly well suited to support both the development of children and the ability of their parents to become more involved in the community through participating in language classes, social activities, and employment services (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2015).

Long Term Support

Temporary housing for new refugees is often provided by the government of the receiving country. However, due to funding restrictions, they may be pressured to leave these facilities before they are able to secure geographically suitable and financially affordable housing elsewhere (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012; Phillips, 2006). Refugees who must move on rapidly and secure housing in the private rental market are likely to feel overwhelmed and to have extremely limited financial resources (Phillips, 2006). They may have to move in with friends or relatives or accept some form of unstable housing (Phillips, 2006). This situation affects youth because of the impact on their educational and social needs. Due to these multiple and intersecting determinants, refugee housing support needs to be ongoing and anchored to other services such as education, job training, and community networks (Phillips, 2006).

Conclusion

Housing support provided to refugee youth and families is most effective when contextualized to their particular situation and focused on building community relationships (Larios, 2013). Entering overloaded rental markets in large urban centres is further compounded by the need for space to accommodate large and extended families. Of particular importance to youth is housing that is within accessible distance to education, social services, and employment support. Embedding at least some of these services within housing sites provides the best access for refugees. Whenever possible, it is good practice to consult with the refugee population when formulating policy or programs that will affect them.

Employment

Employment is a key factor in the successful resettlement of refugees (Lauer, Wilkinson, Yan, Sin, & Tsang, 2012; O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014). The overall integration and long-term employment outcomes of refugee youth are greatly impacted by the support they receive during their first years of resettlement (Eide & Hjern, 2013). However, they are at greater risk for unemployment and often hold economically disadvantaged positions in their host countries (de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2010; Shutes, 2011; Marlowe & Elliott, 2014; UNHCR, 2013). Multiple and intersecting factors contribute to this situation; integrated and multi-level responses are required. This section begins by outlining the employment needs and issues affecting refugee youth and identifies key factors in their overall wellbeing and employment outcomes. Next, it identifies some ways of addressing these needs through key themes identified in the literature. Finally, good practices for providing effective programming have been highlighted.

Needs and Outcomes

Although they may be attending secondary or postsecondary education, refugee youth often have to find employment quickly in order to support themselves and their families (Eide & Hjern, 2013). However, they can face multiple pre- and post-migration challenges and risk factors that affect employability and work outcomes (Nunn, McMichael, Gifford, & Correa-Velez, 2014; Xu, 2007). Among pre-migration and in-transit challenges are: disruption in or a lack of access to formal education, exposure to violence, forced displacement, and multiple losses. Post-migration challenges include: financial impoverishment, insufficient access to education and employment training, lack of support for families, insufficient housing, low language proficiency, substandard or insufficient access to healthcare, emotional stressors, and navigating a new socio-political system.

Despite these challeges, refugee youth also exhibit many strengths, including resourcefulness, strong motivation and clear aspirations (UNHCR, 2013). They are eager to find work, have a desire to seek professional careers, and aspire to pursue tertiary education (Eide & Hjern, 2013; Nunn et al., 2014). Work is seen as an opportunity for personal development, a means to support their family, and a way of expressing gratitude to the host community, all of which contribute to high employment aspirations (Correa-Velez, Barnett, & Gifford, 2013). Additionally, refugee youth have been known to "self-organize, form groups, offer peer-to-peer and wider community support and may even assist international organisations at times of heightened security concerns" (UNHCR, 2013, p. 9).

Employment outcomes are not only determined by strengths and challenges; the ability to successfully find employment is influenced by many complex factors (Torezani, Colic-Peisker, & Fozdar, 2008). Everyone aspires to meaningful employment - work that matches a person's qualification, skills, and talents, and that is compensated fairly and adequately (O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014). However, the challenges and risk factors outlined above often result in refugee employment that is predominantly in low-skilled and low-paid types of work, which tend to have poor terms and conditions (Shutes, 2011; Bloch, 2002). It is important to consider both the long-term and short-term employment needs of refugee youth and their families (Correa-Velez et al., 2013). These include improving the conditions of short-term employment (raising wages, providing healthcare, following human-rights mandates), providing support for education and career training, and satisfying other basic needs in order to reduce the urgency of finding short-term work.

Individual Risk and Protective Factors

At a basic survival level, individual problems include injury, health issues, and trauma (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012; Isakson et al., 2015; Posselt, Procter, Galletly, & Crespigny, 2015). Poor health, as a consequence of pre- and post-migration experiences, has been recognized as a risk factor for integration in general and for finding employment in particular (Nunn et al., 2014; Yun, et al., 2012). Because they experience a range of physical and psychological limitations to health, refugee youth are often marginalized in terms of access to meaningful employment (Correa-Velez et al., 2013). The length of time youth have spent in displacement with limited access to education and livelihood opportunities is another barrier (UNHCR, 2013; de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2010). Low language proficiency is a key risk factor for challenges to employment among refugee youth (Shutes, 2011). Also, they often experience greater family responsibility than is typical among peers in their host communities (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2011).

Nevertheless, several protective factors also exist. On the individual level, temperament, good coping skills, religion, and positive values contribute to education and employment success (Carlson, Cacciatore, & Klimek, 2012). Factors related to identity, such as the ability to make meaning of adverse experiences, confidence, engagement, and enthusiasm in school have been identified as protective factors (McIntosh, 2000). Experiences of safety, belonging, and access to transportation also contribute to overall success (Eide & Hjern, 2013; Correa-Velez et al., 2013). The completion of integration courses has been positively associated with the economic integration of refugees, including positive employment outcomes (de Vroome & van Tubergen, 2010).

Social Risk and Protective Factors

Social risk factors include a sense of social exclusion often experienced by refugee youth (UNHCR, 2013) and a lack of social capital in general - social networks and relationships that have a positive impact on the lives of those involved (Torezani et al., 2008). Work experience or professional qualifications previously acquired may not be recognized in the host country (Bloch, 2007; Shutes, 2011). Racial or linguistic discrimination at the personal and the institutional level also have an impact on refugee youth employment outcomes; research shows that refugee youth have a lower employment rate (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Gateley, 2014). At the resume screening level, there is evidence of discrimination against newcomers with non-anglicized names (Oreopoulos, 2009). Using national and international guidelines (such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), settlement workers, employers, and communities can develop strategies for addressing bias and discrimination in hiring processes and in the provision of employment services (Lauer et al., 2012).

An important social protective factor is family support. Refugee youth with supportive families or refugee youth who have had a positive experience in foster care have more positive employment outcomes (Carlson et al., 2012). Parental support reduces the risk of mental health problems following traumatic experiences (Eide & Hjern, 2013). When family members are resettled together and adult family members are able to understand local education and employment contexts, youth employment trajectories improve (Nunn et al., 2012; Hynie et al., 2013). Connections to prosocial organizations such as school, church, and community groups are also important for mitigating the impacts of employment risk factors and providing social support by fostering relationships with host community members (Anderson, 2013; Torezani et

al., 2008). Encouraging the formation of positive relationships through school peer groups is also an effective strategy for improving employment outcomes (Eide & Hjern, 2013).

Addressing Employment Needs

Refugee youth are often underemployed in low-skilled, low-paying, short-term jobs; their first priority is to satisfy their basic needs (Bayne, 2015). Establishing a fulfilling career is a higher-level need and is often deferred in the short term. Policies addressing refugee youth employment have to support both the fulfillment of urgent needs as well as the provision of employment-focused support such as language instruction, information, and guidance on employment (Shutes, 2011). For youth who have work experience and/or training from their home country, support in re-entering these professions in the host community is a priority. Meeting the goal of safe and dignified livelihoods also includes access to appropriate and relevant education and skills training (UNHCR, 2013).

If real change is to occur in the area of refugee youth employment, O'Donovan and Sheikh (2014) recommend a contextualized and integrated approach. Program design must be flexible in adapting to individual and family needs (Shiferaw & Hagos, 2002) and should include consultation with the youth and families involved. Understanding the youth's context, background, skills, aspirations, and capacities is critical in order to determine what existing services and programs are applicable and what new services are needed (Diab, 2012). A youth focused approach to employment may include such services as family counselling, cultural orientation programs, language learning programs, bilingual education programs, and other comprehensive services that support the emotional and personal development of refugee youth (Xu, 2007). Governments and communities should take into account the financial aspects of meeting these complex and intersecting needs when implementing language programs, apprenticeships, and other employment training opportunities (O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014).

Recommendations for Good Practices

Building relationships. Working effectively with refugee populations requires good relationship building skills. To establish relationships of trust, youth workers should possess cultural competency – this requires an awareness of their own cultural biases and position of power, sensitivity to refugee contexts, as well as an understanding of diverse backgrounds and cultures (Isakson et al., 2015). Programs and interventions can be modified to be more culturally appropriate; policies and procedures must be examined for exclusionary elements (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008; Fazel et al., 2012). Programs that target the needs and contexts of specific cultural groups are known to be more effective than broad approaches that apply the same solutions to all groups (Griner & Smith, 2006). It is particularly helpful when former refugees or those with refugee experience are available to serve as youth employment mentors (O'Donovan & Sheikh, 2014). An anti-oppressive approach encourages respectful and reciprocal communication with youth and their families; it focuses on establishing economic self-sufficiency through skill development and providing practical services for navigating work settings in the host community (Ott, 2013; Gateley, 2014).

Effective programming. Effective and appropriate practice in refugee youth employment begins with a practical strengths-based approach that addresses both short-term and long-term needs. A strengths-based approach acknowledges that refugee youth have valuable skills and experiences; these become the foundation for further education and training (Gateley, 2014; Ott, 2013). Job-outcome-oriented systems or policies that incentivize only job attainment can reproduce labour market inequalities that have negative consequences for refugee (or any)

youth. Policy must not only seek to satisfy the immediate needs of refugee youth and their families (food, housing, and safety) but also contribute to long-term meaningful career development for these youth (Gateley, 2014; Kyle, Macdonald, Doughney, & Pyke, 2004).

Both *work-first* and *life-first* approaches can be implemented; each has benefits and drawbacks (Finn, 2003; Marshall & Wolsak, 2003). A work-first approach puts greater emphasis on short-term job outcomes and rewards service providers for placing unemployed people in paid positions as quickly as possible; this can be very helpful when food security and basic necessities are paramount (Shutes, 2011; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2005). An exclusively work-first approach, however, limits the capacity for employment programs to address the long-term needs of refugee youth, including interest and ability-oriented skill development and career training (Finn & Schulte, 2008). Refugee youth who are more difficult to place quickly may be neglected in such a model, especially in terms of accessing employment related to their interests and skills (Shutes, 2011).

In contrast, a life-first approach encourages youth to explore and reflect on their identities, skills and talents, hopes, fears, and goals, and to explore related career possibilities (Marshall & Wolsak, 2003). The drawback to this approach is that it requires a lot of time, high motivation, and typically strong language skills. In between is an *integrated approach* that holistically addresses the range of needs that refugee youth have that are both directly (e.g. education, skill development, language training) and indirectly (e.g. housing, healthcare, self-esteem) related to employment outcomes (Finn, 2003). An integrated approach helps satisfy immediate security and financial needs, but also includes improving access to cultural and social capital and providing opportunities to build meaningful relationships. Employment support, such as a workplace buddy or mentor system and paid internships or co-op education opportunities (where youth earn an income while they gain training and experience) helps ease the transition to regular employment and improves employment outcomes (Diab, 2012; Lauer et al., 2012).

Policy implementation can also have a substantial impact on the quality of assistance refugee youth receive; service providers' interpretation of policy can support or further marginalize refugee youth. Darrow (2015) explains how street-level theory identifies the ways that privatization and contracting can impact service delivery through pressures on de-contextualized performance outcomes. Policies can indirectly or directly encourage workers to get clients employed as quickly as possible, without taking into account the complex needs of youth and their families. This can lead to discriminatory practices, such as selecting those young people most likely to succeed, rewarding them for compliant behaviour, or extending services only to certain youth (Darrow, 2015). Such unethical practices can be addressed by allocating higher payments to employment assistance providers for addressing the needs of more disadvantaged groups, or by providing incentives to help unemployed groups acquire skills and qualifications (Shutes, 2011).

Effective policy and programming strive to address the diverse needs of refugee youth (Shutes, 2011). This requires a range of pre-employment assistance programs and services, including language training, re-certification support for those already trained or experienced in their desired field, training to acquire new skills, apprenticeship or co-op placements to gain relevant work experience, and adequate support and training in new jobs. A holistic approach to refugee youth employment provides a broad range of short-term outcomes for different circumstances, while still supporting progress toward long-term career goals.

Conclusion

Career development and employment outcomes are a reflection of complex interconnected factors. Effective practices to support refugee youth must take into account the multiple individual, family, and contextual factors at play. Policies and programs that emphasize only short-term job attainment are limiting and serve to disadvantage these young people. Refugee youth and their families benefit from an integrated approach that takes into account their immediate employment needs as well as their longer-term hopes and aspirations. Moreover, involving youth in programming is motivating and builds further social capital.

Mental Health

Many young refugees face severe adversity before, during, and after resettlement so higher rates of mental health problems among this population would not be surprising. However, it has been found that about 80% of newcomer youth report good or excellent mental health (Pottie, Dahal, Hanvey, & Marcotte, 2015). This serves as a testament to the resilience of these young people, many of whom have faced traumatic losses and hardships over a long period of time.

Compared to young refugees who migrate with their families, unaccompanied refugee youth are at greatest risk for mental health problems (Bean, Derluyn, Eurelings-Bontekoe, Broekaert, & Spinhoven, 2007). Unaccompanied adolescents are more likely to have been exposed to pre-migration trauma, and also show more symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety upon resettlement (Derluyn, Mels, & Brokaert, 2009).

A significant portion of these youth do experience mental health challenges. The rate of mood disorders among newcomer youth is 10.9%. Similarly, 11% of refugee youth are diagnosed with PTSD (Rousseau, Pottie, Thombs, Munoz, & Jurcik, 2011). The Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences ([ICES], 2015) compared refugee youths' rates of mental illness with non-refugee immigrants and Canadian-born youth. They found that refugee youths' self-harm rates of 13% were higher than for other immigrants; however, the opposite pattern was found with respect to suicide (2.5% for refugees vs. 3.3% for other immigrants). Schizophrenia rates were notably high for refugee youth at 26%, compared with 18% in non-refugee immigrants and 11% in Canadian-born youth (ICES, 2015).

Mental Health Problems among Refugee Youth

Importantly, being a refugee is not a cause of mental illness. Rather, a multitude of factors across various domains interact for each person, and thus, refugees vary greatly to the degree in which their mental health has been impacted. While some refugees experience mental health challenges during and after resettlement, others demonstrate incredible resilience in the face of migration and resettlement stressors (Mawani, 2014). Stakeholders in refugee youth mental health need to consider their contextual continuum in assessing refugee mental health and in planning for supports. Mental health challenges that refugee youth experience can be linked to hardships experienced along the journey to the resettlement country or to difficulties associated with the settlement experience itself. In addition to the difficulties that adversely affect young refugees' mental health, they also must confront barriers that may prevent them from accessing mental health services.

Challenges in Home Country

Young refugees resettle in their new countries with a wide range of experiences that influence their mental health. The levels of conflict or unsettlement refugee youth face and, correspondingly, their experiences of trauma are highly variable. Furthermore, each individual youth's reaction to trauma is unique. Despite this variability, direct and indirect exposure to violence, as well as personal injury sustained during pre-migration, are predictably associated with increased mental health challenges for young refugees (Fazel, et al., 2012). Young refugees often experience some form of violence pre-migration; additionally, migration journeys can be marked with violence, stress, fear, and uncertainty that place young refugees as risk of mental health challenges (Yakushko, Watson, & Thompson, 2008).

The trauma that refugee youth endure often involves tremendous loss, including the loss of family members and friends, property, work, and the sense of belonging. Thus, refugees can

be expected to grieve these losses during their resettlement. While grief is an adaptive response to this magnitude of loss and each individual will experience and cope with grief in his or her own way, some refugees' experiences fall into the category of *prolonged* or *complicated grief*, meaning that grief responses become chronic and last longer than might be expected (Prigerson et al., 2009). Loss of family members undoubtedly adds to stresses and difficulties already inherent in migration and resettlement in the host country. The theme of losing significant people, sense of home and belonging, and culture is frequently expressed by young refugees receiving mental health services (Warr, 2010).

An additional factor that affects young refugees' mental health is disruption to the family unit (Fazel et al., 2012). For example, separation of children and families is associated with increased risk of psychological challenges (Hodes, Jagdev, Chandra, & Cunniff, 2008). Likewise, young refugees whose parents are missing, imprisoned, or cannot be contacted are at greater risk for mental illness (Hjern, Angel, & Jeppson, 1998).

Settlement Challenges

Disruption to refugee youths' sense of self or identity upon arrival is highly common. Resettlement forces youth to re-negotiate identity, self-esteem, and independence (Allan, 2015). Migration threatens cultural identity, especially if young refugees face discrimination and racism in their country of resettlement. The cultural norms of the new country pose significant challenges to refugees who wish to maintain their natal culture (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007). Similarly, forced migration often results in deep feelings of isolation, lack of identification with a home, and a negative sense of self.

Refugees' mental wellbeing relates to the extent to which they perceive the resettlement country as accepting. Racial, ethnic, gender-based, religious, class-based, and employment-based discrimination all impact mental health (Yakushko et al., 2008). One example of this is the inter-relatedness of peer discrimination, low self-esteem, depression, and PTSD (Sujoldzic, Peternel, Kulenovic, & Terzic, 2006). On the other hand, perceived high social support is linked to better psychological health among refugee youth (Kovacev, 2004). Reduced rates of anxious and depressive symptoms are seen among refugee youth who develop a sense of belonging at school and in broader communities. Thus, finding positive connections either in school or other places in the community is a key strategy employed by refugee youth to protect their mental health.

Family factors also strongly impact young refugees' mental health. Family support and cohesion, parent mental health, and their family's financial situation can all influence youth mental health outcomes (Hjern et al., 1998; Rousseau et al., 2004; Sujoldzic et al., 2006). This points to the importance of considering youth in the contexts in which they are embedded rather than as isolated individuals.

Overcoming Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Services

Distrust of authority. In designing services for refugee youth and their families, it is essential to consider their unique experiences, along with the more general histories of their cultures (Allan, 2015). Refugees may develop an understandable distrust towards authorities after being victimized by governments and other establishments in their home countries. Sadly, some organizations or individuals who were expected to provide support and safety have perpetuated injustices and violence towards refugees (Ellis, Miller, Baldwin, & Abdi, 2011). This can explain some refugees' skepticism of professionals in a helping role. This distrust can compromise the relationship between refugee youth and the well-intentioned service providers

who, nonetheless, engage with these young people from a position of power that may be triggering to those who have experienced victimization at the hands of authority figures. At minimum, this inevitable power imbalance may increase the time it takes to develop rapport and a sense of safety (Hundley & Lambie, 2007).

Involving refugee families and their communities in the design and delivery of mental health services for refugee youth can help to establish trust (Ellis et al., 2011). Young people may feel more comfortable utilizing a service their families and/or community members contributed to in some way. While this type of collaboration is rare in existing mental health services, things like parent advisory boards and outreach programs that commonly seek input from refugee families could be valuable in the design of effective, appropriate, and trustworthy services.

Stigma of mental health services. The stigma surrounding mental illness and the perception that those who seek counselling are mentally ill may prevent refugee youth and their families from accessing mental health services (Osterman & de Jong, 2007). Some refugees see enduring mental health challenges as less aversive than the ostracization that they expect to result from being branded as mentally ill. When stigma becomes internalized by people who experience mental health challenges, the challenges are often exacerbated (Kira et al., 2014); this only increases the need to find ways of connecting with refugee youth who may be struggling.

One strategy for avoiding stigma-related avoidance of mental health services is to embed them within more acceptable supportive systems (Rousseau & Guzder, 2008). A particularly promising example of this is integrating services into the school system. In this way, mental health support becomes a routine part of the regular school day, as opposed to an external commitment to a mental health organization. Families may be more accepting of professional support in the educational arena than in the setting of a separate agency.

Good Practices in Refugee Youth Mental Health Support

A variety of challenges are common in the provision of mental health support for refugee youth. Difficulties related to adjustment to a new community and culture such as social, linguistic, educational, and vocational challenges may complicate existing mental health challenges and impact the way that service providers design supports for these youth (Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2010). A number of considerations are essential for mental health professionals to keep in mind for their work with refugee youth.

Practitioner factors

Establishing trust and safety within therapeutic relationship. A strong relationship between a client and therapist, or therapeutic alliance, is often thought of as the most important ingredient to effective counselling. For clients from refugee backgrounds, the need for safety is greater and thus this alliance is paramount (Guregard & Seikkula, 2014). The uncertainty around things like legal status and income threatens refugees' sense of safety and increases feelings of insecurity (van der Veer & van Waning, 2004). To establish an effective counselling relationship, counsellors should strongly prioritize building trust and rapport with refugee clients. In particular, practitioners should focus their attention on identifying what refugee children need to feel safe and secure, either at school or during and after a session (Warr, 2010).

Emotional containment is important for any client coming to counselling with experiences of immense trauma, as many refugees do (Van der Veer & Van Waning, 2004). Listening carefully to personal testimonies of adversity and reflecting understanding of these

stories using basic empathy and positive regard helps to build the foundations of a supportive therapeutic alliance (Murray et al., 2010). Establishing an understanding of how a refugee family arrived in counselling, as well as certainty about who is the identified client, can contribute to success in therapy (Codrington, Iqbal, & Segal, 2011).

Maintaining hope is a valuable part of fostering a therapeutic relationship that supports refugee youth to make positive changes in their lives (Codrington et al., 2011). It is important to acknowledge that the extent to which a therapist is hopeful (or not) can reflect the client's sense of hope; a counsellor's own feelings can guide awareness of how the client is feeling. Understanding why a refugee client sought counselling, and why they chose this particular time can inform ways a counsellor can help foster hope and motivation.

Cultural competency. A key factor in addressing the mental health needs of young refugee is the cultural relevance of mental health services. Becoming a culturally competent counsellor requires one to build cultural self-awareness (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007). Both the therapists' and clients' cultures can have an effect on what happens in counselling. Culture includes a constellation of factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, spirituality, socioeconomic status, among others, which all fold together to form attitudes, beliefs, and values (Harris, Thoreson, & Lopez, 2007). Counsellors must first recognize their own culture in order to notice ways in which their values, attitudes, and beliefs impact the counselling process. Strengths or assets in one culture (e.g., individualism) may very well be constructed as deficits in another and, as a result, counsellors need to be mindful of how ethnocentrism influences their conceptualization of strengths (Whalen et al., 2004). As well, taking an ethnocentric view of mental health may prevent awareness of culturally distinct notions of expression and healing that could be beneficial to the client (Miller, Kulkarni, & Kushner, 2006).

If refugees can maintain any connection to their cultural identity, this can be a resource for strength and resilience, not only for individual refugees but also for the family unit as a whole (Pickren, 2014). For young refugees, emotional support can involve exploring spirituality, ethnicity, and family beliefs; this type of emotional support can protect mental wellbeing. On the other hand, abandoning one's cultural identity due to a perception that it is of a lower status may occur as refugees strive to fit in to the dominant culture (Yakushko et al., 2008). Refugee parents often find it challenging to balance socializing their children into the new culture at the same time as maintaining a connection to their pre-immigration culture (Pickren, 2014). This area is potentially valuable for refugee youth to explore in counselling sessions and counsellors may be able to support their efforts to maintain connection to their cultural identity.

The notion of seeking counselling for mental health concerns is not a universally accepted practice across cultures. Stigma towards people who seek counselling services is greater in some groups than others. Additionally, the counselling profession may be seen as untrustworthy or incompatible with certain spiritual or religious beliefs. Ways of defining mental illness differ among countries and, therefore, education about the counselling process is essential so that refugee youth can make an informed decision about whether it is something that is appropriate and valuable for them (Warr, 2010).

Program factors

Recognition of resiliency and strengths. Each refugee youth is unique in the way they experience, endure and respond to trauma and an assessment of their mental health should acknowledge this variability (Yakushko et al., 2008). While high rates of mental health

challenges do exist among refugee youth, it is also true that many of them adjust successfully to their host countries without experiencing mental illness (Eide & Hjern, 2013). Among one group of refugees, almost half never showed symptoms of complicated grief or PTSD, and instead recovered from their grief and traumatic experiences with time (Nickerson et al., 2014). Refugees demonstrate positive adjustment in psychological, social, and economic domains (Coughlan & Owens-Manley, 2006). Even after tremendously difficult experiences, incredible resilience can be (and often is) a normal response.

There has been a recent call for a shift away from focusing on trauma and PTSD diagnosis, in order to make way for a more holistic approach, shedding light on refugees' inherent strengths and wisdom (Murray et al., 2010). Western interventions can focus too much on mental health diagnoses, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), overpathologize and disempower refugees, and take the place of more hope-focused and culturally appropriate interventions. Instead of using models of pathology during counselling, it can be helpful to employ strengths-based practices in order to support positive growth and change (Papadopoulos, 2007). In particular, it could be extremely valuable to focus on personal strengths and leadership skills, as well as community leaders, and Indigenous wisdom (Murray et al., 2010). Momentum for positive growth and change can be found in the existing hope and optimism that many refugees display after resettlement (Yakushko et al., 2008).

Many who encounter tremendous hardship, including trauma, find that growth or positive change follows these challenges. This has been labelled *Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)*, or "the experience of individuals whose development, at least in some areas, has surpassed what was present before the struggle with crises occurred." (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p.4).

This concept of positive change in the aftermath of trauma has particular relevance for young refugees. The majority of one group of refugees reported appreciating life more, positive spiritual change, and greater personal strength after their migration. Reports of PTG are particularly common among refugees who have adequate social support (Kroo, 2011). It is important to note that the concept of PTG is not meant to suggest that refugees better off as a result of extreme challenges they faced, but rather, that many find positive aspects in the changes they have experienced. Remaining curious about positive growth experiences that refugee clients may have noticed can be one way counsellors encourage youths' self-identification of strengths they possess or are developing.

Extend counselling services to family unit. Family relationships are put under a lot of pressure by trauma and by stresses associated with resettlement. Young people commonly experience normal challenges in the adolescent and teenage years, which may be exacerbated by hardships; to complicate matters, the stress of migration can impact the ability to parent effectively (Codrington et al., 2011). Due to refugee families' particular situations, offering counselling to whole families can be more beneficial than focusing on a single youth client. Inviting parents and siblings into a few counselling sessions can benefit refugee youth suffering from mental health challenges. Even in the absence of psychopathology, many young refugees benefit from attending counselling sessions with their families (Bjorn, Boden, Sydsjo, & Gustafsson, 2013).

Migration forces refugee youth to leave behind aspects of culture and important support systems they relied on when times were challenging. In spite of such losses, refugee youth and families continue to demonstrate their ability to adapt and confront new challenges (Voulgaridou, Papadoupoulos, & Tomaras, 2006). Furthermore, without their usual external supports, the family unit takes on an even greater level of importance. Through family

counselling, refugees can foster and build upon strengths, solidifying the nuclear family as a reliable support (Hjern & Jeppson, 2005). When possible, counsellors should attempt to arrange sessions with the entire family present so that they can work collectively to pinpoint strengths and resources within the family structure (Bjorn et al., 2013).

Linguistic and cultural differences. The linguistic differences between refugees and those in their host countries creates considerable challenges for those who need to access mental health support. Also, while refugee youth often pick up a new language relatively quickly, their parents, whose consent is often required for counselling services, may acquire language more slowly. To best serve refugee youth, mental health services would ideally be offered in their native language. However, it is rarely possible to provide such services and the ever-changing diverse demographic of refugees is making it increasingly difficult for service providers to keep up (Ellis et al., 2011).

Ellis and colleagues (2011) point out that culturally appropriate counselling services for refugee youth tend to be lacking. Multicultural competency in mental health services requires practitioners to adopt a perspective that respects and acknowledges a variety of worldviews. This includes knowing about socio-political situations from which refugee youth have fled, such as discrimination and other oppressions. Mental health practitioners can research clients' cultural backgrounds and can also find out what their clients perceive as strengths and positive dimensions within their cultural groups; this can include spirituality, storytelling, or language abilities (Grothaus, McAuliffe, & Craigen, 2012). Mental health services that keep refugees' specific cultures in mind are more effective (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006).

Interpreters or translators address the need for both linguistic and cultural relevance in mental health services (Nadeau & Measham, 2005). While this helps to facilitate communication, it can have disadvantages for perception of the therapeutic relationship as a safe place. It should never be assumed that an interpreter would provide complete understanding of a refugee's culture, given the wide diversity within cultural groups (Nadeau & Measham, 2005). What is arguably more important than translation services is the inclusion of community voices and cultural experts in service planning and provision (Ellis et al., 2011). By incorporating these knowledge keepers, the appropriateness and relevance of mental health service provision will be improved.

Prioritization of resettlement needs. Other resettlement stressors, often perceived as more urgent and pressing than mental health concerns, can be a barrier to refugee youth being able to access mental health services. When refugees do seek counselling services, they may be more concerned with other needs, such as food and shelter, rather than mental health issues (Fazel et al., 2012). This notion reflects Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which suggests that basic level needs (e.g., safety, shelter, and food) must be fulfilled before higher level needs can be addressed (Yule, 2002). Broadening the scope of mental health services to include helping refugees meet their basic needs or referring them to other resources that are better able to address these needs could solve this problem. An assessment of basic could be built into the initial mental health assessment (Yule, 2002) and practitioners can take on an advocacy role to promote coordination between the various services accessed by refugee youth (Ellis et al., 2011).

Another strategy to address basic resettlement needs is to focus primarily on fostering strength and capacity, as opposed to in-depth processing of pre-migration or migration negative experiences (Murray et al., 2010). This is not intended to discount the impact of pre-settlement experiences on refugees' day-to-day lives, however, young refugees' needs for support in establishing themselves in their host country can be more pressing than healing from challenges

faced along the journey. For example, young refugees may prioritize social connection and employability during initial stages of resettlement (Codrington et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Refugee youth arrive in urban areas with experiences and histories of trauma, loss, uncertainty, and upheaval. Although struggling with mental health issues is a normal reaction to the pre-migration context and difficult migration journeys many of these youth experience, they also bring considerable resiliency and strengths to their new homes. Refugee youth' positive attributes, capacities, and possibilities are assets that counsellors and other mental health service providers have the opportunity to highlight. While mental health support may be difficult to access behind systemic barriers, services can be designed and delivered in a way that minimizes the impact of these barriers. Refugee youths' suffering and adversity should be acknowledged; however, mental health service providers are encouraged to also be curious about their aspirations, their hopes, and their dreams for the future in their new country.

Sports

Sport has been widely identified as a unifying force that connects people from diverse backgrounds, a reality made possible by its flexibility and global use as a common language (Travill et al., 2014). Programs based in sport provide opportunities for community integration, personal growth, and overall wellbeing. In youth affected by displacement, sport has been noted as having the capacity to improve multiple factors related to personal wellness and self-esteem profiles. Moreover, engagement in sports has been directly credited as an effective ingredient in the restoration of resiliency and normalcy in times of upheaval (Coalter, 2010).

Benefits

Sports oriented programs offer a wide range physical, social and emotional benefits. Many refugee youth come from cultures and environments where physical activity is part of their daily lives; this is not always the case in their new communities where physical activity may require a conscious effort (Rotich, 2014a). Beyond health benefits, participation in sport and recreation opportunities has a wide range of social and emotional benefits for refugee youth, including improving self-expression, supporting identity development, building trust, learning life skills, accessing other resources, serving as a gateway to other social activities, heightening cross-cultural understanding, and fostering social connections (Oliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2015). One study demonstrated that sporting activities fostered feelings of belonging and acceptance among refugee youth (Jeanes et al., 2014). Social support from peers is a key factor in wellbeing; sport and recreation participation helps refugee youth to build social connections with peers and adults (Ha & Lyras, 2013).

Youth are eager to participate in sports based initiatives. In a study examining the relationship between place-making and wellbeing, sport environments, more than any other, were depicted as havens of wellbeing by participants (Sampson & Gifford, 2010). Using an Enhanced Critical Incident Technique as part of an in-depth analysis of resiliency, Jafari (2015), found that the most often cited adjustment tool identified by refugee youth was sport involvement. Among these participants, the value of sport as a tool for resiliency was seen to stem from its function as an integrative experience, as a place to escape from stress, and as domain for language acquisition.

Fostering Inclusion

Inclusion needs to be a primary goal for refugee sport and recreation that is effective. Program design practices should revolve around aiding youth to overcome the barriers of participation; these can be environmental (neighborhood or transportation issues), socio-cultural (gender expectations or valuing physical activity) or socio-demographic (lack of time or financial means) (Rotich, 2014a). Good practices that support inclusion and help refugee youth to overcome these challenges include: addressing language and transportation barriers, providing financial support, having bi-cultural leaders/coaches/program workers, communicating with parents and families, mentoring, teaching refugee youth the rules of new sports, and considering appropriate cultural norms (lack of aggression, foul language, drinking) (Oliff, 2008).

There is debate regarding the impact of having teams, or clubs or activities for people of a single ethnic background rather than those composed of youth from diverse backgrounds. Some research has found that having youth of diverse backgrounds fosters cross-cultural awareness and positive relationships between refugee youth and their non-refugee peers (Oliff, 2008). Other research has found that refugee youth feel more comfortable and willing to

participate when they are among peers from a similar background (Jeanes et al., 2014). A similar debate focuses on gender inclusiveness. Though gender diversity in participants may provide a fertile environment for integration, it may also challenge the cultural realities of young women and their families. Both approaches have been shown to provide opportunities for exploration, challenge, and affirmation of cultural identities (Palmer, 2009; Pizzolati & Sterchele, 2016). Regardless of cultural, national, or gender makeup, it is imperative that leaders and youth ensure that participation and competition is friendly and healthy (Jeanes et al., 2014); rules against discrimination must be enforced. The potential for sport to act as a catalyst for inclusion and development is shared by refugee youth, program leaders, host country peers, and the broader community (Forde et al., 2015).

Sport programs are sometimes criticized for not structuring curriculum in a manner that promotes diversity of learning experiences (Spaaij, 2015). Though sport by itself can provide an environment for social, and emotional learning, programs are increasingly integrating leadership, cultural, social justice, and language dimensions into their curricula (Campbell et al., 2015; OCASI, 2006, OCIN, 2011; Whitley & Gould, 2011). One program combined soccer training with language skills instruction (Dwyer & McClosky, 2013). This succeeded not only in preventing loss of language skills over school holidays, but also resulted in increased interest and focus in language studies among the participating youth. Whitley and Gould (2011) analyzed a sports based initiative (The Refugee Sport Club [RSC]) that used the Personal-Social Responsibility (PSR) Model (Hellison, 2011) in its framework. The PSR program was designed to develop self-control, respect of others, empathy, determination, perseverance, self-direction, and volunteerism in a way that fostered transferable life skills. Another large-scale study examined the outcomes of sports programs with young men, finding that participation was associated with increased pro-social behaviours such as empathy and helpfulness towards others as well as fewer behavioural problems with peers (Nathan et al., 2013).

Participation

Sports programs for refugee youth should also seek to promote connections and appropriate program design through community, family, and participant discourse. Limited input from the youth themselves and a lack of family involvement have been recognized as major gaps in a number of sports initiatives (Jafari, 2015; Oliff, 2008). Programs should be constructed with time allotted for peer, family, and participant-coach observations and feedback (OCASI, 2006). By stimulating communication among the different parties involved, programs can be better molded to fit the diversity of the community at large. Youth have the capacity to make activity decisions, design sports projects, and determine some organizational procedures (Campbell et al., 2015; OCASI, 2006); including them in planning and implementation promotes responsibility and engagement.

Limitations of Sport

The claim of sport as a mechanism for good settlement has been contested as a simplistic and overly optimistic view of what in reality is a multiform and complex narrative (Spaaij, 2015; Oliff, 2008). Youth engaged in sports are at the same time engaged in a multi-layered and dynamic transition that affects cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual levels (Campbell et al., 2015; Hester, 2015; OCIN, 2011; Spaaij, 2013). It is unrealistic to imagine a single activity or program that could effectively address this diversity of personal and cultural needs and challenges. Additionally, critics have attributed to sport a capacity to differentiate, exclude, and

marginalize (Oliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2015). Leaders need to monitor for such exclusionary practices, model inclusion, and direct youth energy along different paths (Spaaij, 2013).

Conclusion

       Even successful sports programs will not be able to resolve all issues and may not be a way to address "broad social challenges" (Evers, 2010, p. 61). The main strengths of successful sports based initiatives are the focus on connections forged among participants, the experience of a stable social network, and an increase in youth awareness of their own agency and potential (Evers, 2010). The social aspect seems to be one of the most compelling reasons for youth to pursue physical recreation programs; they often come to think of their sports team as a "second family" (Spaaij, 2015, p. 310). Though sports based initiatives are just part of the holistic interventions needed to best aid in youth refugee transition, they have the potential to tap into very sensitive areas of the youth experience, and as a result, have the possibility to serve as highly impactful environments.

Arts

Social support is vital to the success and wellbeing of refugees of all ages and backgrounds, a role for which arts based programs and activities are ideally suited. Under the umbrella of arts based initiatives lie diverse modalities (painting, drawing, dance, singing, photography, digital media), used for diverse purposes (therapeutic, preventative, social, educational, community planning, research), in diverse contexts (schools, youth spaces, community centres, religious organizations, specialized venues), and with diverse levels of youth engagement (youth led, youth centred, professionally facilitated, researcher led, adult mentored). Thus, arts activities provide important opportunities for applying many of the key points relating to effective refugee youth resettlement identified throughout this paper: respect for the diversity of refugee youth experiences, inclusive approach, emphasis on youth agency, recognition of existing interests and skills, promotion of resiliency, provision of safe spaces for young refugee women and girls, and opportunities to express and share cultural identity. In addition, many arts based activities require minimal language skills -- this makes them particularly well suited for newcomers. Given these positive aspects, it is not surprising, then, that refugee youth are eager to intersect with existing and new arts initiatives in their resettlement communities.

After a discussion of some key considerations for the design and delivery of expressive programs, this section focuses on two arts practice areas, visual and performative, to illustrate the potential range and use of these methods with refugee youth. Next comes a discussion of the uses of arts based methods in research with refugee youth. Finally, there is a caution related to the challenges of assessing the outcomes and impacts of arts based programs.

Key Considerations for Design and Delivery

Arts programs are complex and situated human experiences (Ingleby, 2005). There is an impressive array of studies that employ arts based methods and evaluate arts initiatives with refugee youth. For example, there are studies focused on psychosocial factors, (Kowitt, 2016), trauma recovery (Ingleby, 2005), and health and wellbeing (Gifford, 2007). Arts based methods have been used in studies exploring youth transitions from past to present, comparison of country of origin to resettled country, pre-flight household and family composition, current home circumstances, and differences in education and experiences. Arts based modalities represent non-stigmatizing ways of working with adolescents on sensitive topics (Rousseau, 2007). The plethora of arts based modalities and the challenge of assessing of the impact of these initiatives on refugee youth and host communities, however, makes identifying effective practices challenging.

Three concepts related to outcomes can help focus reflection by service providers, policy makers, and young refugees themselves as they design and employ arts based methods: resiliency, engagement, and acculturation. The first of these, resiliency, helps to emphasize the capacity that youth have to move beyond the difficult experiences that they may have encountered during their resettlement, and the strength and abilities that they bring with them (Emert, 2014). The second concept, engagement, encourages recognition of the diverse ways in which programs seek to connect with youth and motivate them to participate (Correa-Velez et al., 2010). Finally, acculturation describes the process of orienting and welcoming youth into their new communities (Rich et al., 2015; Ha & Lyras, 2013). Extracurricular programs are vital aspects in the process of respectful acculturation of youth into their new culture, while also recognizing the need for positive incorporation of youth's home culture into their new identity. Some of the potential positive factors resulting from creative arts activities include: identifying

and sharing feelings, thoughts, and experiences (including nonverbally), appreciating diversity, fostering identity, learning social skills, encouraging autonomy, having fun, and building cultural connections (Ingleby, 2005).

Art and creative programs encompass multiple and flexible formats for artistic and performative expression. Over several studies, Rousseau and colleagues have identified four elements for creating successful expressive programs for all ages: 1) ensuring that activities and workshops are seen as safe spaces, 2) acknowledging, appreciating and encouraging diversity, 3) establishing continuity, and 4) allowing space for stories of adversity to be re-framed into individual and shared strengths, where possible and appropriate (Rousseau et al., 2004; 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2007). Activities can be tailored to a specific group of youth, considering their cultural backgrounds or chronological ages, for example (Rousseau et al., 2005c), or they can involve groups with mixed characteristics.

Arts programs that use creativity and expression to focus on emotion do so in a variety of ways; they are sometimes used as prevention tools and other times as forms of therapy. Therapeutically oriented workshops and programs can be beneficial as a safe way for youth to express and address current and past challenges (Quinlan et al., 2015). Confronting emotional issues through an expressive workshop format has demonstrated increased self-esteem and decreased emotional and behavioural symptoms for refugee youth in school (Rousseau et al., 2005a; Quinlan et al., 2015). However, there are risks of distress and re-traumatization involved when refugees are asked to recall and express difficult and potentially traumatic experiences; appropriate training and access to professional help are essential (New South Whales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors [NSW STARTT], 2004). It is also advisable to have an interpreter or older family member available to assist if youth are distressed.

Regardless of the creative form, an arts based program can be designed as a transitional space. This allows youth to "build bridges between the past and the present, their culture of origin and the host society, home and school, and their internal and external worlds" (Rousseau et al., 2005c, p. 77). Creative expression formats may also have the benefit of allowing communication to take place even when language barriers exist, using other modes of expression such as movement, images, or music that do not require language fluency (Rousseau et al., 2005b, p.15).

It is necessary for instructors and leaders to be prepared to address the potential challenges and difficult topics that may emerge in expressive arts contexts. This means that they must understand the complex backgrounds and conditions of participants; encourage and foster a positive sense of community despite differences; understand and gain exposure, where possible, to the difficulties and hardships the participants may have faced; acknowledge, problematize and address inaccuracies and omissions of western knowledge and power imbalances; and, name the challenges that the youth are facing in their daily lives (Wellman & Bey, 2015).

Visual and Artistic Practices

Artistic workshops allow refugee youth to express themselves in ways that reach beyond the limits of verbal skills. Visual modalities such as photography and painting provide opportunities and spaces for public voice of marginalized populations (McBrien, 2012). Photography activities catalyze communication and allow refugee youth to reflect, share and express life changes and aspirations. Youth can use their own experiences or aspects of their traditional culture; one program for youth asked them to depict traditional stories or myths from

their own culture (Rousseau et al., 2005c, p. 78). This encouraged dialogue and discussion among youth and their parents about positive aspects of their culture. Some projects have the creation of a product or object as the central goal, for example, the creation of a hope quilt in which each youth creates a square telling their own hope story (Yohani, 2008) or the creation of a mural incorporating the migration stories of refugee youth from diverse backgrounds (Barraket, 2005). These projects foster dialogue with other youth from refugee backgrounds, as well as potentially with non-refugee youth and with the wider community through exhibitions of their work in public spaces (Yohani, 2008).

Digital storytelling is an avenue through which youth can share their experiences with a wider audience while also improving language and technology skills. These techniques were used with a large group of young refugee men during a summer program with dual goals of improving literacy and engagement, during which youth produced film representations of autobiographical poems (Emert, 2013). Throughout a five-week program there were concrete gains, not only in computer and English-language skills, but also in collaboration, resilience, and confidence. A similar program with young refugee women focused on English-language skills through the creation of autobiographical films (Emert, 2014). The participants saw similar gains in language and technology skills, as well as in social skills. A further element illustrated by this project was the critical role of female undergraduate interns in working with the refugees. Their support was essential because the program was led by a male professor. Gender dynamics should be considered when designing programs for refugee youth, including the possible identification of woman-only spaces (Fresh Voices Youth Advisory Team, 2013); the gender composition of participants and leaders can impact the inclusivity of any program (Emert, 2014).

In another example, youth involved in arts based programs early upon arrival and while still living in precarious and temporary accommodation valued the attention of program volunteers at this time of transition (Ingleby, 2005). They benefited from both the social contact and the opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

Youth-led visual arts projects can provide invaluable opportunities for refugee youth to contribute policy and practice suggestions. In one example, refugee youth made a video to document the challenges and resiliency experienced through their resettlement education system (Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Association, 2014). In another example, youth created a digital media storytelling project to document valued support systems as well as systemic gaps in support for newcomer youth (Canadian Council for Refugees' Youth Network, 2015).

Arts Performance

Artistic performance can be a way for youth to maintain connection to homelands and traditions: traditional songs are a good example (McMahon, 2013). Traditional music is associated with positive identity development in immigrants as well as links to a sense of collective identity and cohesion with family members (Karlsen, 2013). Music helps connect people from diverse cultural backgrounds through shared experience. The unique musical traditions of each culture provide an avenue to share "differing beliefs and hopes in a safe and accepting environment" (Baker & Jones, 2006, p. 251). As with other aspects of culture, it is important not to assume that youth will wish to share their traditional music. It is vital to allow individuals to express their own musical preferences and the way that these preferences reflect their identities (Karlsen, 2013). When used with youth in a therapeutic context, music has been shown to "provide opportunities to channel frustration, anger and aggression into experiences of creativity and mastery" (Baker & Jones, 2006, p. 251).

Theatrical performance may focus more exclusively on youth experiences and allow them to evaluate or express their experiences with the distance that comes from representing their lives through stories that are not directly personal (Rousseau et al., 2005b). At the same time, theatre provides a ritual framework and sense of playfulness that can prevent youth from being overwhelmed by difficult and personal subject matter (Rousseau et al., 2005b, p. 15). Playback theatre workshops are a form of improvisation that aims to transform participants' difficult stories into an empowering format. Used successfully with older youth (Rousseau et al., 2005b; Rousseau et al., 2005c; Rousseau et al., 2007), it can foster healing from traumatic experiences. Stories and experiences shared in these contexts have been seen to create bonds among program participants, resulting in a strong peer support network (Rousseau et al., 2005b).

Arts Based Research

The experience of fleeing persecution and subsequent adjustment experiences in their resettled communities complicate research investigations with this population. Establishing the levels of trust necessary between researchers and refugee youth is a particular challenge. Arts based methods are found in multiple disciplines and may facilitate sharing of experiences and views that, in turn, can inform practices and policies relating to effective refugee resettlement and community development priorities. Arts based research methods employed within participatory or community engaged research initiatives can include youth participation in the analysis of data (despite varying literacy and language issues) -- increasing feelings of agency in research, as well as helping youth make sense of their experiences and emphasize their strengths (Davy et al., 2014).

Photovoice is often used as a community based and youth engaged research method; it involves asking youth to take photos depicting a specific theme or idea followed by analysis of the photos and sharing of the images (McBrien & Day, 2012). One such photovoice project focused on the idea of hope; it provided a venue to demonstrate what the youth saw as inherently hopeful in the broader world and also what made them hopeful in their own lives (Yohani, 2008). Photovoice has been used to examine barriers to participation in physical activity among African refugees, an example of how this methodology can help identify possible solutions to concrete problems (Rotich, 2014b).

Assessing arts based programs

Though the benefits and limits of specific programs are described in the literature, there has also been criticism of such attempts to measure the effectiveness of arts programs (Rowe et al., 2016). The expressive, and often very personal, approaches found in arts and creativity based programs are challenging to assess. It is difficult to know how specific programs are affecting participants when the outcomes, though perhaps extremely significant for the individual, are not always externally observable, and when the assessment tools may not be flexible enough to evaluate intangible and emotional results. Nevertheless, efforts at evaluating arts based programs have been made, including scholarly reviews of art therapy programs, for example. Overall results suggest that they can help youth successfully address issues related to trauma and loss (Kowitt, 2016).

Conclusion

The benefits of arts activities used with refugee youth lies in their accessibility, their ability to circumvent language and cultural barriers, their expressive potential, their translatability to social media formats, and perhaps importantly, the lack of such opportunities in the lives of many refugee youth prior to resettlement. These programs engage young refugees in multiple ways, focusing on youth from a single culture or a variety of cultures, providing spaces and opportunities that allow youth to share their own culture with others in their communities, or developing relationships with adults and providing advocacy opportunities for refugee youth (Easter & Refki, 2004).

The examples discussed in this section represent only a starting point for considering successful programs with refugee youth. It is important to address common access barriers, including environmental, socio-cultural and socio-demographic challenges. It is particularly important to remember that cultural gender expectations are barriers that are often not addressed in western contexts but can dramatically influence young refugee women's ability to participate in programs. Finally, for the wellbeing of participants, program leaders need to be appropriately prepared and trained to work in these powerful expressive contexts.

Further research on arts based initiatives is needed on what constitutes good practices, for whom, and in what contexts. A vital area of future research will be the intersection of arts based initiatives and social media. There are other possible program types which fall outside of the specific examples considered here that could prove equally empowering for youth, such as volunteer opportunities (Carlton, 2015).

The transformative potential of arts approaches makes them valuable, together with their embrace of youth strength and resiliency, their focus on social inclusion and strong peer support networks, and their respect for the cultural traditions of diverse youth refugee participants.

Summary and Concluding Thoughts

This paper reviewed issues and good practices relating to effective refugee youth resettlement. Non-governmental organizations and public institutions that intersect with youth early in the resettlement process have the potential to contribute greatly to the inclusion and wellbeing of these youth.

> *Inclusion is not accomplished by States working in isolation. There should be the broad engagement of a wide range of actors to include refugees and migrants. Local civil society organizations, faith communities, the private sector, the media, national human rights institutions and refugees' and migrants' associations should be encouraged to play more active roles (United Nations General Assembly, 2016, p. 16).*

Key considerations identified throughout this paper will strengthen the practices of youth sector actors embedded in larger systems such as education, health, and recreation. These include recognition of the unique history, circumstances and capacities of refugee youth coupled with a deliberate focus on youth agency. Attention to gender is vital across contexts. Participation by refugee youth in the design of programs intended to serve them supports youth development. Youth participation in the policy development processes seems particularly promising. Cultural identity has been shown time and again to contribute to refugee youth wellbeing.

The literature confirms that there are specific skills and knowledge that contribute to better responses to refugee youth. Careful consideration of the practices described in this paper in concert with attention to context will yield more effective resettlement support. A common starting place involves establishing trust with refugee youth and families and this takes time; workers require patience and consistency to develop relationships of support.

Limitations. Research with youth is complicated by developmental tasks, challenges obtaining consent, and interdisciplinarity. Investigations with refugee youth populations are further complicated by the effects of fleeing persecution, some reluctance to trust researchers early during the resettlement process in light of ambiguous experiences with authorities pre-flight, and overwhelming adjustment tasks. Due to their experiences of fleeing persecution, refugee youth require separate consideration from general immigrant and newcomer youth, yet research studies often group these populations. In this paper, research results, outcomes and descriptions related to refugees have been separated from those for immigrant and other newcomer youth where possible.

Summary

Several highlights of good practices identified in this paper are summarized below.

Language. Effective language programming for refugee youth not only teaches vocabulary and grammatical competence, but also addresses their complex linguistic needs such as dealing with official paperwork (visas, citizenship). For youth, proficiency in the language of their host community also includes the ability to learn other material in the target language, navigate complex institutional structures, choose a career path, become culturally aware of their new surroundings, and develop relationships in their new community. Encouraging the maintenance

of a first language is culturally empowering for refugee youth who are navigating complex identities.

Gender. Local refugee serving organizations in settlement countries need to be keenly attuned to the specific educational, cultural and linguistic needs of the young women they serve. Initiatives run for and by women and catering to the specific needs of refugee women and mothers of all ages combat the invisibility that some feel within larger settlement agencies. Due to family responsibilities, young women and girls spend more indoor time and consequently have less interaction in the community. Programs for refugee girls that provide opportunities for social connection during school hours would be of benefit. Providing transportation to service organizations as well as childcare to enable young women who are mothers to attend settlement programming increases accessibility and thus the effectiveness of settlement support. Young refugee women need settlement workers to be advocates for equitable policies within their agencies and local communities; policy advocacy is also needed at national and international levels.

Housing. Providing tenant rights information and access to tenant advocates is seen as helpful. Co-locating other settlement services and resources within housing projects is also beneficial. The literature confirms the practice of extending the length of stay in transitional housing for refugee mothers. Finally, extending housing support beyond first obtaining housing is a key factor in housing sustainability.

Employment. The overall integration and long term employment outcomes of refugee youth ar greatly impacted by the support they receive during their first years of resettlement. An integrated work-first/life-first approach to employment helps youth satisfy immediate necessities, such as housing, food security, and healthcare, while improving access to career training and personal development opportunities.

Mental Health. Importantly, the extent to which refugees perceive themselves as accepted or discriminated against within host countries is related to mental wellbeing. Refugee youth find positive connections either in school or community where they feel accepted. Researchers and counsellors alike are calling for a shift away from solely focusing on experiences and symptoms of trauma and diagnosis of PTSD, and more toward a holistic approach that highlights the inherent strengths and wisdom of refugee youth. Embedding refugee mental health information and resources within other support systems (such as schools or housing projects) can reduce barriers to access due to stigma.

Sports. Sport has also been linked to increased resiliency and can help to restore normalcy in youths' lives. Social support from peers is a key factor in wellbeing; sport and recreation participation has been identified as helpful for refugee youth seeking to build social connections. A number of practices can help promote inclusiveness in sport for young refugees, including specific strategies such as addressing language and transportation barriers, providing financial support, having bi-cultural leaders/coaches/program workers, communicating with parents and families, mentoring, and considering cultural norms.

Arts. The benefits of arts activities used with refugee youth lies in their accessibility, their ability to circumvent language and cultural barriers, their expressive potential, and their translatability to social media. Good practices include: creating safe spaces, acknowledging diversity, addressing barriers to access (transportation, financial), including diverse modalities, and aiming for multiple levels of youth engagement.

In conclusion, more research is needed in all areas and aspects that touch the lives of young refugees. The ever-growing numbers and the ongoing urgency to implement good solutions demand a continued emphasis on documenting effective strategies and practices. One suggestion is research to examine the explosion of digital tools in the lives of refugee youth. Another fruitful investigation would focus on supports for unaccompanied refugee youth.

Finally, veritable inclusion rests on refugee youth being safe and valued, supported to contribute to their host communities, and being recognized for their unique perspectives and competencies. Sharing good practices will strengthen the actions of many around the world who are welcoming these unprecedented numbers of refugee youth.

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