PANEL AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY
JULY 15, 2015

Shelly Callahan, Executive Director at MVRCR
The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

- Incorporated in 1981
- Has resettled almost 15,000 refugees to Utica.
- Assists refugees, immigrants and those with limited English language proficiency throughout the integration process.
- Provides services to assist in building community with many cultures.

www.mvrcr.org
The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

- Reception and Placement
- **Employment Services**
  - Immigration and Citizen
  - Enhanced Cultural Orientation for New Comers (Health, Safety, etc.)
  - Volunteer Program – featuring the Creativity Inclusion Project
  - Traffic Safety Program
    - Child Safety Seat Training and Distribution
    - Permit Test Preparation and Driving Simulators
  - English for Speakers of Other Language classes – A partnership w/ the Utica City School District
  - Office for New Americans Opportunity Center
    - Citizenship Classes
    - Small Business Development Classes in partnership with SUNY IT
    - New Comers Program for students age 18 to 21 with limited English proficiency
    - Computer Classes
  - Gear Up Program Parent Outreach in partnership with Mohawk Valley Community College
  - Community Gardens (Unity Gardens) – A Partnership with the Oneida County Health Department
  - Unspoken – annual human rights film festival and conference
  - Compass Interpreters
    - Interpretation, Translation, Training, Consulting
The foreign-born residents of Utica constitute 18.3% of the city's total population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Foreign Born Persons percent, 2006-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utica</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binghamton</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A language other than English is spoken in 27.2% of households in Utica.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Language Other than English Spoken at Home 2006-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utica</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binghamton</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2013 US Census

Source: quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states
Who are Refugees?

As defined by Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention:

“a person owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”
US Resettlement Process

Presidential Determination
2015

Africa ................. 17,000
East Asia ............ 13,000
Europe and Central Asia ..... 1,000
Latin America/Caribbean .......... 4,000
Near East/ South Asia ..... 33,000
Unallocated ........ 2,000

Total.................... 70,000

10 National Voluntary Agencies

10 National Voluntary Agencies

400 Affiliates

Bureau of Population, Refugee, and Migration

US Customs and Immigration Services

Office of Refugee Resettlement
Our New Neighbors

An introduction to some of the foreign born communities in Utica
Arabic Speaking Population

Iraqi

Sudanese

South Sudanese
Sudanese  
(Sudan & South Sudan)

Summary: Multiple refugee groups from ongoing conflicts; a 50-year-long civil war (Lost Boys), conflict and ethnic cleansing in Darfur. Fighting continues between North and South over disputed regions.

Camps: Civil War - urban Refugees in Cairo, Egypt and other parts of Africa, Camps in Kenya (Lost Boys), Darfur Conflict – Chad, internally displaced in Sudan and South Sudan, laborers in Urban settings during recent conflicts (Libya)

U.S. Resettlement: 1994 – Present, 377 total

Group Orientation: Collectivist

Time Orientation: Multiple time oriented (polychronic), agrarian life style

Communication Style: Indirect, story telling traditions

Primary Language(s): Arabic, Juba Arabic (Spoken in Southern Sudan), Masalit (spoken by several Refugees in Utica from the Darfur region), Fur, Dinka

Faith Traditions: Muslim, Christian, some Animists
Summary: Refugees from two different conflicts (Persian Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom). Many Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) have been granted to interpreters and other Iraqis who worked for the U.S. military and coalition forces. Palestinians who were living as refugees in Iraq were displaced by the 2003 conflict there. As of 2014 additional people are being displaced due to ISIS.

Camps: Urban Refugees in Jordan, Syria, and other neighboring countries during 2003 Conflict. Many Middle Eastern States do not formally recognized the 1951 Refugee Convention, but offer asylum based on “brotherhood.“

U.S. Resettlement (Utica): Early 1990’s – Present, 385 total, largest number resettled in 2010 (93 individuals)

Group Orientation: Trend toward collectivist

Time Orientation: Trend toward multiple time orientation (polychronic), can depend on context (social vs. work)

Communication Style: Trend direct, comfortable expressing their opinion, common for stories from the Qu’ran used as metaphor or allegory to explain a point

Primary Language(s): Arabic (Standard), Other Languages: Kurdish

Faith Traditions: Muslim (mix of Sunni and Shia), Christian
Spanish Speaking Population

Puerto Ricans

Dominicans
**Puerto Rican**

**Summary:** U.S. Citizens with a tradition of transnationalism and circular migration, particularly between NYC & Puerto Rico. “Great Migration” occurred in the 1950’s and 1960’s. In the last decade the migration has again been on the rise. Most migration occurs for economic reasons.

**Settlement in Utica:** 10.5% of the population is Hispanic/Latino (2010 U.S. Census), 6.8% were considered Puerto Rican (2010 U.S. Census) Some may have moved to Utica after living in NYC.

**Group Orientation:** Trend toward collectivist, but culturally influenced by U.S. experience

**Time Orientation:** Multiple Time Orientation (polychronic), less strict but also culturally influenced by U.S. experience

**Communication Style:** Direct

**Primary Language(s):** Spanish

**Faith traditions:** majority Catholic
Dominican

Summary: Tradition of transnationalism and circular migration, particularly between NYC & the Dominican Republic. Dictatorship followed by an economic crisis resulted in large migration in the 1960’s. As of 2012 there were almost a million Dominicans in the U.S. They are the 5th largest Hispanic population. Many are here as LPR’s or legal permanent residents or have become naturalized.

Settlement in Utica: 10.5% of the population is Hispanic/Latino (2010 U.S. Census), 3.2% were considered “other Latino” (2010 U.S. Census)- this is where the Dominican population falls. Since 2010 one can anecdotally notice a rise in the Dominican community based on business ownership. Many have moved from NYC.

Group Orientation: Trend toward collectivist, but culturally influenced by U.S. experience

Time Orientation: Multiple Time Orientation (polychronic), less strict but also culturally influenced by U.S. experience

Communication Style: Direct

Primary Language(s): Spanish

Faith traditions: Catholic
Resettled Ethnic Groups

Karen
Burmese
Rohingya
Karenni
Chin
Mon
Summary: Conflict from military junta in Burma for over 40 years; ethnic cleansing program of four cuts killed 2 million plus and displaced an equal or greater number, multiple people denied access to services and education. Multiple uprisings for democracy, 1988 (88 generation), 2007 Saffron Revolution, religious minorities harassed.

Camps: Nine camps in Thailand, some urban Refugees in Malaysia, unofficial camps in Bangladesh (Rohingya),

U.S. Resettlement (Utica): 1997-Present, 3,316 (total arrivals from Burma as of December 2014), 2nd largest population ever resettled (this figure does not include secondary migration)

Group Orientation: Collectivist (group focused)

Time Orientation: Multiple Time Orientation (polychronic), less strict but not as loose as Karen, Rohingya also tend to be less strict about time

Communication Style: Indirect (context of who and what you are talking about is the most important. Questions may be answered using stories, or by diverting to a different topic if they do not want to discuss the question. Use “context clues”)

Primary Language (s): Burmese
Other Languages Spoken: S’gaw Karen, Rohingya, Thai, Pwo Karen, Karenni, Arkanese

Faith Traditions: Buddhist (Theravada),
Muslim (Rohingya Ethnic Group – not recognized as citizens)
small number of Christians
Summary: Conflict with military junta in Burma for over 40 years; ethnic cleansing program killed 2 million+ and displaced an equal or greater number. Many refugees have spent their entire lives (even those as old as 25) in camps or have been transient along the Thai-Burma border and Karen State.

Camps: Nine refugee camps in Thailand, Urban refugees in Malaysia

U.S. Resettlement (Utica): 1997-Present, 3,316 (total arrivals from Burma as of December 2014), 2nd largest population ever resettled (this figure does not include secondary migration)

Group Orientation: Collectivist (group focused)

Time Orientation: Multiple Time Orientation (polychronic), less strict, meeting times may be plus or minus 30 minutes to an hour

Communication Style: Indirect (context of who and what you are talking about is the most important. Questions may be answered using stories, or by diverting to a different topic if they do not want to discuss the question. Use “context clues”)

Primary Language(s): S’Gaw Karen, Burmese, Other Languages Spoken: Thai, Pwo Karen, Karenni, Arkanese

Faith traditions: Christian (Baptist, 7th Day Adventist), Buddhist, Animist
Russia
(Former Soviet Union)

Summary: Ongoing persecution due to religious preferences, political refugees prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, ongoing political repression, ethnic persecution since Soviet era, family reunification.

Camps: Specific camps did not exist for this population, most sought asylum or refugee status through embassies or consulates.

U.S. Resettlement (Utica): 1980’s – Present, ~2427 (figure is based on arrivals from the former Soviet Union)

Group Orientation: Trend toward individualist with collectivist tendencies depending on cultural/religious factors.

Time Orientation: Single time (monochronic), precision and productivity matter.

Communication Style: Direct.

Primary Language(s): Russian, Belorussian
Other Languages: Turkish Dialect (Meskhetian Turks)

Faith Traditions: Pentacostal, Russian Orthodox, Sunni Muslim (Meskhetian Turks)
Ukrainian
(Former Soviet Union)

Summary: Ongoing persecution due to religious preferences, political refugees prior to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, ongoing political conflicts, family reunification

Camps: Specific camps did not exist for this population, most sought asylum or refugee status through embassies or consulates


Group Orientation: Trend toward individualist with collectivist tendencies depending on cultural/religious factors

Time Orientation: Single time (monochronic), precision and productivity matter

Communication Style: Direct

Primary Language(s): Ukrainian, Russian

Faith Traditions: Catholic, Pentecostal, Orthodox
Bosnian

(Former Yugoslavia – Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo)
Note: Bosnian refers to someone from the historical area known as Bosnia-Herzegovina, not an ethnic group. The term Bosniak refers to a Bosnian Muslim.

Summary: The wars in the Former Yugoslavia were some one of the most devastating of the post WWII era. Nearly 150,000 people lost their lives. Nearly half of the population was displaced. Numerous individuals on both sides of the conflict were charged and have been convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Although legally defined as ethnic cleansing the massacre of nearly 8,000 Bosniak Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica is popularly considered a genocide. The siege of Sarajevo resulted in the largest humanitarian airlift in history. Rape was widely used as a weapon of war and “camps” similar to gulags or concentration camps were employed.

U.S. Resettlement (Utica): 1992 – 2006, 4449 individuals, largest population resettled to Utica, In 1997 Utica saw the largest number of Bosnians and MVRCR assisted the largest group of individuals in one year, a total of 1195. By 2002 large numbers stopped being resettled to the US, with just over 100 individuals resettled from Bosnia between 2002 and 2006, when the last individual was officially resettled under refugee status.

Group Orientation: trend toward individualist

Time Orientation: Depends on context, work = time matters, social = time doesn’t matter

Communication Style: Direct

Primary Language(s): Serbo-Croatian, Bosnian (Croatian, Serbian)

Faith Traditions: Muslim (majority), Catholic, Orthodox
Thank You!

Shelly Callahan shellyc@mvrcr.org