

# Conceptualising employment services for resettled Bhutanese refugees: A case study in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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During a focus group discussion with adult Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh, an older woman stated: ‘Government should understand the nature of the refugees arriving and put us with the jobs that ... allow the life to sustain.’ For Bhutanese refugees,<sup>1</sup> the nature of the resettlement experience is the result of the design of the national resettlement system and the local services received upon arrival. In the US, economic self-sufficiency and employment form the fundamental objectives of the resettlement programme for new arrivals. Refugees’ sentiments about the difficulties experienced and the government’s lack of understanding of these experiences appear in parallel in reports prepared for the government. One report finds that ‘resettlement efforts in some US cities are underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs of the refugee populations they are currently asked to assist’ (US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 2010: vii). Another report notes that although there exists short-term monitoring of employment outcomes, ‘there has been less focus on making evaluation, on a broader scale, a part of the refugee program’ (Nightingale 2008: 2). Nonetheless, Bhutanese refugees and others are assumed by the resettlement system to be receiving employment services leading to economic self-sufficiency and broader wellbeing. Amidst the negative rhetoric and scant research, conceptualising the employment services Bhutanese refugees receive serves as a basis for understanding the relationship between resettlement policy, service delivery, and refugees’ experiences.

In this paper, I first situate the importance of Bhutanese refugee resettlement and economic self-sufficiency within the broader refugee studies

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1 This population is often referred to as ‘Bhutanese Nepalis’ or ‘Lhotshampas’, although each term has political undertones (Hutt 2011). I have chosen to use the term ‘Bhutanese refugees’ in alignment with the preference of community leaders in Pittsburgh, although many now prefer not to be referred to as ‘refugees’ because they have permanent residency.

field and discuss the research methodology. Then, I present preliminary findings on the theoretical framework and programme delivery. Finally, I discuss the implications of the employment programming's 'theory of change' for the Bhutanese refugee community in Pittsburgh and for refugee resettlement.

### **Contextualising Bhutanese refugee resettlement in the US**

Globally, twenty-seven countries have resettlement programmes associated with UNHCR—representing domestic commitments to those individuals resettled and commitments to the international refugee framework (Lim-Kabaa 2012). These resettlement programmes vary in size and in the populations they resettle. Of the 10.5 million refugees of concern to UNHCR, less than 1% are ever formally resettled to a third country - 62,000 individuals in 2011 (UNHCR 2013). In the UNHCR resettlement handbook (2011), resettlement is said to:

...serve three equally important functions. First, it is a tool to provide international protection and meet the specific needs of individual refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge. Second, it is a durable solution for larger numbers or groups of refugees, alongside the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration. Third, it can be a tangible expression of international solidarity and a responsibility sharing mechanism, allowing States to help share responsibility for refugee protection, and reduce problems impacting the country of asylum.

The Bhutanese refugee resettlement initiative ostensibly serves all three functions: it provides particular protection to those in need first, it serves as a durable solution for the Bhutanese refugee population caught in a protracted situation in camps for 15-20 years, and it acknowledges international responsibility. As widely discussed in the literature on the resettlement programme out of Nepal, the Bhutanese resettlement programme is an expression of solidarity between countries, with over 100,000 Bhutanese refugees referred for resettlement and over 80,000 already resettled in eight countries since 2007 (Gurung 2013).

The US resettlement programme is held up as an archetype of this commitment to durable solutions and refugees globally. Since 1975, the US

has resettled over three million refugees, including over 60,000 Bhutanese refugees since 2008—more than all other countries combined on both accounts (US Department of State 2013). The government invests over \$1 billion per year in the resettlement programme (US Department of State *et al.* 2012). However, the role resettlement plays as a ‘durable solution’ hinges on the programming of the domestic system itself. The US 1980 Refugee Act states that the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shall ‘make available sufficient resources for employment training and placement in order to *achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible*’ (emphasis added).

This paper examines economic self-sufficiency interventions for Bhutanese refugees, their theories of change, and perceptions of effectiveness in an archetypal city: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania has received more Bhutanese refugees than any other state, and was the top receiving state in FY2011 and FY2012 (US Department of State 2013). Pittsburgh accounts for much of these arrivals, receives many Bhutanese secondary migrants, and is postulated by Bhutanese community leaders as the city with the highest Bhutanese refugee population in the US (Ott 2011, interviews 2013).



**Figure 1: International Organization for Migration Image of Bhutanese Arrivals showing Pennsylvania with the highest number of arrivals as of October 12, 2012**

### Research approach

The design of my research project design is flexible, in line with critical realist epistemological orientations (Bloch 1999). Whilst this orientation acknowledges that there is no one 'authentic' voice to represent the individuals or populations in this study, it attempts to continually improve concepts to understand the mechanisms at play behind human behaviour and outcomes and to glean knowledge from the world in a systematic, evidence-based manner (Guerin and Guerin 2007). This approach has aptly been classified as a 'disciplined lack of clarity', allowing for that which is unknowable before the research begins (Law 2003: 3). At times, the literature, my observations, practitioners' interviews, and the refugees' communications challenged each other (on matters such as the importance of English courses, or the prevalence of the caste system amongst Bhutanese refugees being central to some and unimportant to others) and at other times, these sources substantiated each other, as is the ideal in 'triangulation'.

In its essence, qualitative research depends on 'astute pattern recognition' (Patton 1999: 1191). My extensive training in refugee research and eight years spent working with, advocating for, and doing research about resettled refugees in the US, specifically in Pittsburgh, have enhanced my ability to recognise patterns (Holloway and Wheeler 2009). However, these experiences have also created predispositions and biases, with my own positionality as a researcher within but outside of the community. The analysis strives to balance the effects of the researcher's positionality on the findings.

Detailed knowledge of and familiarity with the community is often cited as critical to research with refugees, as are positive relations with 'gatekeeper' organisations such as the resettlement agencies and community groups who have access to the refugee population (Benson *et al.* 2012, Bloch 2004). In addition to the concrete methods and activities described below, my time spent in Pittsburgh over the years—from assisting the resettlement of some of the first Bhutanese refugees in 2008-2009 to research in April 2011, August-September 2012, January-April 2013, and July 2013—allowed for informal trust building and familiarity.

### Research process

To begin this research, I established a formal agreement to observe the services of and carry out research with the assistance of the two largest

resettlement agencies in the city.<sup>2</sup> I had volunteered extensively with a third resettlement agency from 2008 to 2009, but it now receives a smaller number of refugees. Each resettlement organisation assists new arrivals using federal funds from the Department of State and Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services. I also established a working relationship with the Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh (BCAP) - an elected body with the stated mission 'To ensure a high quality of life for all members of the Bhutanese community in Pittsburgh and to support their integration into American society through culturally-informed services and activities' (original emphasis, Bhutanese Community Association of Pittsburgh 2013). BCAP operates with a small budget but offers activities and services through a network of volunteers and one Americorps member, including English classes for elders, cultural programming, and weekly videos posted on a website (bhutaneseicap.org). Although the leaders initially estimated the Bhutanese population at 3,500-4,000+, the census data collected from BCAP indicates the organisation aims to serve a population that is still sizeable but more likely around 2,000-2,500 individuals.

The bulk of the research took place during two months of observational research at the two major resettlement agencies and five months of surveys completed through face-to-face interviews in refugees' homes. However, in accordance with the research design, a listing of the mixed-methods is shown in the table below. In this paper, I will focus on my findings on employment programming for resettled Bhutanese refugees.

### **Conceptualising service delivery and outcomes**

Two distinct, complementary concepts serve as bases for examining the programming Bhutanese refugees receive to improve their self-sufficiency and wellbeing: these are the theoretical framework and the theory of change. The theoretical framework offers a general lens through which to see the world; this is often a psychosocial theory explaining the ways in which individuals and their surroundings interact. The theory of change or logic model explains the way in which an intervention, including

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2 The information presented does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of collaborating entities.

Method	Participants	Details
Observation, discussions, and semi-structured Interviews	Two refugee resettlement agencies (focus on employment - eight staff members)	For two months, shadowed 'regular services' & attended ORR National Conference
Interviews with other service providers	Four staff - service providers	Avg. 1 hour; one man, three women
Interviews and phone calls with employers	Talked with two employers	Attempted to contact additional four major employers
Semi-structured interviews	Eight People identified as 'Bhutanese leaders'	30 min - 2.5 hours; seven men, one woman
Focus groups	1 - 33 Bhutanese adults in one neighbourhood 2 - 10 adults in a different neighbourhood	1 - 3 hours; 16 men, 17 women; Seven arrived in Pittsburgh first, 26 in other cities; 2-1 hour; 8 men, 2 women, all arrived in Pittsburgh
Document analysis	Documents from service agencies and BCAP	e.g. Meeting agendas, client handbook
Phone discussions/ Expert interviews	Numerous in the field, seven very project-specific	Includes researchers & national ORR staff
New representative survey on economic self-sufficiency and wellbeing	146 randomly-selected Bhutanese adults (aged 18-65) in ten 'neighbourhoods'	Randomly selected half of households and one working-age adult from each household, face-to-face surveys and discussions lasting 20 min - 2.5 hours

**Figure 2: Summary of research methods**

its components, creates a causal pathway to the desired outcome. This explains how and why an intervention works and shows the connections between activities, outcomes, and contexts (Connell and Kubisch 1998, Weiss 1995).

Together, the theoretical framework and the theory of change explain programme development and reveal the assumptions therein (Weiss 1995, 2001). To improve and change policy, it is advantageous to explain the way a programme works and to monitor change by measuring mediators and final outcomes to see whether and how an intervention is working

(Weiss 1995). Turton (2003: 17) explains the importance of understanding theoretical frameworks:

First, we need to encourage research that aims to understand the situation of forced migrants at the local level, as purposive actors, embedded in particular social and historical circumstances. Second, we need to recognise that such research will inevitably call into question the adequacy and usefulness of existing conceptualisations of forced migrants. And third, we need to recognise that it is by the questioning of taken for granted assumptions that research can have its most beneficial impact on policy and practice.

Examining the theoretical framework can both help understand the context and challenge existing assumptions.

### **Theoretical framework**

Before developing a theory of change, I began by situating refugees in the environment which influences them—with individuals at the centre, then the microsystems of families and peers, then the community, and finally the macrosystem of national cultural values, customs, and laws—following Bronfenbrenner’s ‘ecological model’, the theoretical framework of the levels on which programming acts (Bronfenbrenner 1994, 1999). Policies and programmes aim to change behaviour by influencing different levels: individual, proximate (micro/interpersonal), intermediate (meso/community), and fundamental (macro). I mapped the employment and economic self-sufficiency programmes observed, their general emphases and their outcomes onto these levels. Although these services are intended for all refugees resettled by the agencies, Bhutanese refugees accounted for almost all of the clientele in the interactions observed. Rather than presenting complex frameworks or the details of programmatic delivery in this paper, I focus on core activities and concepts. The figure below shows a simplified version of the ecological model for this service delivery, incorporating recent programmatic design thinking of fundamental, intermediate, and proximate spheres of influence.

Importantly, multiple orientations, one-on-one meetings with employment specialists, and job readiness workshops or employment English classes emphasised changing refugees’ cultural norms and

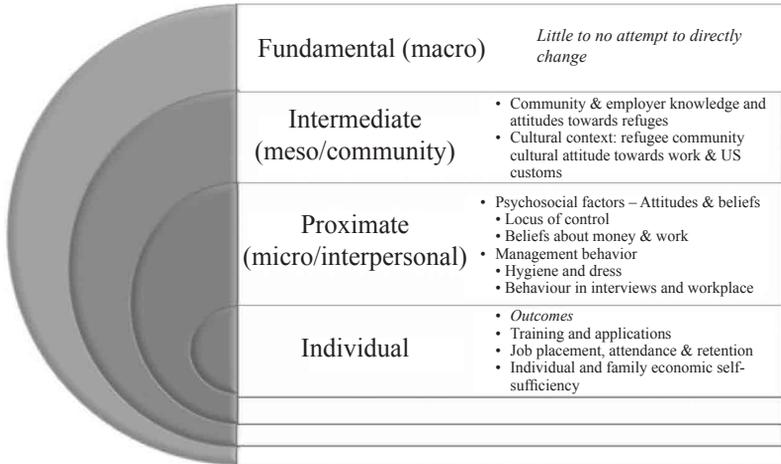


Figure 3: Theoretical framework highlighting levels targeted for agencies' work

public interpersonal interactions, including attitudes and beliefs about the importance of accepting any low-level employment as well as behaviours such as hygiene, timeliness, and direct communication in English. Although attempting to change individual and cultural norms may sound didactic, in practice this theoretical framework sought to empower refugees about the available array of options and the way they are perceived by others in the US to understand their current situation. Accordingly, Bhutanese were taught not only macro-concepts such as the importance of relationships between employers, the resettlement agency, and the refugee community, but also minutiae such as the sensitivity of many native-born Americans to strong smells and standard workplace safety regulations. Resettlement agency employment specialists explained employers' cost-benefit analyses, indicating that employers may cease working with the resettlement agency and the Bhutanese population if individuals quit without communication and that employers initially had to invest a lot in training employees so it was expected that individuals would stay at least three to six months. This theoretical framework and mapping of emphases flowed into the theory of change developed, thereby examining the interactions between the resettlement agency, refugees, and employers.

### Theory of change (logic model)

In observing programme delivery, I looked at how the different individuals and entities interacted and developed the following logic model. From this logic model, one can reexamine approaches and begin to monitor service delivery.

The agencies roughly split their workers into those involved in reception and placement services (e.g. housing, cultural orientations, health appointments) and employment services (e.g. employment orientation, job search, interviews). However, these entities reinforced the same ideas, such as cultural competency in understanding the US system. The employment services team also communicated with hiring agencies and employers and sought to connect the employers and agencies in hopes of achieving the primary initial (proximal) outcomes of employment and retention, leading to eventual (distal) outcomes of economic self-sufficiency, well-being, and integration. Rather than providing detail of all services and how they map onto the federal service requirements in this paper, I will note three overarching observations.

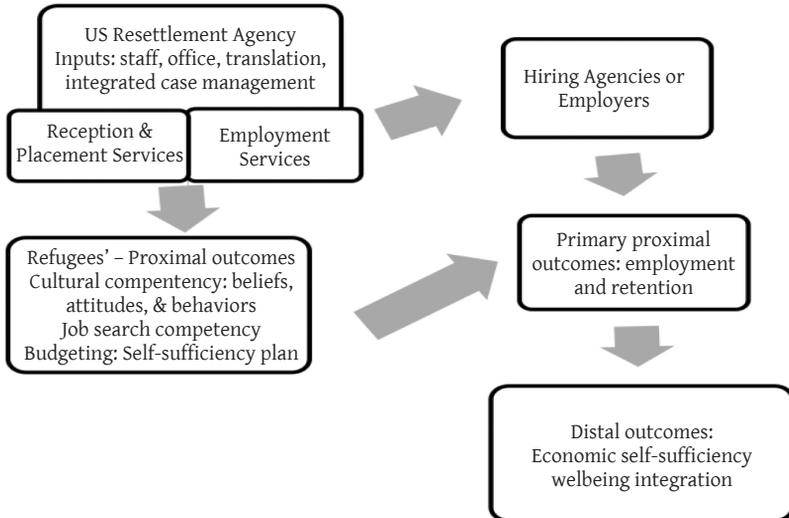


Figure 4: Simple logic model highlighting different actors and outcomes; Potential mediators: age, gender, ethnic group; moderators: English and education levels.

**Observation 1: Separating employers and refugees**

First of all, both agencies separately focused on changing the beliefs and behaviours of potential employers or hiring agencies and of the refugee community. I did not observe any forums where community members and employers were brought together before the hiring process or a time where potential employers came in to discuss job and self-sufficiency skills and cultural competency with refugees. This is not inherently negative, as resettlement agency staff could interact as a 'broker', communicating for refugees while initial proximal outcomes of cultural competency and job search competency were still being developed. Additionally, many staff in both resettlement agencies had refugee and immigrant backgrounds, including six resettled Bhutanese refugees. Employment staff spoke of the importance of their ongoing relationships with employers to assist when issues arose and help maintain employment.

Although it seemed that the standard *modus operandi* was to use resettlement agency staff as 'brokers' and trusted contacts, other arrangements have been made. In the past, some employers held initial explanatory sessions with the Bhutanese refugee population, and certain employers preferred to communicate directly with the potential refugee employees. One employment specialist commented that some employers might have been put off by a greater fanfare or 'special treatment' for refugees. Refugees were encouraged to use their own skills and networks to find employment, bypassing agencies' employer contacts and either directly going to employers or using friends or family members as intermediaries. Future research could focus on which relationships were best at obtaining and maintaining employment.

**Observation 2: Leap from proximal to distal outcomes**

Secondly, I observed a gap in the logic model, which assumed that the primary proximal outcome of employment and retention would lead to broader distal outcomes. This leap may be attributed to the structure of the resettlement system rather than to the agencies themselves. The funding streams focused on refugees in their initial months after arrival and assumed they would progress to economic self-sufficiency, wellbeing, and integration as time passed or access mainstream services as needed. Although both agencies offered referrals and help with upgrading or finding second employment, one agency provided more ad-hoc help for wellbeing,

self-sufficiency, and integration—including supporting BCAP, offering weekly neighbourhood office hours with paperwork and other assistance in Nepali, and providing emergency case management for specific cases long after funds and contractual obligations for that family had expired. The other agency offered ‘bonus checks’ for early employment for those in their Matching Grant employment programme, hoping that quicker proximal outcomes and extra cash would lead to quicker distal outcomes. The question for an agency over which levels to target—federal policies, community norms, interpersonal interactions, or other levels, and in what timeframe—relates to nuanced theories of change.

**Observation 3: Little attempt to directly change macro-policies or receiving communities**

Most of the agencies’ employment staff time was spent directly with refugees and paperwork. Staff focused on providing resources and targeting change to attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours through group workshops and one-on-one training. Agency staff relied on national resettlement agencies to focus on changing macro federal policies and broader American norms about refugees. In selected instances, there was outreach to city councilmen, police, or non-profit workers who they viewed as representative of the broader community and support for events which would celebrate community diversity.

Despite the lack of direct attempt change macro federal policies, there was a great consensus on the need to change macro-policy, particularly the mainstream governmental self-sufficiency programme ‘Temporary Assistance for Needy Families’ (TANF), commonly called ‘welfare’. At one resettlement agency, a job placement specialist had ‘around 85 clients’ receiving welfare money, for whom she was helping to navigate the welfare system. She said, ‘they give us less money per client, but expect us to have better outcomes’, compared to agencies working with non-refugee clients.

Adult TANF recipients generally have to attend a certain number of hours per week of allowed activities, generally 20-35 hours depending on family composition. Refugees are permitted one year of vocational English as a Second Language (ESL) to count towards these hours, but generally fewer than the required number of ESL hours are offered per week, so they must supplement these hours with additional official hours.

Locations offering permitted activities are not equipped to assist individuals with low levels of English, so some refugees may attend job search sessions or other activities where they do not understand anything, and they must switch activities every four weeks to retain eligibility if they are not in their one year of ESL. Another employment specialist said, ‘...with the job search, just kind of a farce; it’s keeping track of the paperwork. They want to see them slip up so they can close cash. And, the attitude is well, tough, the clients need to do that [even if it doesn’t fit them].’ Despite dissatisfaction with these and other programming requirements and levels of federal and state support, I observed no attempt to change macro policies by the agencies, although I know they are in contact with their national agencies which do some information campaigns and lobbying.

The US government and resettlement agencies could also place greater emphasis on community consultation, as highlighted in recent reports (Nezer 2013, US Government Accountability Office 2012). There were collaborative forums between different refugee-serving agencies, but broad outreach to change the attitudes and beliefs of the general community was not part of the key logic model. Both agencies had ad-hoc outreach to employers or other entities as conflict arose, and one agency was more adroit at using the media to highlight the refugee employment assistance and needs. This same agency received a contract to train teachers in local schools about refugees, a programme working to change a micro-community’s cultural attitudes with positive initial evaluations. Both agencies viewed their programmes as holistic, as *all* programming leads to greater acculturation, which in turn allowed for improved economic self-sufficiency and wellbeing. However, individuals I spoke with in Pittsburgh, including in the neighbourhoods where the Bhutanese were densely concentrated, had no idea that there were any Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh, let alone their strengths, the challenges they faced, or their history.

The two-way nature of resettlement and the role of the receiving community as well as the refugee community is perhaps becoming more salient nationally and locally, with visible an anti-refugee sentiment and city or state-wide efforts to restrict resettlement present in other locations, including in Georgia, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Tennessee (Goodnan 2013, Nezer 2012). The US Office of Refugee Resettlement

funded Welcoming America in 2012 to support refugee resettlement community engagement. Additionally, the 'Linking Communities Project: Creating Welcome for Refugees' pilot project was recently launched in Pennsylvania and Ohio to 'building and supporting capacity at the national and local levels to generate and maintain broad-based commitment to resettlement in local communities' (HIAS 2013). These efforts will affect agencies' work in Pittsburgh and may affect the welcome and community support for Bhutanese refugees, particularly for the large numbers in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

### **The overall picture of employment service delivery for Bhutanese refugees**

Employment services for resettled Bhutanese refugees have been criticised as often 'dependency-based' and 'oppressive' (Grigsby 2013), but the agencies' work revealed itself as heartfelt and nuanced, with resettlement caseworkers working as a 'pivotal link' to initiate Bhutanese refugees 'into the societal processes and networks within which they take up new roles, and exercise the citizen's repertoire of rights and duties in the "new" social context' as desired in anti-oppressive practice in the labour market programmes for resettled refugees (Valtonen 2001). The theory of change in Pittsburgh revealed an employment services design that echoed legislative requirements to promote economic independence and 'to achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible'. The delivery of employment services was decidedly practical—with meetings and detailed discussions within the agencies to decide which funding stream would allow families the best chance of being able to pay their bills by the time their funding ran out, given specific demographics like family size, physical health, and mental health. In both focus groups, without prompting, the individuals stated that they had nothing negative to say about the resettlement agencies' services. Individuals suggested macro ways in which resettlement could be improved, such as allowing for longer support to allow for more education, training, finding jobs that match and 'allow that life to sustain', and greater support for occupational mobility. Services were constrained by funding, administrative requirements, local variables such as employment opportunities, and the individual characteristics of the Bhutanese refugees and the resettlement agency staff.

On paper, the services for a resettled Bhutanese refugee are identical to

those of any other resettled refugee passing through that agency. However, resettlement workers repeated that they found each population had its own set of exceptions, needs, and capacities and that pre-existing communities played a role in support and expectations. Employment services are thus affected by community culture and past experiences. A Bhutanese community has requested to be settled in the Pittsburgh metro area and coalesced in neighbourhoods in and around the city—they span castes, education levels, English language levels, and Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Kirat religions, though there appeared to be some separation between neighbourhoods based on these variables. Experiences with employment services may be affected not only by the more generic theory of change, but also by interactions between the Bhutanese community at large and the receiving community, as well as micro-interactions based on demographics and other characteristics. This differentiation is a subject for future analyses.

Although there was a distinct sense of a ‘Bhutanese community’ and micro-Bhutanese communities in greater Pittsburgh, the services and jobs accessed did not distinctly build on ‘Himalayan’ tradition or skills. Occupations were common to other resettled refugee populations and individuals with low English proficiency in the city. Occupations in Bhutan and Nepal—including farming, sewing, teaching, and traditional crafts—did not repeat as common occupations in Pittsburgh. These included housekeeping, cleaning, moving boxes, food packaging, and factory work, as well as, to a lesser degree, cheque processing, interpretation, nursing, and working at gas stations. The community was interested in preserving traditional skills and livelihoods and BCAP was beginning livelihood activities, including small-plot farming and traditional crafts. Many shops opened, mimicking shops in the refugee camps in Nepal, and some individuals created or sold traditional crafts or items out of their apartments.

Although the employment services received and occupations practices were not distinctly Bhutanese or traditional to this population, these factors did not define the individuals or the community. Employment may serve as a crucial aspect of the domestic resettlement in the US, but not as a crucial aspect of identity.

### **The overall picture for Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh**

A picture emerged of a Bhutanese population where some individuals are excelling and others are struggling—indicating perhaps the need for

additional or modified services targeting certain community members. An initial analysis of the surveys showed that 42% of households indicated they could always pay the bills, and that 58% sometimes had trouble paying all of the bills. Economic success in different realms was apparent in the community. The community members own five grocery and bazaar stores and one gas station; no one knew how many families had bought houses—likely well over a dozen. Preliminary statistical analyses of initial surveys did not indicate any differentiation in economic outcome based on caste, although interview reports and overall observation indicated neighbourhoods and employment splits based on caste, suggesting that higher caste members were more likely to have arrived earlier, purchased a house or live in slightly more expensive neighbourhoods. These remain hypotheses, and discussions of economic wellbeing and correlations with better employment and wellbeing outcomes will be the focus of forthcoming analyses.

Beyond economic indicators, signs of a thriving community and wellbeing abound. The Bhutanese refugee community includes more than ten Hindu priests, one Buddhist lama, and four Christian pastors. There are Bhutanese dancing and singing groups and many soccer teams. A great emphasis was placed on education, with many individuals graduating from high school and college, and high interest in technical training programmes including the Certified Nursing Assistance programme. Some randomly selected interviewees reported strong functional health and wellbeing, contrary to the literature's focus on mental health concerns (Ao et al 2013, Benson *et al.* 2012, Chase 2012, Dutton 2011, Nelson 2012, Thapa *et al.* 2003, Van Ommerman *et al.* 2001). One important picture emerged: that of the resilience of much of the population.

## **Conclusion**

The Bhutanese refugee population do not fall into a binary of poor and in-need or self-sufficient, of vulnerable or resilient; likewise the service provision does not fall into deficient or sufficient. Rather, the service provision is imbued with broad ideas like changing cultural norms and tangible knowledge about the US job search and interview process but also shows variation based on individual refugees, individual service providers, labour markets, and neighbourhood resources. Continued data collection and analysis will aim to clarify these initial findings whilst

showing their complexity and contextuality, building towards the 'dual imperative in refugee research' of academically and policy-relevant research, with careful scientific and ethical considerations (Jacobsen and Landau 2003).

The onus on improving service delivery and outcomes for refugees does not fall squarely on the service providers, or on the government, or on the refugee community. Service providers may improve their services more broadly by reaching out to local communities and by lobbying for federal changes. Just as a Bhutanese refugee said that 'governments should understand the nature of refugees arriving', so too should the broader city community, including employers. In doing so, governments, receiving communities, refugee communities, and individual refugees can communicate and reach out to understand each other in the concentric spheres of influence of the theoretical framework. Understanding the employment services and perspectives of economic self-sufficiency and wellbeing for Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh provides a frame to see not only the challenges and successes of this population and resettlement, but also national and international obligations.

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