Labour & Immigration Research Centre
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The Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Journey

PART 2: ON ARRIVAL

'An environment that encourages you to work hard, erasing the present tag of refugee.'

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Department of Labour
TE TARI MAHI

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Research Programme is following a group of Bhutanese refugees from camps in Nepal through to settlement in New Zealand.

The research involves three phases of data collection. The first phase involved initial interviews with a group in refugee camps in Nepal. The second phase involved follow-up interviews at the end of the resettled refugees' orientation process at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (which is the focus of this report), and the third phase involved interviews in the community 18–20 months after the refugees' arrival in New Zealand.

Since the 1990s, over 100,000 Lhotshampa (Bhutanese of Nepali origin) have been confined to seven refugee camps in south-eastern Nepal after the Government of Bhutan revoked their citizenship and forced them to flee the country. These Nepali Bhutanese spent 18 years in refugee camps, being denied integration into the local Nepal community or their return to Bhutan before the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees offered third-country resettlement as a solution.

In 2007, New Zealand announced its inclusion of Bhutanese refugees into its annual refugee quota, and in 2008 the first selection mission to the camps in Nepal took place. As part of the second selection mission in October 2008, 33 Bhutanese refugees gave their permission to be interviewed about their pre-resettlement needs, expectations and experiences. The findings from these interviews are presented in *The Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Journey – Part 1: Pre-departure* (Department of Labour, 2011a).

The second phase of the research, and the focus of this report, involves a series of shorter follow-up interviews at the end of the Mangere orientation process. The Mangere interviews were designed to provide immediate feedback and information to the Department. These interviews focused on specific aspects of the orientation programme, in particular how it worked, how before and after departure expectations were met, and the refugees' hopes for their life in New Zealand.

The third and final phase of the research explores the post-settlement experiences of this group of former refugees and examines specific elements of settlement into New Zealand society. The findings from these interviews can be found in *The Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Journey – Part 3: Settlement* (Department of Labour, 2011b).

Overall themes

The study explored specific aspects of New Zealand's orientation programme with a particular focus on; first impressions of New Zealand, experiences at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, pre-departure information needs, plans for after the orientation programme and preparedness to live in the community.

First Impressions

Initial impressions of New Zealand for most of those interviewed were positive. The most common first impressions were of:

- the environment and scenery
- the helpfulness of New Zealanders
- the facilities and experiences being better than expected.

Some difficulties however were experienced which were mostly in relation to:

- the different physical environment
- the impact of leaving loved ones behind in camps
- adjusting to a new culture and food.

Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre

There were many aspects to the orientation programme that were found to be extremely valuable, in particular the English language and information sessions run by the Auckland University of Technology.

Some areas where the orientation could better meet the needs of refugees were also highlighted. The areas were it was felt could be improved were:

- more English language classes
- more information about banking and housing
- fewer disturbances during sessions
- more appropriate food at the centre in terms of taste and preparation.

Pre-Departure information needs

Interviewees consistently commented on the lack of information particularly before departure. This information related to:

- New Zealand generally – what to expect on arrival
- customs processes – what was allowed to brought to New Zealand
- what to bring to New Zealand and baggage allowances
- the journey, including the transit process.

Plans for after the orientation programme

At the time of interviews, most people's plans for the coming months were to first learn English. Either in conjunction with this, or after this many planned to find study and/or paid work. Another immediate priority on arrival to the community was to enrol children in school and to get to know their new surroundings and community.

Living in the community

Most of those interviewed had no concerns about going out into the community, and felt prepared for this. Those that were concerned said this was due to:

- their limited English
- fears about day to day living and isolation

- uncertainty surrounding the appropriateness of their housing and reliance on daughters

Few interviewees knew much about the city in which they were to be resettled. Some would have liked more information about their local area and where to find things, but thought they would find out what they needed to know when they arrived. Others were anxious about where they were to be resettled, what their house would be like and how to find the services and facilities they would need.

1 BACKGROUND

International context

Introduction

The predicament of the Lhotshampa (Bhutanese of Nepali origin) refugees in camps in Nepal arose from internal conflict in Bhutan (see Map A1 in Appendix A). Those affected have remained in limbo as a result of the refusal of Nepal or Bhutan to accept their citizenship or for both countries to agree a solution (Loescher and Milner, 2005). This situation has put pressure on international aid agencies to find a durable solution. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offered third-country resettlement. After 18 years, the Bhutanese now faced resettlement in Western countries, for which their time in camps and as outsiders in local society minimally prepared them.

Background to the Bhutanese refugee crisis

In the early 19th century, the Government of Bhutan recruited the Lhotshampa of ethnic Nepali origin to southern Bhutan to cultivate land. The predominantly Hindu Lhotshampa became the country's main supplier of food. They remained largely unintegrated with Bhutan's Buddhist majority until 1958, when a new nationality law allowed the Lhotshampa to hold government jobs and obtain Bhutanese citizenship (UNHCR, 2006).

In the late 1980s, Buddhist Bhutanese began to view the growing population of Hindu Lhotshampa as a threat to traditional Buddhist culture. In 1985, the government passed a new citizenship Act that denied many Lhotshampa their citizenship rights. Discriminatory policies followed whereby Nepali dress, language and the right to sell cash crops became illegal. In addition, the Nepali language was removed from the school curriculum (UNHCR, 2006).

Unrest in the Lhotshampa-populated south in response to these reforms began to surface. In 1990, public demonstrations against the new policies took place. In response, the Bhutanese government branded all those who took part in such protests as anti-nationals, and imprisoned and tortured several thousand Lhotshampa. Very few Lhotshampa were formally charged or stood trial. Repressive measures continued against the Lhotshampa Bhutanese, and increasing numbers had their citizenship rights revoked, had their houses demolished and were forced to flee to neighbouring India.

By the end of 1992, an estimated 80,000 Lhotshampa were living in UNHCR-administered camps in Nepal.

Conditions and opportunities in Bhutanese camps in Nepal:

Since the early 1990s, more than 100,000 Lhotshampa have been confined to seven refugee camps in south-eastern Nepal (see Map A2 in Appendix A). These camps have been supported by approximately US$20 million from donor governments each year (UNHCR, 2006). A community-development approach was taken in running the Bhutanese camps. This meant in practice a rights-based approach and democratic structures of self-management, the promotion of

the interests of women and children, and equitable access to basic services. Comparatively high levels of primary, secondary and tertiary education were achieved, and several preventive health programmes were instituted along with regular nutrition and other services. In effect, the refugee population enjoyed 'disproportionately higher indicators of well-being' than the local Nepalese population (Muggah, 2005, p 152). The camps themselves are entirely refugee run – with the refugees providing policing, social, project, and health services, counselling, aid distribution, and camp administration. The result has been described as a 'best practice' example of refugee camp 'care and maintenance' (p 156).

Despite such a 'relatively high standard' of education and services, the UNHCR has acknowledged 'considerable frustration' among refugees (UNHCR, 2006, p 116). This frustration is 'particularly pronounced' among young people (p 116). The provision of education to advanced levels has raised skills and expectations that cannot be fulfilled in the context of confinement to camps (Brown, 2001). Suicide rates, domestic violence, alcoholism, and trafficking of women and children were increasing (UNHCR, 2006) along with child marriage, polygamy, and prostitution (Muggah, 2005). Refugee families were dispersed across different camps, and young people often lacked identity papers since they had been born in camps after families fled Bhutan.

Although the local host population did derive some benefit from the camps since the cheap labour increased the supply of goods and locals used the camp healthcare systems, local Nepali communities complained that refugees drove down wages, depressed prices and contributed to crime and prostitution (UNHCR, 2006). The failure to address issues of differences between refugees in camps and local populations has meant solutions 'cannot and will not' be found (Goetz, 2003, p 16).

Protracted refugee situations and policies

Global refugee populations are at the lowest they have been for many years. However, the international population of refugees left in protracted political stand-offs and their duration as refugees has increased (Loescher et al, 2008). Recognition of this has resulted in the UNHCR designating such situations as 'protracted refugee situations', defined as populations of over 25,000 who have been in exile for 5 years or more in developing countries (UNHCR, 2008a, p 1).[1] By the end of 2003, there were an estimated 6.2 million refugees worldwide (excluding Palestinian refugees who are dealt with under a separate mandate). By 2008, estimates were as high as 9.9 million refugees worldwide, half in protracted refugee situations (UNHCR, 2008b, p 1). Not only has the number of protracted refugee situations increased since the early 1990s, but the average

[1] This definition effectively discounts the situation of a great many groups of fewer than 25,000 (Loescher and Milner, 2005). The UNHCR (2006, p 106) acknowledges that the definition is a 'crude' underestimate of what are often 'chronic and stagnating' protracted refugee situations. The humanitarian and academic communities have done some soul searching on the best ways to ameliorate these problems. High-level international conferences have dealt with issues such as relationships between policy components, issues of security, and the relative roles of humanitarian agencies, development agencies and civil society.

duration of protracted refugee situations has almost doubled over that period (Loescher et al, 2008).

In the 1990s, the gap between the number of refugees needing repatriation and the number accepted for resettlement by third countries continued to grow (UNHCR, 2008b). In 2002, the UNHCR adopted a new strategy termed the 'Agenda for Protection' to develop 'customised' programmes (Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 2008a). This new strategy aimed to share burdens between and build the capacity of states to receive and protect refugees. By 2004, this strategy had become the UNHCR's search for 'durable solutions' (Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 2008b).

The UNHCR's three strategies for 'durable solutions' are voluntary repatriation, local integration in the country of first asylum and resettlement in a third country. The UNHCR's search for durable solutions has had limited success, and in 2006 the UNHCR acknowledged that many protracted refugee situations remained because of 'neglect by regional and international actors' (UNHCR, 2006, p 106).

Resettlement of Bhutanese refugees

The UNHCR has tried to find a durable solution for the Bhutanese in Nepal. However, its attempts to get agreement for their repatriation to Bhutan failed, and the Nepalese Government opposed local integration. Most refugee leaders also opposed local integration. International observers criticised integration on the grounds that Bhutan's behaviour constituted ethnic cleansing and local integration was a dangerous precedent (UNHCR, 2006). In 2006, the UNHCR acknowledged that the 'many refugees from Bhutan who were deprived of citizenship [and] languish in camps in Nepal foresee little chance of returning home or reacquiring their citizenship' (UNHCR, 2006, p 26). They faced a prospect of remaining 'part of the UNHCR casebook for the coming years' (p 27).

In mid 2008, the UNHCR acknowledged the failure of repatriation efforts (Feller, 2008), saying the United Nations had 'found it impossible' to broker solutions, so the strategy was to 'phase out assistance' and support targeted third-country resettlement as a 'solution to this problem' (Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, 2008a). The Bhutanese in Nepal were seen as a 'priority' for resettlement.

New Zealand has supported the effort to resettle the Lhotshampa. Other countries to offer resettlement include the United States, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Australia. There is no limit to the number of Nepali Bhutanese who may be resettled, and it is estimated that the process will take up to seven years as nearly one-third of the Nepali Bhutanese refugee population has registered their interest in third-country resettlement (Banki, 2008).

New Zealand context

Refugee Policy and Refugee Quota Programme

In 1987, the New Zealand Government established a formal annual quota for the resettlement of refugees.[2] In recent years, the focus has been on refugees most in need of resettlement as identified by the UNHCR. Before resettlement decisions are made, refugees referred by the UNHCR are interviewed by Refugee Quota Branch officers from the Department of Labour in the country of asylum or, where this is not feasible, by officers of international organisations in the field. Each case undergoes a comprehensive selection screening and assessment process that focuses on credibility, risk and potential settlement to ensure:

- the case is in line with New Zealand's priorities
- New Zealand is the right settlement option for that person
- the case is not a security risk or character of concern to New Zealand.

If the Department of Labour is not satisfied with the information presented in relation to any of the above considerations, the case is declined.

The New Zealand Government aims to ensure the resettlement quota remains targeted to refugees and that New Zealand has the capacity to provide good settlement outcomes to those accepted under the Refugee Quota Programme. The programme allows 750 places[3]. These places are made up of:

- a minimum of 75 places under the Women-at-Risk Subcategory[4]
- up to 75 places under the Medical/Disabled Subcategory
- 600 places under the UNHCR Priority Protection Subcategory (including up to 300 places for family reunification and up to 35 places for emergency referrals).

All subcategories within the refugee resettlement quota generally include the immediate family members (that is, spouse and dependent children) of the principal applicant.

In addition to standard family residence categories, two specific family reunification policies are available for refugees.

- Within the quota, a declared spouse and dependent children may be included.
- Under the Refugee Family Support Category, 300 residence places are available for refugees to sponsor family members. This has been limited to Tier 1 priority sponsors (those being refugees who are considered 'alone' in New Zealand). Tier 2 will be opened to sponsors early in 2012; this will allow a wider range of sponsors to register.

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[2] New Zealand also assesses claims for asylum under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

[3] The total annual quota may vary by plus or minus 10 percent.

[4] For the purposes of resettlement, the UNHCR considers women at risk as 'those women or girls who have protection problems particular to their gender, whether they are single heads-of-families, unaccompanied girls or together with their male (or female) family members' (UNHCR, 2004)

The size and composition of the refugee resettlement quota has traditionally been set annually. However, from 2010-2011 the Minister of Immigration and Minister of Foreign Affairs agreed to a three year planning cycle. The quota is reviewed annually in line with the three year cycle proposal after consulting widely with relevant government departments, the UNHCR, non-governmental organisations, existing refugee communities and other stakeholders.

New Zealand's annual refugee quota is above average on a per capita basis compared with a number of other resettlement states (eighth out of the 19 resettlement countries). Other countries with significant resettlement quotas include the United States, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Australia has the highest quota programme on a per capita basis.

The Refugee Division of the Department of Labour works closely with the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration and other governments to promote international responsibility sharing, coordinated responses to refugee issues, capacity building, and the ongoing development of norms, policies and best practice in refugee protection.

Refugees accepted for resettlement to New Zealand under the refugee quota programme are granted a permanent residence visa on arrival. As New Zealand permanent residents, they are entitled to live in New Zealand permanently, and enjoy almost all of the same rights as New Zealand citizens.

2 BHUTANESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Resettlement of Bhutanese in New Zealand

In 2007, New Zealand became the first country to accept Bhutanese refugees for resettlement. In 2007/2008, 75 Bhutanese were accepted as part of the annual refugee quota. Most of those accepted were resettled in Palmerston North and Christchurch. In 2008/2009, a second intake of 195 Bhutanese refugees was included in New Zealand's annual refugee quota. This intake was predominantly resettled in Palmerston North, Christchurch and Nelson.

These cities were chosen for resettlement because, in addition to having the availability and capability to resettle a new community, they were deemed to be a good fit in terms of their environment for the Bhutanese community and could offer a good resettlement foundation.

In 2009/2010, 176 Bhutanese were resettled in New Zealand and as of April 2011, a further 105 Bhutanese refugees have arrived. It is likely that Bhutanese refugees from camps in Nepal will continue to be accepted for resettlement in the future given that they remain in a protracted situation, and therefore a UNHCR focus for resettlement.

The Bhutanese are a new ethnic community to be resettled in New Zealand. Given their small numbers, they will continue to require large levels of support from a variety of service providers.

Background to the research project

The 2008 selection mission to Nepal was used as a unique opportunity to undertake research on this group of refugees. The aim of the Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Research Project is to provide information about the pre-settlement hopes, expectations and experiences of the Bhutanese refugees, as well as their short-term settlement outcomes. This information will enable better support for the resettlement not only of this community, but of refugees generally.

There has been relatively little research on refugee resettlement in New Zealand. The notable exception is *Refugee Voices: A journey towards resettlement* (Department of Labour, 2004), which contains the findings from interviews with nearly 400 recent and established refugees, and the recently published *New Land, New Life: Long-Term Settlement of Refugees in New Zealand* (Department of Labour, 2011c) which is a preliminary report from the Quota Refugees Ten Years On programme of research.[5] However, this study of refugees before and after resettlement is unique both nationally and internationally. No other studies that systematically examined the expectations of refugees before resettlement and their short-term reactions after resettlement could be found.

[5] The *Quota Refugees Ten Years On: Perspectives of Integration, Community and Identity* programme of work builds on *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement,* to understand what life is like for former refugees who have lived in New Zealand for more than ten years.

There are some studies of refugees *after* resettlement. These studies tend to focus on specific issues such as impacts on the health of refugee youth (Gifford et al, 2007), ongoing effects of violent refugee experiences after resettlement (Amone-P'Olak, 2007), changes in family structure (Currie, 2007), the challenges of integrating refugees into the workforce (Posiadlowski, 2007) or other specific aspects of third-country social or economic structure (Valtonen, 1998, 2004; Pottie et al, 2006; Spitzer, 2006; Beirens et al, 2007; VanderPlaat, 2007; Pressé and Thomson, 2008).

No substantial studies appear to explore these issues from the perspective of the refugees, before, during and after resettlement (Mitchell and Kisner, 2004). However, this is an important issue, as other researchers have pointed out. Gifford and colleagues demonstrate from their prospective study of a cohort of refugee youth resettled in Melbourne that important differences exist between studies that examine the importance of 'meaning' as made by individuals and studies that focus on the 'measurement' of indicators as decided by researchers (Gifford et al, 2007). There is limited understanding of how refugees' own priorities and values may change between pre-arrival and settlement. This study takes account of these issues in its design. The substantive issues important in New Zealand policy and the provision of services for resettling refugees are addressed through a selection of topics and questions in a semi-structured interview.

Purpose of this research project

The findings of the Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Research Project as a whole will help to:

- inform future pre-arrival and on-arrival settlement information and orientation
- identify areas of priority when resettling new ethnic communities, for example, language and employment support
- identify gaps and overlaps in current settlement support.

Monitoring before- and after-settlement needs and outcomes for this cohort will inform the selection process and resettlement of refugees through the Refugee Quota Programme. Little such monitoring has been undertaken in the last two decades. The complexities of world events and resettlement needs require the Department of Labour to monitor its practices to ensure they are up to date and in the best interest of the communities who are to be resettled through the Refugee Quota Programme.

Structure of the research

The research involves three phases of data collection. The first phase involved 33 interviews that took place as part of New Zealand's refugee mission to Nepal in October 2008 (see Department of Labour, 2011). Interviewees were asked about their background, expectations of resettlement, existing knowledge of New Zealand, their goals for life in New Zealand and expected settlement support needs both before departure and after arrival.

The second phase of the research (and focus of this report) involved a series of shorter follow-up interviews at the end of the orientation process at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. These interviews were designed to provide immediate feedback and information to the Department of Labour. These interviews focused on specific aspects of the orientation programme with a particular focus on how it worked, how before and after departure expectations were met, and the refugees' hopes for their life in New Zealand.

The third phase of research took place in the community, 12–18 months after the refugees' arrival in New Zealand. These interviews focused on specific elements of settlement into New Zealand society.

Orientation training for resettlement

In 2008, 11 OECD and European Union countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States) were committed to an annual quota of refugees. Of these countries, only three do not provide a pre-departure orientation programme (the Netherlands, New Zealand and Ireland). There is widespread agreement that refugee orientation programmes assist in the positive resettlement of refugees. Pre-departure cultural orientation reduces stress and anxiety by giving refugees an accurate picture of their resettlement country and helps to shape realistic expectations and attitudes towards their new community (Gray, 2008).

Commentators point out that refugees resettled in countries with different cultures, traditions and practices to their own can encounter problems adjusting to their new environment (Ekholm et al, 2005). This is usually for anyone lacking the necessary information and orientation required for such a move. Refugees accepted for resettlement often come straight out of refugee camps and sometimes have little, if any, knowledge of the societal and economic practices of Western countries.

Cultural orientation reduces these stress factors by presenting a realistic picture of what awaits the newcomers, providing them with coping mechanisms to deal with the unfamiliar, and by helping to shape attitudes towards life in the new community. Cultural orientation sessions help newcomers to become self-sufficient, contributing members of society (Gray, 2008).

Various countries conduct pre-departure cultural orientation training sessions in several ways. The United States, Australia, Canada, Finland and Norway subcontract pre-departure training to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), while other countries send their own delegations or use locally based diplomatic staff (Gray, 2008).

International Organization for Migration cultural training

IOM provides cultural orientation services to tens of thousands of participants every year from 30 countries of origin or transit. The three broad cultural orientation objectives of the IOM orientation are to:

- provide participants with factual information about the country of destination

- assist refugees to develop skills needed to succeed in their new environment (for example, how to get a job and access healthcare facilities)
- explore attitudes necessary for successful integration (for example, flexibility, open-mindedness, initiative and self-reliance).

Cultural orientation empowers participants to adapt more rapidly and successfully to the day-to-day demands of any new environment (Ekholm et al, 2005).

New Zealand cultural training

New Zealand focuses on on-arrival orientation but provides limited pre-departure information in a booklet in the refugees' language. This booklet overviews basic information about New Zealand society and services available to quota refugees on arrival to the country. Where possible, the interviewing officer from the Department of Labour explains the content of the booklet to the refugees during the resettlement interview.

Once the Department of Labour has approved the refugees and allocated them to an intake for travel to New Zealand (which could be up to a year later), the refugees also attend a briefing with IOM. This briefing focuses on preparing the refugees for their travel to New Zealand, for example information about air travel, using toilets on the plane and so on.

Dutch cultural training

As in New Zealand, the Netherlands emphasises on-arrival orientation rather than pre-departure orientation. However, it takes a different approach to orientation procedures on arrival.

After arriving in the Netherlands, refugees are taken to a central reception centre where they are responsible for their own housekeeping, such as cooking and washing, and receive a weekly allowance to cover personal expenses. They receive all the urgent medical treatment they need, are registered for health insurance and are entitled to the same medical facilities and treatment as Dutch citizens. They also have access to recreational and educational facilities and to primary and secondary education for children (usually at local schools near the reception centre).

Refugees remain in the reception centre for 3–6 months or longer. Moving to a house of their own is subject to the availability of (social) housing in one of the Netherlands' 500 municipalities. During their stay in the reception centre, refugees are offered a short introduction programme that includes Dutch lessons, information and a course about participating in Dutch society. All refugees are offered tailor-made case management to help their integration into the Netherlands. Refugees register with the police to receive photo card identity and with the municipality to receive a civil service number in order to get access to municipality housing, social security and employment (Gray, 2008).

Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre

All refugees granted residence in New Zealand under the Refugee Quota Programme spend their first 6 weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement

Centre in Auckland. Immigration New Zealand from the Department of Labour manages the centre.

The centre can accommodate about 125 refugees from multiple ethnic groups at any one time. Facilities include accommodation blocks, an early childhood learning centre, classrooms, medical and dental clinics, a mental health clinic, and general living and recreation areas.

Orientation programmes are conducted in the refugees' language and provide general information about life in New Zealand, including an English language component and adult education, early childhood learning and care, special education, and primary and secondary classes. The orientation programme also aims to build the basic social and coping skills required for refugees' new life in New Zealand. The Auckland University of Technology coordinates the English language and education components of the programme.

During the 6 weeks at Mangere, refugees also undergo comprehensive medical and dental check-ups and, when needed, trauma counselling. Therapeutic activities are also provided for adults and children.

All refugees are given needs assessments in terms of education, employment experience, housing and social needs. All adult refugees are set up with a bank account and an Inland Revenue number and are enrolled with Work and Income New Zealand, which provides each family with a resettlement grant of up to $1,200 and income support in the form of a benefit paid directly in to their bank account.

Housing New Zealand and Refugee Services work together to locate appropriate housing for refugees in the community either through Housing New Zealand stock or the private rental market.

The Department of Labour also funds Refugee Services to provide social services and coordinate the training of volunteer support workers to help refugees with ongoing settlement needs and with accessing mainstream services on arrival in the community. Refugees are provided with this support on a case-by-case basis in the community for up to a year after they have left the centre.

Post-Mangere orientation programme interviews

Participants

At the time of the interviews, 18 of the 33 Bhutanese initially interviewed in Nepal had arrived in New Zealand. All 18 consented to participate in follow-up interviews after the Mangere orientation programme.

Those interviewed were aged 18–77 years and had a variety of educational backgrounds from being university educated to having no formal education. They also had varying degrees of skills and occupations, ranging from teachers to having no skills or occupation. Most of those interviewed had spent 16 years in the refugee camps in Nepal, although this ranged from 14 to 17 years. Consequently, some of the younger interviewees had no memory of life outside a refugee camp.

Interviews took place 6 weeks after the refugees arrived in New Zealand at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre before they were resettled in the community.

Unless otherwise specified, quotes throughout this report have been broken into the three age classifications: 'Adult' male and female, which relates to ages 20 to 35; 'Middle-aged' male and female which relates to those aged 35-50 years; and, 'Older' male and female, which corresponds to participants who are 51 years and over. Broad age classifications have been used to protect the identity of interviewees.

Interview procedures

Interviews took place on two occasions, in February and April 2009. Both sets of interviews followed the same procedure. Before the interviews took place, staff from the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre asked the potential interviewees whether they would be willing to participate in the post-Mangere orientation programme follow-up interviews. They told participants that participation was voluntary and any information they provided would be kept confidential.

Interviews were about 30–45 minutes long and followed a semi-structured questionnaire format. Interviews focused on first impressions and experiences of New Zealand, the value and experience of the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, plans, and expectations and readiness to move into the community. The interview questions are reproduced in Appendix B.

Two researchers from International Migration, Settlement and Employment Dynamics (IMSED) Research were present along with a Nepali-speaking interpreter. Interview questions were asked in English, but questions and answers were interpreted in Nepali, as needed. Interviews were recorded where permission to do so was given, otherwise detailed field notes were taken.

At the completion of interviews, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns. Researchers answered questions as they were able, and referred any other questions to relevant people.

Ethical considerations

The process undertaken throughout this research complies with the IMSED Research strategy, which outlines ethical considerations throughout all research and evaluation. The Association of Social Science Researchers' code of ethics (ASSR, 1996) and Social Policy Evaluation and Research Committee's *Good Practice Guidelines* (SPEaR, 2008) have also been followed. Further, recommendations from an in-house training manual developed for the research study Quota Refugees Ten Years On: Perspectives on integration, community and identity were also considered in this research.

3 FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ZEALAND

The Mangere interviews provided an opportunity to explore the initial impressions of New Zealand of a group with little knowledge about what to expect before arrival.

First impressions

Initial impressions and experiences of New Zealand for most of those interviewed were positive. The three most common things mentioned were:

- the environment and scenery
- New Zealanders were helpful
- the facilities and experience were more favourable than expected.

Impressions of the environment and scenery

For many, the first impression was one of their immediate surroundings, environment and scenery; for others, it was their first ever glimpse of the sea from the plane when landing into Auckland. Most noticed New Zealand was clean and green and the stark difference in weather:

> The weather is colder than in Nepal, but the direct sun is hot. (Adult female)

Impressions of New Zealanders

Once participants had taken in the initial surroundings, the New Zealand people they were in direct contact with made a strong impression; their helpfulness and friendliness was particularly noticed. As one woman said:

> Compared to people at home, people here are very helpful. We don't even need to do the dishes! (Adult female)

Impressions of Facilities and experiences

Because many had little or no idea about what to expect on their arrival, the facilities and arrangements at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre were also appreciated. As one man said:

> The facilities were more than I expected – the clothes, kitchen utensils they have given us. (Middle-aged male)

Many of those interviewed also expressed relief that New Zealand was better than they had expected and that life here might work out alright. As one man relayed:

> When I arrive it seemed better than I thought – it will be okay. (Middle-aged male)

Adjustment difficulties experienced

However, as might be expected when people arrive into a different country and culture, not all first impressions were positive. Many found it difficult to adjust to the:

- different physical environment
- impact of leaving loved ones behind
- new culture and food.

Adjusting to the different physical environment

For some, the first few days in New Zealand were difficult and involved negative thoughts, feelings and reactions. As one woman expressed it:

> In the beginning, my first impression was that the sky felt so close to the ground and I can't actually understand what all peoples are saying– it felt suffocating. (Adult female)

Adjusting to the impact of leaving loved ones behind

For others, the impact of having to leave loved ones in Nepal and the reality of their situation and third-country resettlement were being realised:

> As I reach here, I was not happy at all, because my relatives are left in Nepal. Natural things are not replacement for many emotional need. Bhutan is still tolerating the chronic pain of Bhutan Government and my family are sitting there under the heat of the roof of the sky. I am not that happy at all. (Adult female)

Adjusting to new culture and food

Participants also experienced difficulties adjusting to a new culture, in particular to the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre where unfamiliar food was being introduced:

> Main problem is the food – we are used to rice and lentils but here, the food is different. The elderly don't like it; they're not used to it. (Adult male)

4 MANGERE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT CENTRE

The Mangere interviews also provided an opportunity to gain insight into the interviewees' experiences of New Zealand's orientation programme while they were in attendance rather than retrospectively. Questions explored interviewees' impressions and thoughts on the programme in general as well as its specific components, in addition to problems they had encountered or parts they felt were missing or not covered sufficiently.

Valuable elements of the orientation programme

English language and information sessions

The Auckland University of Technology (AUT) at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre offers programmes for children and adults. The adult education programme includes English language and orientation to New Zealand sessions that introduce refugees to the essential skills and information they need to integrate successfully into the wider New Zealand community.

Because they arrived with little factual information about New Zealand, the interviewees found the education and information sessions useful and almost everyone who was interviewed said they found everything about the AUT sessions valuable. A few offered further insight into specific sessions they found most useful.

- English language and pronunciation classes:

  > Found the English useful – can't survive without it. (Adult female)

- General information about New Zealand (for example, its history, culture, and systems):

  > Life in New Zealand, the mud pools in Rotorua was a surprise. Christchurch seems beautiful, with flowers and greenery. (Adult female)

- Rules and regulations:

  > Law and order of New Zealander – if we do not have a knowledge of law and order I think it will be difficult to someone who is staying in this country. (Middle-aged male)

- The education system:

  > The system of education – lots of direction about study. (Adult female)

Some of those interviewed had small children, so were unable to attend sessions or were present for only some or parts of them.

Other useful sessions

Other agencies also give presentations and run sessions about a variety of topics. The sessions those interviewed found commonly valuable were by the following organisations.

- The Gambling Foundation:

  > We may think it's just an innocent game and we end up gambling. This was very useful. Pokie machines more dangerous than wild tigers at home – they could lead to violence and other problems'. (Adult male)

- The New Zealand Police:

  > Learnt the police won't just take you and beat you. Here they are like friends – in Nepal you are afraid of them. (Middle-aged female)

- The Fire Service:

  > Fire safety – that's important. I think every people enjoyed it. (Adult male)

- Refugees as Survivors:

  > We got counselling. For the depressed people they are getting ideas and support and some people can't sleep at night so they taught us exercise to make our mind free so that we can sleep. (Adult female)

Ways the orientation programme could better meet the needs of refugees

The timing of interviews at the end of the Mangere orientation programme enabled reflection on what else could have been offered at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre to encourage those leaving to feel better prepared on arrival to the community.

More classes on the English language, banking and housing

The most common area where it was felt more focus was needed was with English language. Some felt more classes would have helped them to have a better grasp of and confidence in the language on their arrival to the community:

> Would be helpful to have the English classes for a bit longer. (Adult female)

In addition, it was felt that there was a lack of interpreters at the centre who could act as important conduits of information to attendees:

> There were lots from our ethnic groups, but only one interpreter. It was hard for those who don't understand English. (Adult female)

More information on banking and housing would also be an improvement:

> We were given some information on banking and housing but this was not sufficient. (Adult female)

Fewer disturbances during classes

Many interviewees were also dissatisfied with the number of disruptions during sessions. Many commented that orientation sessions were often disrupted by people being collected for or going to medical examinations. This was particularly difficult because it disrupted the flow of sessions and meant that those leaving missed out on important information. It was generally agreed that a more

appropriate time could be sought for medical examinations to decrease the number of disturbances:

> Disturbances during classes when we have to go to different appointments. Would be good to have these on other days to minimise disturbance and help learning. (Middle-aged male)

Barriers to attending orientation sessions

Women with young children had their time at the centre disrupted because they were often unable to attend sessions or missed parts of them. This meant they did not get the same level of assistance and information as others received, which led them to feel unprepared about going out into the community.

More appropriate food at the centre

The most frequently identified area for improvement was with the food served at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. Almost all of those interviewed (15 out of 18) commented on the food served at the centre, with many interviewees finding the food inappropriate. This created a difficult adjustment that hindered initial settlement into New Zealand. It was particularly difficult for children and older people.

In addition to taste of the food, many had cultural or religious objections to how food was prepared and served. Many of the Nepali Bhutanese are Hindu who do not eat beef or are vegetarian. Some felt the treatment of the food was unacceptable according to their religious beliefs and cultural practices; some mentioned that the supposedly vegetarian food was not vegetarian; and others commented that beef was served next to rice and other food, which to them was 'taboo'. As one man said:

> The food was difficult here, especially for certain family members. Regular fasting was very difficult [every 11th day he ate only potato or kumara but no grains or meat]. Had rice cooker brought by a family member – cook this in the bathroom [especially when beef or meat is being cooked in the kitchen] even mentioning beef is terrible – the cow is holy. (Adult male)

Certain meals were also found to be problematic for this group. Egg is not a part of the Nepali or Hindu vegetarian diet. However, at one point, the Bhutanese were served a meal that contained eggs. Those who ate the meal experienced major gastric problems, because their digestive systems were unable to cope with the 'foreign' food. Some also commented that the gastric problems highlighted the inadequate toilet facilities at the centre – there were not enough facilities to cope with this crisis:

> Many things are difficult – the toilet, bathroom. One toilet, two toilets are there, and many people, and we have to go together. They have been so dirty. (Adult male)

There was a general observation that many interviewees had lost weight since the interviews in Nepal. Many of the Bhutanese, particularly the elderly, had

gone on an enforced fast because they could not stomach the food as a result of of its unusual taste and concerns about how food was prepared:

> My daughter didn't eat for 15–20 days and now is only eating a very little. Happy with the food, but we don't cope easily with it. If the centre could arrange for some ethnic food – A lot of food here is being wasted. (Middle-aged male)

Although interviewees expressed dissatisfaction about the food and its preparation, they also generally acknowledged and understood that people of many ethnicities, cultures and dietary needs had to be catered for at the centre. One even provided a suggestion:

> After arriving – they could arrange a meeting with the arrivals to talk about the food that will be served. This way we could save money from wasted food. We could offer volunteers to help cook the food. (Middle-aged male)

Other difficulties experienced

Other individuals mentioned:

- that everything was new and difficult:

  > Everything is new for us, everything is difficult, but after Sunday it will be ok. We'll do best, better. (Adult female)

- the length of the trip to Mission Bay:

  > The time for this could be extended, because once we leave Auckland it will be a long time before we come back. (Adult female)

- access cards to the centre not working:

  > The access cards didn't work – need to constantly disturb staff here to get in and out of the centre. (Adult male)

- boredom and wasted time:

  > I was bored at times – it would have been good to have a library of books to read. People want to learn more and spend their time usefully. It was wasted time. The children were also wasting time – there was a lack of learning materials/entertainment. The evenings and mornings were difficult. (Middle-aged male)

5 PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION NEEDS

Before departure, refugees to New Zealand are given a pre-departure settlement booklet that provides basic information about New Zealand. The booklet's aim is to help ease tension about resettlement to an unknown country and covers the climate, people, language, history, health care, housing, education for children and adults, travel to New Zealand, the Mangere orientation programme and so on. This booklet is translated into the first language of the client group.

Refugees are also given an opportunity to ask questions about New Zealand and the resettlement process at the end of their UNHCR interview. Additionally, once the Department of Labour has approved the refugees and allocated them to an intake for travel to New Zealand, they also attend a briefing with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This briefing focuses on preparing to travel to New Zealand. Bhutanese refugees stay at the IOM transit centre in Kathmandu for three days before departure.

Those interviewed were asked about the information they had received before their departure from the camps and whether other information would have been useful for them before they left. Interviewees gave a variety of responses to these questions which are explored in this section.

More information about New Zealand

Almost all of those interviewed felt they did not have adequate information about New Zealand or there was some aspect about New Zealand and its systems they would have liked more information on before leaving the camps. Many interviewees commented that they had minimal knowledge about New Zealand compared with other resettlement countries such as the United States and Canada. They experienced a sense of 'missing out' and a feeling that those going to other countries had better and timelier information, so were much better prepared. For many it was felt some pre-departure orientation would be invaluable. For example:

> People only know a little about New Zealand [compared to other countries like the United States and Canada]. Orientation for those countries happens there, but not for New Zealand. Would have been good to do some orientation there. Basic orientation classes there would be good, with pre-departure information – a one- to two-day orientation. (Adult male)

> If the information is given before hand, then we can prepare themselves, so that they won't face much trouble here. (Adult female)

> Cleanliness, hygiene, toileting practice, people wash outside, toilet system is very different. (Adult male)

More information about what and how much to bring to New Zealand

Information about what to bring to New Zealand

Many of those interviewed felt there was not enough information about what to bring to New Zealand. They were uncertain about the New Zealand climate, what would be supplied in New Zealand, and maximum baggage allowances, so many of those interviewed packed more than was necessary and were charged for excess luggage. This caused stress and concern that could have been prevented with better information:

> I brought excess bags – and had to pay money on the way and had lots of trouble. I bought three very big bags – 25 kg–30 kg – I thought it would be ok because was told it was 100 kg for the [all] of us, but it was not, as only allowed 20 kgs. (Middle-aged male)

> Clothing – many were worried about what clothing to bring, but didn't know that clothing would be supplied here. (Middle-aged male)

Information about customs processes

Interviewees also felt there was a lack of coherent information about what they could bring into New Zealand. This distressed some of those interviewed. UNHCR officials check all bags before refugees leave Nepal and apply the same rules (according to United States regulations) regardless of destination country and its allowances. Some of those interviewed had packed Ghurka knives (a traditional cooking tool) into their checked luggage, which UNHCR officials later removed. This caused distress because the refugees had been correctly informed that they could bring these traditional items into New Zealand so long as they were in their checked luggage. This was exacerbated by the fact they had also been told to bring items of cultural importance to keep their culture and traditions alive in New Zealand:

> Need clear information about what we could bring – not allowed to carry scissors [Ghurka knife and scissors taken out]. Told us that we must not forget nationality and customs – but were not allowed to carry Ghurka knife for cooking. We should be allowed to carry it – UNHCR needs to be told. I am expressing the feelings of other people. (Middle-aged male)

More information about the journey to New Zealand

For many, the journey to New Zealand was long and stressful. A lack of reliable information meant many were unprepared, with some not even knowing the length of the journey. The stopover time in Singapore was short, and the group had to navigate its way from one terminal to another and find the correct boarding gates. Because of the short timeframe many had to run, which was made difficult by not knowing where to go, carrying bags and children, and being confronted by foreign technology such as travellators. Interviewees felt more support at this stage of the journey would have been helpful:

> After changing the flight in Singapore it was quite difficult, at that time, no one was representing there was no person from New Zealand, was

no person in Singapore who can direct us to another flight. It was quite difficult. That caused problems. (Adult male)

Transit – didn't know we had limited time – we had to run with babies and bags. No help and support was provided. There was too little time. When we came to the travellator many women fell down on that, because they couldn't walk comfortably on their own, they had to run. (Middle-aged male)

5 PLANS FOR AFTER THE ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

Interviewees were asked what their plans were for after the orientation programme when they left the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. The main plan was to learn English and then to study or find paid work. At the same time, interviewees wanted to enrol children in school and get to know their new community. Only one person had no plans.

Learn English

Twelve out of the 18 interviewed said that their priority and initial plan was to learn English:

> To study language. Once we learn English then we will find work and earn our own living – that's our target. (Adult female)

> If my child is settled I will go and learn English. Without learning you can't do anything – you have to do this first. (Adult female)

Find study or paid work

After learning English, it was common for interviewees to then say they wanted to study or find paid work:

> In the short term it will be limited, but later I will get work matching my qualifications. (Middle-aged male)

> Work and study – I cannot live idle, for me, for my family. (Middle-aged male)

Enrol children in school and get to know the community

Others said that their plans (usually in combination with learning English) were to:

- enrol children in school:

  > We have to enrol our children to their school. (Adult female)

- get to know their community and local area:

  > Study the city – what is available and where. Ask everything – types of people, how to communicate with them. (Middle-aged male)

- help the community:

  > I have lots of hopes – I can help the country, the people and the community. (Middle-aged male)

Have no plans

Only one man said he had no plans and was relying on his children for support:

> I have no plans – more likely our children will support us. But we have been told our children will be further away. This might be difficult. (Older male)

6 LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Concerns about living in the community

Those interviewed were asked whether they were worried or concerned about going out into the community and whether they felt prepared to go out. Most had no concerns about living in the community, but a few were concerned about their limited English, their living arrangements and isolation.

No concerns about living in the community

Fourteen out of the 18 interviewed said they had no concerns and felt well prepared to go out into the community:

> 'I have no worries – I will go and live in my home. I feel prepared.' (Middle-aged female)

Concerns about limited English and isolation

Those that said they had concerns or worries were concerned about not being able to speak English and their family living arrangements and worried about day-to-day living and isolation:

> The main worry is that we have seen so many things we have never used – we may misuse or damage them. But people may teach us how to use them. Shopping – and how to use a bankcard. (Adult female)

> I have many worries, because everything is new. We don't know how to go to the market and buy a simple thing. My mother don't know how to speak English and when she come out of the home she find difficulties – there are many obstacles. We don't know how to speak English properly, it is a difficulty. We cannot find similar ethnic groups, and we cannot extend our culture and believed they will bring wealth and fortune to the family. (Adult female)

Concerns about the appropriateness of housing and role of daughters

Interviewees also raised concerns about the appropriateness of housing. The problems were predominantly around the reliance on being housed with or having food being prepared by daughters. Family members would not eat at the daughter or sister's house as this would incur debt. Generally, other family members should help the daughter and not the other way around as in the Nepali Bhutanese culture/religion daughters are highly respected and treated like 'goddesses':

> The thing is that, my grandparents will never eat their dinner or lunch in their sister, daughter's home it's not possible. (Adult male)

What it will be like living in the community

When asked what they knew about the city in which they were being resettled, almost all of those interviewed said they knew nothing or knew only a little about such matters as the weather or that it had a university:

> I don't know where it is. I don't know anything about the city. (Middle-aged female)

Interviewees gave mixed responses about what it would be like to live out in the community. Most of those interviewed had family in their cities of resettlement, and some knew of neighbours from Nepal or others from the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre who would be living in the same place. Many of those interviewed said they would be fine out in the community and people would be available to help them if they needed it:

> There will be people to help us. They will access us, like here. (Adult female)

Others were unsure or acknowledged that they would have to adjust to living on their own in New Zealand:

> It will be difficult at first, but easy once we adjust to the community. (Adult female)

> If the peoples are similar like here, it will be nice but if there is peoples who behave rude it will be difficult for us because we don't know how to face problems over here. (Adult female)

Information needed before going out into the community

Interviewees were asked if there was anything they felt they needed to know more about before they went out to live in the community. Given the lack of knowledge about the resettlement cities it is unsurprising that many of those interviewed wanted to know more about their resettlement city, including what facilities they would find in their local community, where to go to get things and how long this would take, as well as just general information about the city and their community:

> Whether there is handy school, hospitals and parks nearby, where we are going to live, how long it takes to get places. (Adult female)

> Housing – I had expected to know about the area and street. But I won't know until we arrive there – I would have liked to know more earlier. I would like to live in close proximity to other Bhutanese families going there. (Older male)

> Many things – what is the population of the town – I haven't found information on the computer. Demographics of the local community – its ethnic background. Geographical features. (Adult female)

> They haven't given us a clear picture of where we are going. They could have given us information about Christchurch, but my brother and volunteers will give us information – 6 weeks is limited in what they can tell us. (Middle-aged male)

Things to look forward to about living in the community

Interviewees were asked what they were most looking forward to about living out in the community. Those interviewed were most commonly looking forward to:

- having volunteers available to help them adjust:

  > People will help us with shopping, then we will do it ourselves. (Older male)

- making new friends and meeting new people:

  > Make friends, move around say hello. Mingle with friends. (Adult female)

- having their own home:

  > Having own home and being able to live our own life happily. (Middle-aged male)

- taking up study opportunities:

  > Studying – if you don't do study you can't do anything. (Adult female)

- seeing the city:

  > My maternal uncle has told us about [the] city – I want to see it! (Adult female)

7 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONCLUSION

These interviews provided a unique opportunity to gain important insight into the expectations and experiences of a newly arrived cohort of refugees. Interviews revealed the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre orientation programme and facilities generally exceeded expectations, and interviewees found that the information provided was useful and relevant. However, there were some suggestions for the way in which the centre could better meet this group's needs.

Pre-departure information

For many of the Bhutanese refugees resettled in New Zealand the camps in Nepal have been home for up to 18 years. Hence, they have no knowledge of life in a modern Western society. They need appropriate information and time to prepare in order to easily adapt to a foreign culture and country. This is extremely important because wrong information can lead to unrealistic expectations and increased personal difficulties and extended periods of adjustment on arrival (Gray, 2008).

One limitation of living in a refugee camp is a lack of reliable information. The Bhutanese refugee situation is unique in that a large percentage of the refugees are being resettled in the United States and Canada, so are exposed to information from other countries' pre-departure orientation courses. Many of those interviewed commented that the main source of information in terms of the journey came from others within the camps who had attended pre-departure orientation before resettlement in other countries.

The interviews revealed the need for better support before arrival by way of pre-departure information. It is important that sufficient timely and accurate information be given to refugees before they depart for New Zealand to decrease the level of difficulties experienced and aid adjustment and successful settlement into the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre and life in New Zealand. In particular, more detailed information is needed about: New Zealand culture, geography, healthcare and educational systems; the 6 week orientation programme that will be received on arrival to New Zealand; the journey to New Zealand including baggage allowances and transit information.

Providing more comprehensive information prior to departure would also give those being resettled in New Zealand an opportunity to ask questions at a more appropriate time and in a more relaxed environment than during selection interviews where the focus is on gaining approval rather than information gathering.[6]

[6] Note: The Refugee Resettlement Strategy currently under development is addressing the need for pre-departure information and assessing possible options for short orientation sessions prior to departure.

Food served at the Mangere Refugee resettlement Centre

A major challenge for almost all interviewees during their stay at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre was the food served at the centre. As a new cohort of refugees at the centre, their strict dietary needs were not necessarily well understood or able to be catered for. There is a need to clearly communicate with refugees how food is prepared and ingredients used in all meals. In addition, food prepared at the centre needs to be prepared in a way that is appropriate for the refugees at the centre at the time, and care must be taken to avoid cross contamination. For example, it is important that beef is not prepared and served next to vegetarian meals whilst Bhutanese refugees are at the centre. In turn, refugees at the centre also need to be made aware that they are part of a multi-ethnic intake of residents at the centre, and kitchen staff cannot cater for the dietary requirements of all residents all of the time.[7]

Enlisting support for the cultural orientation programme from the broader community of interest

A useful addition to the orientation programme would be enlisting support from the broader community of interest (for example, the New Zealand Nepali community) for the cultural orientation programme. This support would provide valuable context and relevant perspectives for new refugees. Such support is currently provided to a limited extent by cross-cultural workers at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. It is well received, although refugees could benefit from more such engagement.

Better access for women with young children

Interviews identified the difficulty that women with young children have whilst at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. It is important for these women to access the whole orientation programme, so they are as equally prepared as others to go out into the community. Finding ways for women to leave their children that they are comfortable with so they can attend AUT classes as much as possible will be of great benefit on arrival to the community.

Timing and phasing of aspects of the orientation programme

It is important that whilst at the centre refugees have access to all information and classes available at the centre. Interviewees commonly expressed frustration during interviews conducted at the end of the Mangere orientation programme that classes and learning was disrupted by medical examinations.

It is acknowledged amongst agencies at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre that it is not ideal for residents to have to attend medical appointments during classes. However, whenever possible, appointments with all other agencies are made outside of these sessions, particularly orientation sessions. Furthermore, health screening is an essential part of the Mangere programme and certain aspects of the screening, such as X-rays, immunisations and dental checks are run by off-site medical staff so the timing of these appointments is not always flexible.

Resources and activities after sessions

Some interviewees voiced their frustration at the lack of activities and resources available at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre outside of formal orientation sessions. Many relayed a feeling of boredom and/or felt that they could use this down time in a more productive way. Suggestions included:

- establishing a library or information centre so refugees can continue to learn about New Zealand and practise their English (self-study) outside of sessions[8]
- creating two television rooms – one for children and one for adults – to ensure appropriate programming for all age groups
- having daily post-session recreational activities, particularly for children.

It must be acknowledged that recreational activities in evenings and weekends occur on an ad hoc basis. It is difficult to have anything organised regularly, as the timetable is full after AUT hours so residents can attend other sessions with Refugees as Survivors, Refugee Services, Work and Income, the bank, and Housing New Zealand. Therefore, additional recreational programming must be balanced against the existing programme.

Conclusion

The Bhutanese refugees who participated in the Mangere interviews were predominantly positive and hopeful about their new life in New Zealand. Although many acknowledged the obstacles they needed to overcome and areas where they had found adjusting difficult, they generally had a positive outlook to the future and a readiness to move into the community. Whilst there were areas of improvement suggested overall the Mangere orientation programme had provided a good foundation of knowledge and most felt adequately prepared to enter the community and were looking forward to the next step in the resettlement process.

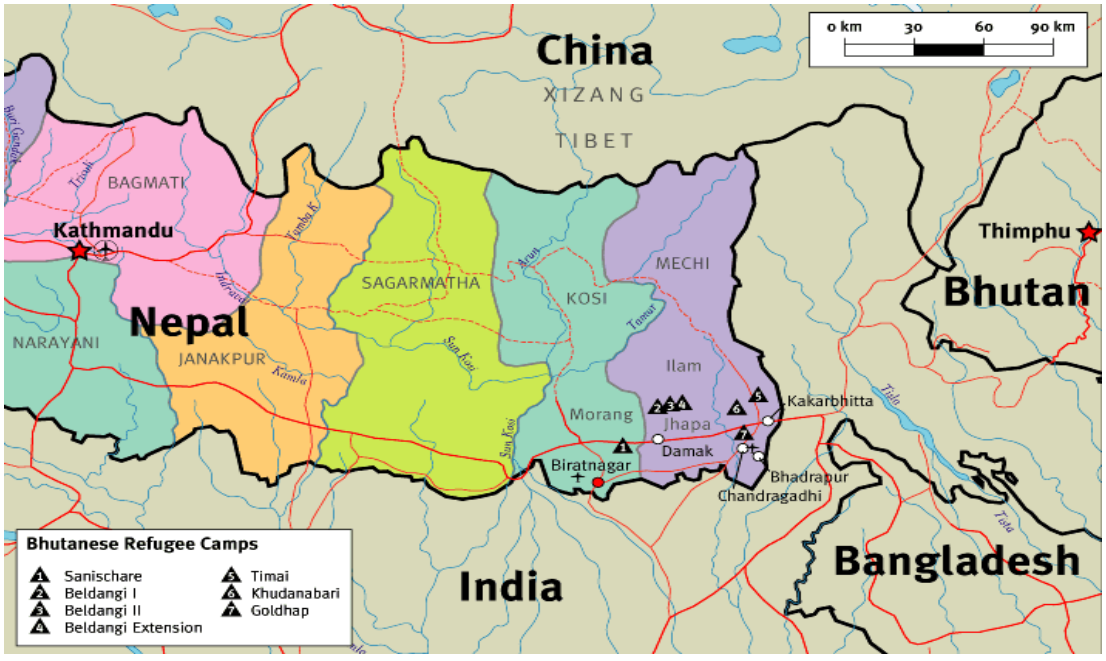
[8] Note: since these interviews were undertaken a library area has been incorporated at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

APPENDIX A: MAPS

Map A1: Location of Bhutan and Nepal

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Map A2: Location of refugee camps in Nepal



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Study of Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Needs, Expectations and Experiences: Phase 2 – Post Orientation Programme interviews

Introduce self and research, obtain signed consent for the interviews

Question 1

First of all I want to ask you about what you thought of NZ when you first arrived.

Q1A

What do you remember most about the first few days in NZ (people, weather etc) ?

- *Prompt – what were your first impressions?*

Q1B

How did your first impressions compare with what you knew about NZ or expected about NZ before you arrived?

Q1C

What was similar or different to your pre-departure expectations?

- *Prompt If it was similar or different, did this matter to you?*
- *If it did matter, can you tell me why?*

Question 2

I want to now ask you some questions about the 6 week orientation programme you have just completed

Q2A

Thinking about the last 6 weeks, what areas of the programme have you found most valuable?

Q2B

Thinking specifically about the AUT orientation programme what did you enjoy/find valuable?

Q2C

Thinking about sessions held by other agencies what did you enjoy/find valuable?

Q2D

Are there any issues/subjects about transition to life in NZ you feel were missing or not covered sufficiently by the Mangere programme?

Q2E

What did you least enjoy or find difficult with the programme?

Question 3

Last time we talked, you told me a bit about what you knew about NZ before you arrived here.

Q3A

Thinking about this now, was there some information that might have been useful for you to know before you arrived in NZ?

Q3B

What information would be the most useful for those still in the camp who are waiting to be resettled to New Zealand?

Question 4

What are your plans for when you leave the Mangere Centre?

Question 5

Do you have any concerns or worries about going out into the community?

- Prompt – do you feel prepared to go out and live in the community?

Question 6

What do you think it will be like to live out in the community?

- *Prompt – Do you know anything about the city where you will be living?*
- *Prompt – Do you know any people in the city where you will be living?*

Question 7

Do you feel like there are other things you need to know more about before you go out to live in the community?

Question 8

What things are you most looking forward to about living out in the community?

Question 9

Is there anything else you would like to tell me – about anything at all?

Thank you for participating in this research. Outline next steps for the research

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