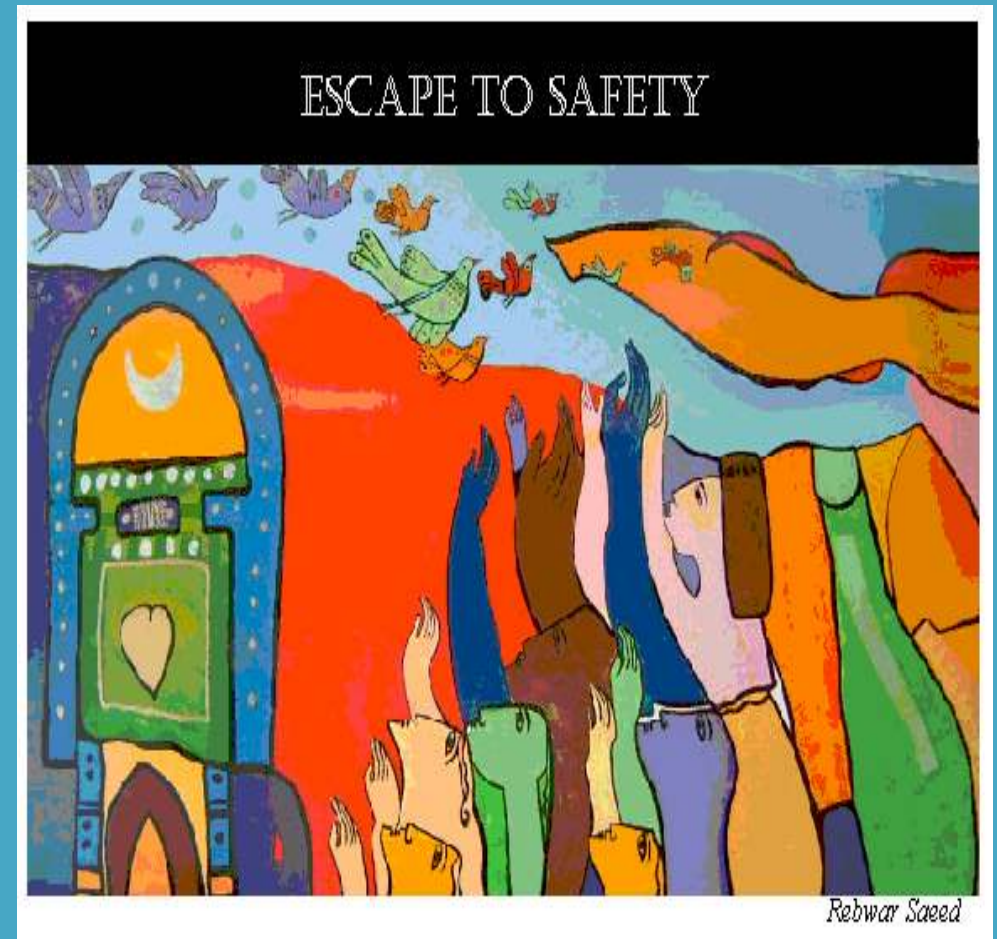


Refugee Resettlement in Oregon



Who is a Refugee?

- A refugee must be outside their country of origin and unwilling to return due to:
- **A well-founded fear of persecution**
- Because of the individual's:
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Political affiliation
 - Nationality
 - Membership of a particular social group



Stateless or Legal?

- Refugee status is a **legal status**, granted by the United Nations within a refugee camp or processing center
 - More than 68.5 million people are currently displaced due to war or violence
 - Of these, more than 25 million are considered refugees
 - The United Nations reviews all other Durable Solutions before granting someone eligible for resettlement to a 3rd country
- * Approx 0.4% of the world's refugees will be resettled to a 3rd country**

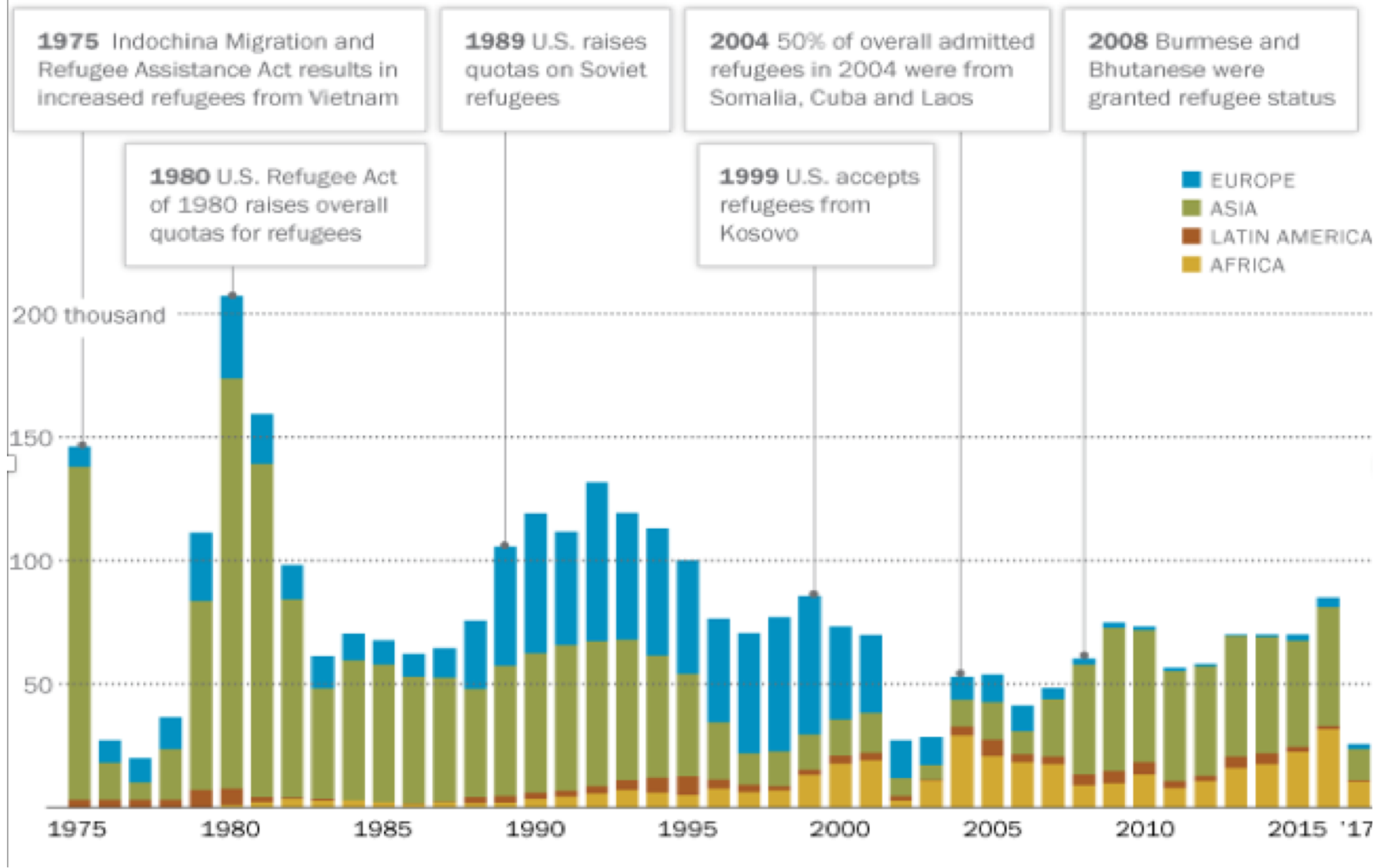
US Refugee Resettlement

- The US began resettling refugees formally in the 1940's after WW2 and the Holocaust (with Oregon participating!)
- The Refugee Act was passed in 1980, creating the current system of resettlement, in partnership with the United Nations
- The Department of State creates an annual budget based on the Presidential Ceiling – annual number of refugees allowed in
- Since 1980, refugees have been the most vetted immigrant group allowed into the US

US Refugee Admissions

The shifting origins of refugees to the U.S. over time

Number of refugees admitted to the U.S., by region of origin of principal applicant and fiscal year



U.S. Federal System of Refugee Resettlement

United Nations refers refugee cases to US Dept of State and Dept of Homeland Security for vetting and consideration

All cases must be approved by US Department of State

Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration Services

Department of State refers case to one of 9 National Voluntary Agencies

To provide 30-90 days of pre and post arrival services

Called Reception and Placement (R&P) Services

9 National Voluntary Agencies contract with 300 local affiliate resettlement agencies across the US

30-90 days of R&P services required are nearly identical across the US, much of the initial assistance is provided by private donations and volunteers in the community

Case management services address pre and post arrival incl. airport transport, setting up apartment, housing stability, budgeting, medical and mental health services, child care and school enrollment, services for elderly and disability, referrals to employment and ESL, etc

Local resettlement agencies are paid per capita / only receive funding per arrival

Federal Refugee Benefits and Expectations

- Federal law - as required by the UN - entitles refugees to basic benefits in order to survive and gain skills to become self-sufficient.
- All refugees are entitled to cash assistance, food stamps and health insurance until 8 months pass or they are self-sufficient. This assistance varies state to state.
- The federal Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, passes funds through states' HHS offices who contract with Resettlement Agencies to provide case management and employment services (in Oregon, IRCO provides state-contracted employment services).
- All refugees are entitled to work authorization and are expected to become self-sufficient within the 8 month period.
- Oregon's state budget/pass through funds have been dramatically cut due to low arrival numbers.

Refugee Resettlement Agencies in Oregon

- Catholic Charities of Oregon
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Lutheran Community Services NW

Resettlement Agency's Case Management Services

Current Oregon State Contract

- Can serve refugees up to 12 months, throughout the state, which include:
- Benefits and referrals to DHS
- Navigation of health services and mental health support
- Navigation and support of housing stability services
- Assistance with utility bills or landlord/tenant issues
- Transport to appointments and training on use of public transport
- Immigration assistance and referrals
- Advocacy regarding domestic violence, U.S. laws, and hate crimes

Case Management Services, cont...

- Interpretation assistance and access to language services
- Referrals to culturally specific support groups and religious organizations
- Cultural navigation and pairing with ESL mentors
- Support with budgeting, financial literacy and education
- Identification and referrals to employment skills and other job support services
- Problem solving and life skills acquisition
- Life skills sessions in any area where the client lacks knowledge

Additional Support Services

- Psychosocial support and emotional wellness education
- Intensive medical service coordination
- Family preservation services, legal, housing and social service support for domestic violence and child welfare cases
- Assistance navigating other legal or criminal issues, including support for victims of crime
- In-home services including parenting, ESL, medical and psychosocial support

Refugees in Oregon - Stats

- Oregon's refugee resettlement agencies have resettled 67,154 refugees between 1975 and 2017
- 1 out of 10 Oregonians are foreign born
- Over 11% of Oregon self-employed businesses are immigrant or refugee owned

Refugees: Income, Tax Revenue

- On average, refugee incomes triple after 25 years or more in the U.S. to \$67,000, which surpasses the median American household income by \$14,000
- Immigrants paid \$1.7B in federal taxes and \$736.6M in Oregon State taxes

Oregon's New Neighbors – Where Refugees Live



Impact of Changes

- A drop from 110,000 refugees in 2017 down to 45,000 in 2018 to 30,000 currently.
 - Admitted refugees are much lower (only 23,000 arrived in FY18 out of the 45,000)
- Funding to Oregon's Refugee Resettlement Agencies has been cut by nearly \$2 million annually due to this drop in refugee arrivals
- More than 100 refugee resettlement agencies have closed across the US, some states no longer serving refugees at all
- Families indefinitely separated due to travel bans
- Thousands of refugees who were assured resettlement to Oregon had status revoked

HB 2508 - Oregon's Welcoming Refugees Bill



HS 2508 – State Funds Allocated for Refugee Services

- Two years of extended case management services for all newly arriving refugees by Oregon's 3 Resettlement Agencies (RA's), an extension of services conducted through state's current FY 19 contract
- Ensure stability of refugee resettlement in Oregon for two years
- Access for any refugee-benefited person across Oregon support through RA's case management services up to 5 years after arriving in the US
- Funds allocated for extension of services for state contracted school enrollment and success program for refugee children
- *Amendment drafted:* Funds allocated for extension of employment services and coordination by state-contracted refugee employment agency

Evidence-Based Services

- Bill is modeled after State of Utah's refugee resettlement program
- Continuity of care, coordinated access, and trauma-informed services
- Other states, including New York, are following suit
- Columbia University's study evaluating Utah's model
 - Program's success
 - Increase of refugee integration
 - Decrease of dependency on public benefits
 - Equity of services and community involvement