

# ***Expectations & Experiences of Resettlement:***

***Sudanese refugees' perspectives on their journeys  
from Egypt to Australia, Canada and the United States***

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## Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

I first met [interviewee] in church and we chatted together. We had known each other since Cairo. I told him about the research and explained to him why this research was being undertaken. I asked him if he was willing to participate in the research and he accepted. I asked if I could go and interview him in his house and he gladly said yes, I can. He gave me his residential address and telephone and agreed on a day and time to visit him. On the agreed day, I went to his house and interviewed him in his house. He and his wife welcomed me and gave me Coke to drink. I then started the interview when his wife left to a shopping center. The children were in their rooms. He was willing to talk and I could observe that he is happy and his house has got all the utilities and is spacious with four bedrooms. When I asked him to compare life in Sudan and Egypt to life in Australia, he told me that Australia is many, many times better than Sudan, because the government gives money to those not working and the people are very kind and honest. There is not corruption like in Sudan and Egypt and there is freedom for one to express his opinion regardless of one's status, i.e., refugee, migrant or citizen. – *notes from the first interview conducted in Australia by one of the project's four research assistants, James Wani.*

Cairo, Egypt is currently home to 20,500 recognized refugees, one of the largest recognized urban refugee populations in the world. Because of the city's location at the crossroads of two major refugee-producing regions, Africa and the Middle East, its proximity to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea, and the resulting continuous flow of asylum seekers into and out of the city, Cairo provides a unique and intriguing context for refugee studies.

A key center for refugee-based activity is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) regional office, located in Cairo. In recent years, this unit has referred approximately 4,000 recognized refugees per year for resettlement to the United States, Canada, Australia and a number of other smaller receiving countries, making it the largest such program in the world. But despite the size of the refugee population and the resettlement program in Cairo, there has been little research conducted into the expectations and experiences of the refugees themselves on this process. These perspectives could be significant determinants of success in the resettlement country. Therefore, the Forced Migration & Refugee Studies Program at the American University in Cairo generously agreed to fund the study described throughout the rest of this paper, a pilot project seeking to provide preliminary documentation of refugees' expectations and experiences throughout the resettlement process.

The 15,000-strong Sudanese refugee community in Cairo is both the largest refugee population and the primary beneficiary of the resettlement program. Thus, this group formed the most logical case study for this project. The purposes of this project, besides filling a gap in the research already conducted on refugee resettlement, were two-fold. Primarily, it aimed to investigate Sudanese refugees' expectations of life in resettlement while in Egypt and previous to travel, and their experiences of life in resettlement after arrival in Australia, Canada and the United States, the three largest receiving countries worldwide. Secondly, through this report and various other articles and presentations, the authors aim to facilitate the communication of these perspectives to the governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental agencies

whose actions can significantly impact the lives of refugees, in the hopes of improving refugees' experiences of resettlement and adjustment.

To this end, this research seeks to answer several key questions:

- What expectations do refugees have for life upon resettlement? How, or do, these expectations differ from their actual experiences?
- What factors shape refugees' expectations of life in the resettlement country?
- How do the policies of the three resettlement countries affect refugees' expectations and experiences throughout the resettlement process?
- What role do refugees' expectations play in their experiences of resettlement and life in their resettlement country? Are they, or can they be, determinants of success in resettlement?
- How do refugees define 'successful resettlement'? How does this compare to the government's understanding of 'successful resettlement' in the three resettlement countries? What factors can affect someone's perception of their resettlement experience?

The remaining sections of this chapter provide background information integral to this research, including a review of the literature on refugee resettlement that reveals the gaps this research intends to fill, a brief historical background of the situation in Sudan causing people to seek asylum in Egypt, a sketch of the resulting situation for refugees in Cairo; and an overview of the methodology employed in conducting fieldwork. Chapter II discusses a number of the variables that could influence success or failure in resettlement, including demographics of the study population, resettlement country policies and information received by refugees previous to resettlement. Chapter III presents and analyzes the significant findings of this research project, compiling them into the following sections: *Expectations & Experiences*; *Relationships with Resettlement Agencies*; *Participation & Integration*; and *Perspectives on Success*. Chapter IV provides recommendations for improving the chances of individual success in resettlement, including refinements to the receiving countries' respective Cultural Orientation sessions (facilitated by the International Organization for Migration); observations of the impact of specific policies on refugees' experiences of resettlement in the receiving countries; and recommendations for a smoother facilitation of the overall resettlement process in Cairo and in transit to the receiving countries. It also identifies several topics and specific hypotheses for future research that rose out of this project, as well as highlights the key findings of the study and their place in the existing literature on refugee resettlement.

## **BACKGROUND LITERATURE**

Many previous studies played an important role in guiding this research. The most important literature for this project specifically relates to understanding resettlement or integration from the perspective of refugees. J.W. Berry (1992), in his seminal work on acculturation, defines integration as one of four acculturation options. Acculturation refers to the cultural change that “results from continuous, first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups”. In another work, he attached a social-psychological meaning to the term, describing it as the way in which “individuals negotiate their way into life in a plural society” (1986: 2), and ascribed four acculturation options that can act as both strategies and outcomes: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (1992).

Assimilation is the process by which a minority group adopts the traits of the host culture, to the extent that they are ultimately absorbed by the majority group (Wahlbeck 1999: 12). Integration implies a certain degree of cultural integrity among the resettled or minority group, but also a movement to join and become part of the mainstream or majority society (Berry 1992). There are many conditions which influence a group’s successful acculturation into a new society, including factors present before and during the acculturation process and factors within the settlement society. Berry argues that since many of these factors are known, it is possible to develop policies and programs that could increase the probability of successful adaptation.

Although Berry’s work highlights factors that may aid in the adaptation process, Korac (2003), in her recent research on refugees in Italy and the Netherlands, states there is still very little comparative research which focuses on refugees’ own perceptions of their integration. Building on the work of Montgomery (1996), Korac found that “how refugees feel about their experiences is as important an indicator as are objective indicators of adaptation such as employment, income and socio-economic mobility” (53). Therefore, a qualitative approach to integration and settlement issues, allowing respondents to speak freely and documenting their thoughts and opinions, is more beneficial to this research than a quantitative approach which tends to present a by-the-numbers, “tidier-than-life account of social reality” (ibid). Korac’s major finding, the importance of refugees’ perspectives on their integration, affirms Harrell-Bond’s assertion that the manner in which refugees are assisted can actually undermine their personal coping strategies (1999).

Two other studies, by Majka and Valtonen respectively, highlight the importance of examining resettlement from the perspective of refugees. Majka, in her 1991 work analyzing resettlement programs in the United States and Britain, found that “although both refugee systems and non-systems emerged and are sustained in the interests of aiding forced migrants, we have little information about refugees’ perceptions about the quality, quantity and process of assistance as well as on whether the aid endeavors actually benefit the target population” (281). Understanding refugees’ perspectives on policy is essential since refugees play the primary role in their own resettlement. Valtonen, in her work with Middle Eastern refugees in Finland, further indicates the necessity of understanding refugees’ perspectives on resettlement. Through looking at refugees’ goals for life in resettlement versus their actual conditions, Valtonen is able to analyze refugees’ integration process from the perspective of refugees themselves. This approach can play an important role in guiding policy. “While institutions have a direct impact

on the resettlement and integration process, refugees are ultimately the central agents in resettlement, and hence their own priorities and goals have influence upon their style of engagement with the surrounding society” (1998: 41). The lack of information regarding refugees’ perspectives can thus create significant misunderstandings at the individual, organizational and institutional levels.

The University of Oxford’s Centre for Migration and Policy Studies (COMPAS) and Refugee Studies Centre conducted a study in 2002 to “map out existing and current research on integration of immigrants and refugees in the UK” in order to inform the development of government policy. The study consisted of an extensive literature review and interviews with many experts in the field. It found that it is necessary to understand the factors influencing integration in order to develop policies that will actually assist rather than hinder the integration process. Refugee perspectives and opinions should be central in determining these factors. “Indicators [of integration] should not be set in a top-down way by governmental agencies, but should rather be the result of consultations including a range of community groups and spokespersons for immigrant and refugee communities” (Castles, et al: 133). The study also stressed that successful integration cannot be determined solely by easily-measured data such as employment and income level. Information regarding factors such as quality of life and relationships with the local community, gathered more often through qualitative methods, is equally important in measuring the success of the resettlement experience.

In addition to literature about resettlement and integration issues in general, the current study also draws on works that examine refugees’ experiences in each of the three resettlement countries. Both Val Colic-Peisker and Peter Westoby conducted extensive qualitative research with refugees in Australia and provide useful insight into the issues that refugees encounter when settling in this country. Colic-Peisker specifically focused on Bosnian refugees, as they comprise the largest group resettled to Australia in the 1990s. In one article, Colic-Peisker (2003) examined issues surrounding refugees’ perceived identity in resettlement, community-building among refugee communities and the re-establishment of ‘normal’ life. The author found that while all aspects of resettlement assistance are important, assistance toward labor market integration should be the most heavily emphasized as it is the key factor in facilitating social inclusion and successful resettlement. Peter Westoby (2004) focused exclusively on giving a “voice to the narratives of Sudanese refugees and workers” in Australia. Based on in-depth interviews with 30 refugees, his article discusses the feelings of distress experienced by Sudanese refugees in Australia and focuses extensively on issues related to unmet expectations, lack of economic opportunities, family disintegration, and struggles with maintaining culture and relationships both within the Sudanese community and with Australians. Regarding unmet expectations, Westoby found that

Listening to refugee narratives around the issue of aspirations revealed a conflicting and internally ambivalent sense of, on the one hand, deep relief, joy and celebration that they have escaped from the context of war, refugee camps and distressing first asylum contexts, yet, on the other hand, this deeply disappointing sense that aspirations will not be met. (2004: 3)

This article is important in facilitating the articulation of Sudanese refugees’ own perspectives on the challenges they face in resettlement.

Various articles have also been written about resettlement to Canada, but the study of Abu-Laban, et al. (1999), on the settlement experiences of refugees in Alberta, is particularly relevant to this research. In this study, interviews were conducted with over 600 refugees, 72 service providers and 150 members of the general public to further understand the integration experiences of refugees in this province in order to learn why some move to other parts of the country after arrival, and to recommend policy changes to the Canadian government. The study looked at employment, language acquisition, the relationships between service providers and refugees, and the general public's perceptions of refugee issues. The authors found that both refugees and overseas government personnel knew very little about the life that refugees could expect to find in Alberta, including the services they would receive prior to resettlement. This research also affirmed that many variables affect an individual's ability to integrate into Canada, including her own personal characteristics, social and community factors, the potential for economic integration and the types of social services received by the refugee. Since the research in Alberta is quite comprehensive, it is a highly useful tool with which to compare the findings of this research on Sudanese resettlement.

Compared to the literature on Canadian and Australian resettlement, there are many more articles written about refugee resettlement to the United States. A large portion of these focus on the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees in the 1980s, while significantly fewer articles have been written about the resettlement of African refugees. More recently, there have been several significant publications on the experiences of Sudanese refugees and immigrants in the U.S. Holtzman's (2000) ethnography of Sudanese Nuer refugees in Minnesota is the most extensive study published thus far. However, the work covers so many important issues of adjustment and integration, including learned materialism, difficulties with changing gender relations, and employment and labor market integration, that none is investigated in detail. *Wanderings*, a study of Sudanese immigrants in North America by Abusharaf (2002), also provides insight into the experiences of Sudanese in the unique cultures of the United States and Canada. In addition, Heldenbrand's (1996) article provides a useful, in-depth look at the experiences of one Sudanese family who were the first to settle in their particular city in the U.S. This vignette highlights the tension that often occurs both within refugee families and between resettlement agencies and the refugees they assist. The difficulties faced in the resettlement process by both the refugee and the resettlement agency are poignantly illustrated. Heldenbrand's conclusion emphasizes the important role that the ethnic community plays in resettlement.

Bound by bureaucratic procedures and federally mandated priorities, the resettlement agency is largely limited to direct, material support. It is the ethnic community, not the agency, which can offer the less tangible help empowering refugees to become active participants in their own resettlement. (122)

The importance of the ethnic community was also affirmed by Colic-Peisker and Westoby in Australia and Abu-Laban, et al., in Canada.

Employing a research design similar to that used in this project, recent papers by Horst (2004) and Riak Akuei (2004) on Somalis and Sudanese respectively, provide an important transnational perspective on the extended ethnic community. Both papers address remittances, communication, and other transnational resettlement issues by conducting research in both

refugees' countries of origin and the United States. They highlight the difficulties faced by refugees in resettlement countries in fulfilling their obligations to support their families overseas – both financially and emotionally – while at the same time trying to adjust, integrate, and meet their basic living expenses in the resettlement country.

The literature reviewed above reveals the fundamental importance of analyzing the resettlement process from the perspective of refugees. It also highlights some central issues related to resettlement, such as: the importance of obtaining meaningful employment and the support of the ethnic community in facilitating integration; issues related to remittances; and the intense challenges that refugees face throughout the resettlement process, even after settling in to their new communities. This literature also affirms that there are still considerable gaps in the research on resettlement, particularly with regard to Sudanese refugees, comparing the resettlement process across countries, and further understanding refugees' own definitions of successful integration.

This research project aims to bridge some of these gaps by providing a preliminary study of the perspectives, expectations and experiences of Sudanese refugees at various stages in the resettlement process, including after the resettlement referral interview at the UNHCR Regional Office in Cairo, before and after Cultural Orientation at the International Organization for Migration in Cairo, just after arrival in the resettlement country, and up to nine years after arrival. The research design, described below in the Methodology section, allowed us to compare the perspectives of refugees awaiting resettlement in Cairo with those of refugees already resettled in the United States, Canada and Australia, as well as across the three resettlement countries, revealing new and intriguing trends discussed further in the third chapter.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SUDAN AND EGYPT**

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. A microcosm of the continent, Sudan's borders encapsulate the centuries of conflict and mass migration that characterize the histories of the two regions it straddles: Africa and the Middle East. Sudan's population of over 35 million people belongs to between 50 and 100 different ethnic groups and further comprises at least 570 distinct peoples. The largest groups – Arab (39%), Dinka (10%), Beja, Nuer, Nuba, Nubian, Fur, Bari, Azande, Moru and Shilluk, in that order – represent 75% of the population; other groups together form the remaining 25% (Lesch 1998: 17). Arabic is the predominant language, although more than 100 languages are spoken, and English is taught in southern schools. Religion is perhaps the most over-emphasized divide among the diverse groups of Sudanese: 70%, mostly in the North, are Sunni Muslim; another 20-25% maintain traditional beliefs; and 5-10%, mostly southerners, are Christian. Geographically, over 68% of the population resides in rural areas; many of these are barely touched by government rule.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For further explanation of the inherent diversity of the Sudan, see Francis Deng's *Wars of Visions*, Anne Lesch's *Sudan: Contested National Identities*, and John & Sarah Voll's *The Sudan: Unity & Diversity in a Multicultural State*.

Like much of Africa before the colonial era, Sudan was home to hundreds of small, discrete kingdoms and city-states. Over centuries of trade and migration, northern Sudanese came to identify more with the Arab Middle East, while black southerners remained relatively uninfluenced by Islam – except when captured and transported northward as slaves – and associated much more frequently with the pastoralist tribes of East Africa. This regional rift was originally due to geographic barriers such as mountains, rivers and swamps, but grew over time into a cultural, linguistic and psychological divide. Since 1955, and for 38 of its 49 years of independence, Sudan has thus been engaged in a destructive clash of identities that has manifested in civil war. The primary motivations for this war have varied over time, including southern demands for independence and autonomy; attempted ‘Arabization’ by northern Muslim groups; and conflicts over the oil resources of the central provinces, port access in the East, and the ideal-for-cattle-grazing plains of the West.

In the first episode of civil war, the government’s response to southern uprisings and calls for autonomy, including bombings and burning of villages – combined with the lack of economic and institutional development in the South – caused the flight of approximately 500,000 people to neighboring countries. This marked the first of many mass emigrations from Sudan. The years of peace and development between 1972 and 1983 encouraged many of these émigrés to return to their homes across the country. But the imposition of an authoritarian version of *shari‘ah* law and a redivision of administrative districts by the former peacemaker, Col. Ja‘afar Numairi (president of the Sudan from 1969-1985), in 1983 heralded the country’s second slide into civil war. Southern opposition groups arguing for regional autonomy coalesced and founded the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and its affiliated Army (SPLM/A) the same year. Some northerners, opposed to Numairi’s changing tactics and fearful of the brewing tensions, left immediately for Egypt. Others waited, hoping the democratically-elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi that came to power in 1986 would return stability to the country. But the coup led by Brigadier-General Omar Hasan al-Bashir in June 1989 both shattered these hopes and greatly intensified the war in the South.

The violence of the war and the recurring regional droughts and famine throughout the 1980s and early 1990s motivated further mass emigrations. By the mid-1990s, the number of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) had reached four million; another 430,000 had sought asylum in neighboring countries (USCRI, 1997 Sudan Country Report). From 1993 to 2001, the Bashir regime worked increasingly closely with Hassan al-Turabi and his National Islamic Front party to ‘Islamize’ the government and the nation, in an overt attempt to consolidate its command over Sudanese politics. But following the 2001 break between the leaders and the subsequent imprisonment of al-Turabi, Bashir entered peace negotiations with the SPLA and other opposition political and military groups from across the country. In August 2004, the last of four protocols signed in Naivasha, Kenya concluded one and a half years of peace negotiations and provided for a referendum on independence for the South after six years. In January 2005, the Sudan Peace Agreement was signed.

The devastation this episode of civil war caused in Sudan is unquestionable; the testimonies of the estimated 350,000 recognized refugees in camps and urban centers in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Egypt continue to condemn the discriminatory and desperate tactics employed by

the Sudanese government in its efforts to maintain control over the country (cf. Prendergast 2002). In addition to massive emigration, the war also claimed more than two million lives and displaced another four million people within Sudan. The continuing uprising in Darfur and the violent retributions of the government and the ‘janjaweed’ militias it supports – not addressed by the recent peace negotiations – have killed an additional 50,000 people, displaced one million more internally, and forced 200,000 into refugee camps just across the western border in Chad (UNHCR, “Chad/Darfur Emergency” Updates). Despite the signing of the Naivasha accords, the majority of those outside Sudan hesitate to believe that the government’s 22-year-long record of human rights abuses, including bombing of civilian targets, slavery, rape, torture, and arbitrary detentions, has truly ended.

In Egypt, the security situation is much more stable than in Sudan, but for refugees, economic and social livelihoods remain precarious. Historically, people from Sudan and Egypt have frequently migrated back and forth between the two countries because of the close relations between them and the educational, employment and other opportunities available across the borders. However, the number of Sudanese arriving annually in Egypt as asylum seekers has increased significantly over the last 15 years because of the deteriorating political and social conditions in Sudan that followed the 1989 military coup d’état led by al-Bashir.

Egypt has hosted various exile populations over the last century, including Armenians who escaped the 1915 massacre perpetrated by the Ottomans, Croats fleeing World War I, and Palestinians displaced by the creation of Israel in 1948 and subsequent wars (Grabska 2005: 4). Recently, an increasing number of people from multiple African countries, including Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in addition to those from Sudan, have sought refuge in Egypt due to the seemingly intractable civil wars raging across the continent (*ibid*). Egypt is a State Party to the 1951 *UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 *OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*. However, Egypt registered significant reservations to the 1951 Convention upon its accession in 1981, and has yet to implement any domestic legislation specific to refugees. Its reservations to the Convention include personal status (art. 12[1]), access to primary education (art. 22[1]), access to public relief and assistance (art. 22), and labor legislation and social security (art. 24). Egypt did not make reservations to Articles 17 or 18 concerning wage-earning employment and self-employment. However, because of the lack of domestic legislation specifically addressing their situation, refugees must follow the same employment regulations as all other foreigners living in Egypt.<sup>2</sup> This includes having to obtain a work permit for employment in the formal sector, a process that is both cumbersome and costly. It was only when the “Wadi al-Nil” treaty that had guaranteed Sudanese the right to work and reside in Egypt without specific visas was abrogated in 1996 that the UNHCR Regional Office in Cairo (RO Cairo) began to conduct Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interviews for Sudanese asylum seekers.

It is difficult to estimate the total number of Sudanese currently residing in Egypt, given the large number who historically lived in the country both temporarily and permanently. Estimates range from 2.2 million to 4 million; Sudanese opposition groups often cite the former figure while the Egyptian government frequently employs the latter (Grabska 2005: 17). It is even

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<sup>2</sup> Governed by Egyptian law no. 137 of 1981.

more challenging to determine what percentage of these people are registered asylum-seekers or refugees. According to the UNHCR, there were 14,954 recognized Sudanese refugees living in Egypt at the end of 2004 (UNHCR RO Cairo 2004: 1). In addition, there are a significant number of Sudanese whose cases have been rejected by UNHCR, but who have remained in Egypt. In 2003, UNHCR estimated this number to between 12,000 and 15,000 (UNHCR RO Cairo 2003: 13).

UNHCR provides limited assistance to recognized refugees. Through various implementing partners, UNHCR offers educational grants to help refugee children attend school at local churches, covers 50% of refugees' medical expenses at a designated health care provider, and distributes monthly financial aid to particularly needy refugee families. Another way in which refugees are assisted by UNHCR is through 'resettlement', an instrument of international protection and burden-sharing through which refugees move from their countries of first asylum to more developed countries like Australia, Canada and the United States. Resettlement is an option used to prevent further persecution in the country of asylum or for refugees not able to return to the country in which they originally faced persecution, as well as to provide a 'durable solution' to the problematic situation of long-term refugees. Usually, refugees are allowed to become naturalized citizens of the resettlement country after an introductory period. In 2004, UNHCR RO Cairo referred over 4,000 refugees to the American, Canadian and Australian embassies for resettlement. In addition to the UNHCR referral program, the Canadian and Australian governments have private sponsorship programs through which refugees with willing sponsors in the resettlement country can apply directly to the embassy for resettlement.

All UNHCR country and regional offices abide by standard resettlement referral policies as outlined in the *Resettlement Handbook* produced by the Department of International Protection. These guidelines specify that resettlement is not a right for refugees and that the possibilities of voluntary repatriation and local integration in the country of first asylum should be explored before an individual is determined to be eligible for resettlement (UNHCR 2004a, Ch. 4: 2). UNHCR also identifies certain criteria to be met in determining eligibility. These accord legal or physical protection needs the highest priority; they also extend support to those who are most vulnerable, including women-at-risk and unaccompanied minors (*ibid*: 3). Other issues that can determine eligibility for resettlement include family reunification, particularly for children or the elderly, and whether a person is a survivor of torture or has pressing medical issues that cannot be resolved in the host country. Finally, when there is a surplus of resettlement spaces available, refugees can be referred merely on the basis of 'lack of local integration prospects.'

In Cairo, once a refugee is recognized by UNHCR under the 1951 Convention, the individual is scheduled for another interview to determine whether he or she is eligible for resettlement. At this interview, the UNHCR case worker explains the three possible 'durable solutions' to the refugee situation, reviews the individual's claims with her, and gathers additional information from the refugee to determine whether she is eligible to be referred for resettlement to one of the embassies in Cairo. At the end of the interview, the case worker discusses the claim with a supervisor and then informs the refugee whether or not she will be referred. Given the high annual ceilings available at each of the three embassies for referrals from UNHCR RO Cairo, the 'lack of local integration prospects' rationale formed the basis for a large percentage of these referrals in 2004, although this is quickly changing with the advent of the Sudan Peace

Agreement in January 2005. UNHCR employs still further criteria to determine whether or not refugees are eligible for referral on this ground alone.

Once the file of a UNHCR-recognized refugee has been referred to one of the embassies, his travel is not yet guaranteed, as the approval for his visa and refugee status in the resettlement country is ultimately the embassy's decision. Therefore, upon approval by UNHCR, the file is sent either to the country's embassy or to the International Organization for Migration, depending on the proposed country of resettlement. The refugee is then interviewed again by government representatives to ensure that he meets the country's security and specific status requirements. Once his refugee status is approved by the resettlement country government, he is required to undergo a medical exam and attend a Cultural Orientation session at IOM to prepare for travel.

The private sponsorship process is quite different, as the refugee admissions determinations are based on the resettlement country's unique standards which can differ from those used by UNHCR to grant or deny refugee status. Privately-sponsored refugees do not necessarily even have to secure refugee status through UNHCR as their procedures are conducted entirely through the specific embassy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The research for this study was conducted in a multi-national setting over six months, beginning in July 2004 and concluding in December of the same year. Informant interviews were conducted in four countries: Egypt, Canada, Australia and the United States, with one or two researchers conducting interviews in each of the subject countries. The interviews in Canada were conducted by a Canadian researcher; those in the United States were completed by an American researcher and a Sudanese research assistant; the interviews in Australia were completed by two Sudanese research assistants who are resettled refugees themselves; and those in Egypt were conducted by a Sudanese researcher and research assistant. The quote at the beginning of this paper was taken from the fieldnotes of one of the research assistants in Australia; the initial interaction he describes with the respondent is generally representative of the other interviews in this study.

Although the goal was to have a total of 25 interviews with refugees from each resettlement country and 50 from Cairo, due to time constraints and frequent breakdowns in communication between Cairo and Australia, only 118 were completed. These included 25 in Canada, 28 in the United States, 16 in Australia and 49 in Egypt. All interviews in the three targeted resettlement countries were with Sudanese who had been resettled to the country via Cairo, Egypt either through UNHCR referral to one of the three embassies or, in the case of some respondents in Canada and Australia, through private sponsorship programs conducted directly through the embassies. The 49 respondents interviewed in Egypt were all Sudanese refugees who had been referred for resettlement to one of the three targeted resettlement countries' embassies and who were in various stages of pre-resettlement processing.

Initially, research participants were contacted through representatives within their local refugee communities or through their resettlement agencies. Those contacted through resettlement agencies may have been closer to the “successful” refugee as defined by the agencies – hard-working, optimistic and independent – but due to time constraints on travel to some locations, it was impossible to proceed otherwise. In the U.S., in Richmond, Virginia, for example, the researcher was only in town for a few days and was able to meet efficiently with respondents only through prior communication with the major agency there. Not surprisingly, the first of the three interviews conducted there was with a jovial and positive father of four, contentedly employed in a meatpacking plant and about to purchase his first home.

Situations like that in Richmond were avoided wherever possible by working through refugee community members themselves rather than the agencies. Respondents in most locations were identified with the assistance of known or previous informants and others who were willing to help researchers in finding and contacting new participants, a technique referred to as the “snowball” method. While this is a commonly used approach, it does not systematically identify a representative sample of the study population. Put another way, because people tend to associate with others like them (for example, in the same neighborhood or the same relative level of employment), the sample gleaned through this referral method may represent only one group or ‘type’ of respondent. Clearly, this can have a significant impact on the data produced. For example, Sudanese male researchers conducting the interviews in Cairo and Australia using their contacts within the community interviewed a disproportionately large number of men than women. Normally and in this project, this effect was countered by initiating contact with a target community through various ‘points of entry’ or, more specifically, through agencies, diverse community members, and in a number of different locations in each resettlement country.

The interviews were conducted using one of two standardized questionnaires in order to minimize variation in the topics covered and the means by which they were addressed across the four countries and seven interviewers. In Egypt, the Sudanese researcher and research assistant conducted interviews in Arabic and other Sudanese languages, using a uniform pre-resettlement questionnaire. In Canada and the United States the interviews were in English, or in Arabic with the assistance of an interpreter, and in Australia the two Sudanese research assistants conducted the interviews in Arabic, English and several other Sudanese languages. A second uniform questionnaire was used to guide interviews in all three resettlement countries.

The questionnaires consisted of both closed- and open-ended questions. Utilization of both types of questions facilitated the collection of data that could be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Demographic – and easily quantified – information such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, type of employment and general impressions of resettlement was gathered to provide a clearer picture of the study population. This information was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) database for analytical purposes and comparisons were made across several variables, such as country of resettlement and time spent in the resettlement country. The information gathered from responses to open-ended questions, like direct quotations and informants’ discussions of values and impressions, was compiled into tables and categorized by topic to facilitate comparison between the countries.

In addition to interviews with refugee respondents, interviews were also conducted with various agencies involved in the resettlement process. A standardized questionnaire of open-ended questions was created for each type of organization. In Egypt, interviews were conducted with a number of staff members from the Resettlement Unit of the UNHCR, operations and cultural orientation officers at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and representatives of the American, Canadian and Australian embassies who work in their countries' respective refugee resettlement programs. In the resettlement countries, another standardized questionnaire was used when interviewing employees of the various resettlement agencies. The questionnaires for the agencies in Egypt, Canada and Australia were completed through personal interviews, while the questionnaires for the American organizations were primarily completed via email. Interviews conducted in person were recorded whenever possible.

### **Respondent Demographics**

The 118 refugee participants comprised 81 men and 37 women. Forty-seven percent of respondents originated from southern Sudan; there were also significant numbers from the western and the northern regions of the country. Seventy-three percent of informants fell within the age range of 26-50 years, with respondents in the resettlement countries tending to be somewhat older than those in Egypt. They represented a wide range of education levels; 35% of people interviewed in Egypt had completed university, while the plurality, totaling 33%, of those interviewed in the resettlement countries finished secondary school, but did not pursue further education. A more detailed discussion of the demographic makeup of the respondents from each country is provided in the next chapter.

### **Methodological Issues**

Several issues should be kept in mind when analyzing the data gathered for this study and when drawing conclusions based upon that data. Particularly because this research was intended to be a pilot study, and was thus quite broad in scope, researchers attempted to diversify their respondent profiles as much as possible in order to limit the influence of any one demographic variable that could have been allowed unrepresentative weight in the sample, such as gender, region of origin in Sudan, English level previous to resettlement, et cetera. Therefore, participants represented a wide variety of backgrounds. However, given the vast number of variables involved, the small size of the samples in each country, and the issues involved with using the snowball method as discussed above, it was often difficult to accomplish this successfully.

Several of these variables, such as region of origin in Sudan, time spent in Egypt, education level, language proficiency, and time spent in the resettlement country, affected the respondents' opinions and feelings about their resettlement experiences to varying degrees. Also, a large number of the interviews were conducted in a language other than the participants' first language, or with the use of interpreters, both of which can affect the respondent's understanding of the questions asked and the responses given. Additionally, there may be issues that arise naturally when working with qualitative data gathered by several individuals, each of whom may bring their own biases into their interviews and data entry. And finally, the attempted diversification of the sample was the only control implemented for the numerous variables mentioned above. This allowed us a varied study population, but because of the small

sample size, any generalizations or conclusions must be investigated further to confirm their validity.

That said, as a preliminary, broad-based, comparative and multinational study, the research undertaken in this project is unique in the literature on refugee resettlement. While there is a great deal of room for improvement, this study and its methods may provide a baseline and a jumping-off point for future, necessary research in this field.

## Chapter II: DISCUSSION OF SELECTED VARIABLES

This chapter will discuss a number of variables that may have an effect on the resettlement experiences of individual Sudanese refugees. There are of course many more variables than those addressed here; any attempt to understand the infinite diversity of human nature must first recognize that diversity. However, researchers attempted to control for this variety by representing as much of it as possible in each country's sample. Thus, the variables discussed here are merely the most obvious and the most thoroughly explored in this project: the demographics of the study populations in Egypt, Australia, Canada and the United States; the policies and programs of each resettlement country; and the amount of information available to each refugee previous to her travel from both friends and family already in resettlement countries and the IOM Cultural Orientation sessions.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The potential demographic variables in this study are innumerable. Some of the key variables are discussed below, as examples that underscore the diversity of the samples in each of the countries where research was conducted for this project.

#### **Egypt**

Interviews were conducted in Cairo with 49 respondents – 36 males and 13 females – from August to December 2004. All but 14 arrived in Egypt between 2001 and 2003, and most had only expected to stay in Egypt for a maximum of one year. Twenty-three respondents had been approved for resettlement to the United States, 18 to Australia and five to Canada.<sup>3</sup> All but 11 respondents held jobs in Sudan before coming to Egypt, ranging from professional employment to manual labor. Tables 1 through 4 depict some of the demographic variables used when analyzing the information gathered through the interviews.

**Table 1: Age / Cairo**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-25	5	10.2
26-35	28	57.1
36-50	15	30.6
51-60	1	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Region of Origin / Cairo**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
North	10	20.4
South	21	42.9
East	2	4.1
West	12	24.5
Central	4	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

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<sup>3</sup> Three of the respondents were still unsure of their final destination. Although UNHCR and embassy policy dictates refugees should be recommended and approved for resettlement to only one country, either through the UNHCR resettlement program or the Australian or Canadian private sponsorship programs, three of the respondents had been approved through two programs and had yet to decide to which country they would ultimately travel.

**Table 3: English Level / Cairo**

	Frequency	Percentage
None	9	18.4
Beginner	17	34.7
Intermediate	14	28.6
Advanced	6	12.2
Fluent	3	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4: Educational Level / Cairo**

	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	6.1
Some Primary	2	4.1
Finished Primary	3	6.1
Some Intermediate	2	4.1
Finished Intermediate	4	8.2
Some Secondary	2	4.1
Finished Secondary	8	16.3
Non-University Post-Secondary	3	6.1
Training	4	8.2
Some University	18	36.7
Finished University		
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### Resettlement Countries

Sixteen Sudanese were interviewed in Australia, including 12 men and four women. The respondents lived in the areas surrounding Adelaide, the capital of South Australia (9), and Sydney, the capital of New South Wales (7). Researchers intended to interview 25 people in Australia, but this did not occur, which clearly complicates comparison across all three countries. Exactly half of the respondents were referred by UNHCR and traveled through the refugee category, while the other half were sponsored by a friend or relative and traveled through the special humanitarian category. At the time of their interviews, only five were employed; the others either relied on the government or their family members for financial support.

In Canada, twenty-five individuals, consisting of 14 men and 11 women, were interviewed in four locations across the country. Interviews were conducted in three major refugee-receiving cities, Vancouver (5), Calgary (7), and Toronto (8), and one smaller rural town, Brooks (5). Brooks was investigated because a significant number of Sudanese have recently moved to the town, the majority having followed employment opportunities in the local meatpacking plant. Five of the respondents were privately sponsored, while the remaining traveled through the UNHCR or directly through the Canadian Embassy in Cairo. Thirteen were earning their own incomes, all in unskilled labor positions except two who worked at resettlement agencies and one who was self-employed and owned a used car dealership.

Interviews were conducted with 28 individuals in the United States, including 19 men and 9 women, in six locations along the East Coast: Baltimore, Maryland (6); Concord, New Hampshire (1); Lynn, Massachusetts (8); Manchester, New Hampshire (8); Richmond, Virginia (3); and Washington, DC (2). These locations were chosen for their proximity to each other and the relative size of the Sudanese communities in each. Fifteen were employed, all in manual labor jobs, except two who worked in resettlement agencies and one who had earned his license as a Certified Nurse's Assistant.

Tables 5 through 8 detail some of the most relevant demographic information for respondents in each of the resettlement countries.

**Table 5: Age / Resettlement Country**

	USA	Canada	Australia	Total	Percentage
18-25	7	3	0	10	14.5
26-35	11	7	5	23	33.3
36-50	8	11	11	30	43.5
51-60	2	3	0	5	7.2
Over 60	0	1	0	1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: Region of Origin / Resettlement Country**

	USA	Canada	Australia	Total	Percentage
North	1	4	1	6	8.7
South	18	17	6	41	59.4
East	0	0	1	1	1.5
West	5	3	3	11	15.9
Central	2	1	0	3	4.3
No Answer	2	0	5	7	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7: Educational Level / Resettlement Country**

	USA	Canada	Australia	Total	Percentage
None	2	0	2	4	5.8
Some Primary	2	1	0	3	4.4
Finished Primary	0	4	0	4	5.8
Some Intermediate	2	0	0	2	2.9
Finished Intermediate	2	3	1	6	8.7
Some Secondary	4	3	0	7	10.1
Finished Secondary	12	5	6	23	33.3
Non-University Post-Secondary Training	0	0	2	2	2.9
Some University	1	1	0	2	2.9
Finished University	3	7	5	15	21.7
Finished Graduate Studies	0	1	0	1	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 8: Length of Time in Resettlement Country**

	USA	Canada	Australia	Total	Percentage
Under 3 months	4	2	0	6	8.7
3-6 months	1	1	3	5	7.2
7-12 months	4	5	1	10	14.5
1-2 years	8	2	8	18	26.1
3-4 years	11	8	3	22	31.9
5 or more years	0	7	1	8	11.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

## **HISTORY, POLICIES & PROGRAMMINGS OF RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES**

Given the multinational nature of this research, one of the primary variables in analyzing the experiences of refugees in resettlement is the actual country of resettlement. Each of these countries has different policies regulating the number and type of refugees that will enter their country and the services that refugees will receive upon arrival. These policies are primarily based on historical, economic and political factors. In order to assess how the choice of resettlement country affects the overall resettlement experience, it is important to understand the policies and programs related to refugees in Australia, Canada and the United States. Each country has differing expectations for refugees upon arrival to their country which are manifested in the services offered and the pressure that refugees face to become self-reliant.

### **Australia**

#### *Immigration Policies and History—*

Australia is a state party to the 1951 UN Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and has incorporated these obligations into the Migration Act of 1958 and the Migration Regulations of 1994. Australia's immigration policy is based on the philosophy of multiculturalism, which "recognizes, accepts, respects and celebrates cultural diversity" (DIMIA; Australian Multicultural Policy). Since the end of World War I, approximately 600,000 refugees have come to Australia as displaced persons or refugees (DIMIA 2003). However, given its geographic position, the country did not receive a large number of asylum-seekers until the Vietnam War, when thousands fled to Australia as 'boat people' (Kenny and Fiske unpublished: 2).

Refugees are granted permission to enter Australia through its Humanitarian Program, which is overseen by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA). The program comprises of both offshore and onshore processing. The onshore category is for people who arrive in Australia either illegally or with some other type of visa, such as a tourist visa, and then claim that they are unable to return to their country of origin for fear of persecution. These people are often detained while their case is processed and can then be granted either temporary or permanent protection, depending on the Australian government's determination on the legitimacy of their claim. The offshore category is for people who apply for refugee status while they are still overseas. It comprises two categories: the refugee program and the special humanitarian program. The refugee category is reserved for those referred by UNHCR; the humanitarian program is for people who have experienced significant discrimination amounting to a gross violation of human rights in their countries of origin and have someone in Australia willing to sponsor them.

The Minister of Immigration determines the total number of humanitarian asylees allowed to enter the country via both onshore and offshore processing each year. Between 1996 and 2003, Australia allocated 12,000 humanitarian visas annually. In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the government increased this number to 13,000. Since visas which are not distributed in one year can be rolled over to the following year, the total number of humanitarian entrants has exceeded these ceilings in some years, reaching a peak in 2003-2004 at 13,851. The percentage of people

receiving a visa through the onshore category has significantly decreased since 2000, whereas the number of people arriving through the special humanitarian program has substantially increased (Young 2003a: 7). For example, in 2000-2001, almost 6,000 of the total 13,733 entrants arrived through onshore processing, while two years later only 869 of the 12,525 total entrants came through the onshore program (DIMIA 2004a).

In both 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, individually sponsored Sudanese made up the largest group of people from one nation entering Australia through the humanitarian program. In 2003-2004, 6147 humanitarian visas were granted to people from Sudan, comprising almost 50% of the total arrivals (DIMIA 2004b: 3). Cairo is one of Australia's largest processing sites. Since 2002-2003, when the total number of entrants approved for resettlement to Australia through the embassy in Cairo was approximately 2100, the ceiling has significantly increased to a target of 3100 for 2004-2005. This higher ceiling includes 800 refugees and 2300 humanitarian entrants,<sup>4</sup> accounting for nearly 25% of the total number of humanitarian entrants that will be granted status in Australia this year.

#### *Programs and Services Provided—*

There are a range of services provided to people who enter the country through the Humanitarian Program, particularly through offshore processing. These specific services are relatively new as DIMIA significantly modified the program in 1998. The new model of services was initiated as DIMIA shifted its focus to providing a more developmental approach to settlement services, which would be “explicit in its aim of respecting refugees’ autonomy and not encouraging dependency” (Young, et al. 2003a: 5). In addition, service providers were required for the first time to bid competitively for contracts to provide services, which “marked the first implementation of the purchaser/provider model of service delivery in humanitarian settlement services” (ibid).

The overall model for settlement services emphasizes an integrated approach which incorporates both mainstream services and specific services for humanitarian entrants. Initial services fall under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS) and include orientation, initial and long-term accommodation, material goods and a health assessment. These are provided by government-funded service providers and last approximately six months. Support and training are also available for sponsors and for service providers including volunteer groups. The overall purpose of the IHSS services is to equip entrants “to gain access to mainstream services” (op cit: 6). After initial services are completed, entrants are eligible for general settlement services funded under the Community Settlement Services Scheme. These include English classes for up to 510 hours, interpreting services and community assistance. Humanitarian entrants are also eligible for mainstream services including financial assistance through a government agency called Centrelink, health insurance and mental health counseling.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with an official at the Australian embassy in Cairo, December 2004.

## **Canada**

### *Immigration Policies and History—*

Canada has accepted approximately 50,000 refugees for third-country resettlement over the past five years (UNHCR 2002). Although Canada is essentially a country of immigrants and has been receiving refugees and immigrants since its founding, it did not adopt a formal policy regarding refugees until the Immigration Act in 1976 (Lanphier 1981: 113).

Canada ratified the 1951 UN Convention in 1969, but did not incorporate a comprehensive refugee policy into its domestic laws until 1976. The 1976 Immigration Act contained two main classes of refugees eligible for resettlement: Convention Class Abroad, which essentially followed the 1951 Convention's refugee definition and Designated Classes, for those who were in refugee-like situations but did not fulfill the requirements of the Convention definition. Members of this second class were required to be from specific countries, most often Indochinese countries such as Vietnam or Laos, or Latin American countries including Chile and Argentina. Self-exiles from Communist states were also covered by this category (*ibid*).

The Canadian government undertook an extensive review of the Immigration Act in the 1990s, which led to the creation of the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002. With the introduction of the new act, there was an expansion of the classes eligible for resettlement. The Convention Refugee Abroad Class remained the same and continues to be the largest class of resettled refugees. Over the past five years, 40,662 refugees have been resettled under this program (*ibid*). Members of the Convention Refugee Abroad class are eligible for the government assistance program or private sponsorship. The Designated Class of the previous Act was renamed the Protected Persons Abroad Class and was subdivided into two groups: Country of Asylum and Source Country Class. Over the past five years 10,196 refugees have been resettled through these two sub-classes (*ibid*).

Refugees can be granted resettlement to Canada as government-assisted refugees or through private sponsorship. Government-assisted refugees comprise the bulk of the yearly intake at approximately 7500 per year, while between 2900 and 4000 privately sponsored refugees are accepted annually. The embassy in Cairo has maintained an annual target of approximately 1000 refugees over the past few years, approximately 800 of which are government-assisted refugees and 200 of which are privately sponsored. Approximately 80% of applications for these spaces are filled by Sudanese.

### *Programs and Services Provided—*

Government-assisted refugees receive a variety of services. Resettlement agencies in the various destination cities, funded by the federal and provincial governments, administer the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) in which newcomers are met at the airport and provided with temporary housing for up to 21 days and essential household items, cultural orientation, and assistance in obtaining permanent housing. Financial assistance is provided for up to one year or until the individual becomes self-sufficient, and health care is covered until new arrivals are able to apply for Medicare in their province of residence. English training is also available for the first year, though the levels available vary by province. Non-therapeutic

counseling and career advising, along with basic information regarding education and living skills, are also provided.

After the first year, newcomers fall under the Integrated Service Program (ISP) which is available to all immigrants and refugees for up to three years after their arrival in Canada. These services include workshops about issues faced by new immigrants, referrals to other immigrant-serving agencies, and collaboration with community organizations to provide additional services to resettled refugees. As government funding only allows for approximately 13 hours of staff time per individual, services often vary according to agency and depend on the amount of external funding that has been raised. Programs funded by private donations include increased one-on-one time with the case workers, computer courses, childcare programs, parenting programs and employment training.

### **United States**

#### *Immigration Policies and History*<sup>5</sup>—

The United States has the largest refugee resettlement program in the world. Since 1945, more than 3 million refugees have been welcomed into the country, including Europeans after World War II, Cubans, Southeast Asians and people from Communist countries throughout the Cold War. Legislation related to displaced people was first established in 1948 and has since been modified multiple times culminating in the Refugee Act of 1980.

The writing and passage of this Act, the most important legislation on refugees in U.S. history and still in effect today, was prompted by the need to regulate and solidify the growing public-private partnership that had been responsible for the resettlement of nearly two million refugees since the end of World War II. The Act removed any stipulations regarding the Communist nature of the refugee's country of origin, ratified the 1967 United Nations Protocol refugee definition, and assigned the President final responsibility, in consultation with Congress, for setting the annual admissions ceilings and the "special humanitarian concern" designations.

The standard government target for regionally-allocated refugee intake over the last few years has been 50,000 people per year, but actual arrivals between 1980 and 2004 have fluctuated from over 200,000 to only 23,000 annually. The 2005 ceiling of 50,000 is broken down into approximately 20,000 from Africa, 13,000 from East Asia, 9500 from Europe and Central Asia, 5000 from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 2500 from the Near East and South Asia. In addition, an extra 20,000 spots are left unallocated in case of emergency or overflow from one of the regions (U.S. Refugee Program News: 2005).

#### *Programs and Services Provided*—

The 1980 Refugee Act also clarified and formalized the program of resettlement assistance for new arrivals, and standardized assistance for all refugees (cf. Kennedy 1981; Anker 1984). It established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) under the Department of Health & Human Services to manage domestic programming for new arrivals while the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the Department of State remained responsible

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<sup>5</sup> Much of the historical data is borrowed from Philip A. Holman's "Refugee Resettlement in the United States," Chapter 1 in *Refugees in America in the 1990s*, except where otherwise noted.

for managing the overseas processing, cultural orientation and coordination of transportation for refugee applicants. The Immigration & Naturalization Services (now Citizenship & Immigration Services) remained responsible for the final determination of individuals' eligibility for refugee status under U.S. law. Normally, this takes place overseas in the country of first asylum or in the country of origin. Once refugees arrive in the United States, they are granted the same rights as legal residents. They may apply for permanent resident status after one year and for citizenship after five years.

Each refugee admitted after 1980 is provided with specific forms of assistance by a vast network of federal, state and local government agencies; non-profit, voluntary and religious organizations; and private citizens. PRM provides funds to 10 national voluntary agencies ("volags")<sup>6</sup> for initial "reception and placement" (R&P) activities in the first 30 days after resettlement. At the same time, the volags ensure a domestic sponsor for refugees coming from abroad through their networks of local resettlement agencies in towns and cities across the country. The resettlement agencies use the R&P grants (and any other support they can raise) to provide initial social services upon refugees' arrival, including: airport pick-up, initial housing, basic furnishings, food and clothing; orientation to the refugee's new community; referrals to local Social Security Administration offices and medical centers; job search assistance; enrollment of refugee children in local schools; and links to the longer-term assistance provided by ORR.

ORR then provides cash and medical assistance to new arrivals for up to eight months, as well as other social services such as English-language training, assistance in accessing welfare and Medicaid benefits, citizenship classes, job counseling, and mental health services for those in the U.S. for up to five years. This assistance is distributed through both the volags and state governments. ORR also funds specific programs for unaccompanied minor refugees and survivors of torture, and its Matching Grant program currently distributes nearly \$60 million annually, offering \$2 for every \$1 provided in cash or in kind by the volags (ORR 2005). The purpose of the Matching Grant program is to facilitate refugees' achievement of self-sufficiency without accessing public welfare programs, echoing the U.S. government's emphasis on "economic and social self-sufficiency" (*ibid*).

Although the 1980 Refugee Act was based on the assumption that the annual refugee flow into the US would not exceed 50,000, the 1980 intake was 207,000 in addition to some 165,000 Cubans and Haitians not officially designated as refugees. For the next 20 years, admissions never fell below 60,000; frequently they were much higher (the years 1989-1995 all exceeded 100,000). Arrivals dropped to 26,839 in FY2002 and 28,306 in FY2003 because of a near-moratorium on refugee processing in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. But the FY2004 numbers exceeded the target at 52,875; PRM estimates that FY2005 will also slightly exceed the allocated ceiling. Average per capita expenditures by the Department of State on refugee arrivals in FY2004 were the highest they have ever been at \$3,507.

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<sup>6</sup> These include: the original four mentioned above, that is, the IRC, USCCB, HIAS, and Church World Service; as well as six more recent partners, or Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services, Episcopal Migration Ministries, the Ethiopian Community Development Council, World Relief Corporation, the State of Iowa Bureau of Refugee Services, and Immigration & Refugee Services of America.

## **Policy Comparisons**

The policies regulating admissions to the respective countries and the programs and services available for people after arrival are quite varied among these three resettlement countries. These differences are related to the governments' expectations for refugees after arrival and the way in which the governments conceptualize successful resettlement. These different understandings can affect a country's decision regarding whom to accept for resettlement and how to assist her upon arrival.

The situation in Cairo is unique for many reasons, including that rather than advocating for additional resettlement opportunities at the various embassies – as is the case in most locations – the UNHCR Regional Office often finds itself working extremely hard to meet the ceilings made available by each of the resettlement country governments.

Here are opportunities. Everybody is keen on resettlement. The problem is usually getting everybody to do it. Here that is not the problem. The problem is producing enough quality cases to fill all of the spaces. That is definitely a driver. – *Resettlement Officer at UNHCR RO Cairo.*

This “driver”, the high resettlement ceilings, can be problematic as it may act as a pull factor, influencing people's decisions to leave their country in order to seek resettlement. Given the scope of this research and the complexity of this issue, it is not possible to determine the extent to which resettlement draws people to Cairo. However, it does seem clear that the program in Cairo affects both refugees' expectations of resettlement and the perspectives of UNHCR staff working with refugees.

There is a real danger for people in jobs like mine, people on this floor, becoming deeply cynical and suspecting motives, suspecting the claim, disbelieving everything... We have to struggle very hard to avoid that. And we do. – *Resettlement Officer at UNHCR RO Cairo.*

Also given the high ceilings, UNHCR RO Cairo refers a significant number of people on the basis of ‘lack of local integration prospects’ alone. The office regulates these determinations, its policies adapting to circumstances in refugees' countries of origin and changes in law and practice in the resettlement countries. UNHCR RO Cairo tries to communicate its policies to refugees, but at the same time, does not want people to change their individual stories in attempts to fit resettlement criteria. Therefore, misunderstandings frequently occur between UNHCR and the refugees it intends to serve, particularly with regard to resettlement criteria.

Each resettlement country has policies that govern the services to which refugees can access upon arrival in their new country. These reflect the governments' expectations for refugees living in their territories, as well as the governments' conceptualization of “successful” resettlement and integration. These domestic policies and services can also influence the type of person allowed to access resettlement from abroad. Although we found that refugees often have information on the resettlement policies of each of the three receiving countries, they often reach their understandings through conversations with people in their own communities, and

consequently, they are often confused about the distinctions between the policies of the three countries.

Australia has the most generous domestic refugee policies in terms of cash assistance, English classes and medical insurance. The Australian government allows refugees a significant period of time to adapt and learn English before they are expected to work and support themselves. “Humanitarian entrants may be heavily dependent on arrival, with a continuing need for assistance from both government and the community sector for some time” (DIMIA 2000). A resettlement official at the Australian Embassy in Cairo expressed the same basic concept in a different way by stating, “In Australia, we know that we will support some of the entrants for the rest of their lives.” This official described successful resettlement according to indicators such as learning English, enrolling children in school, obtaining Australian citizenship and generally ‘fitting in’ to Australian society. According to her, success in integration can be determined more by the success of the children and their ability to interact with the host society than by the experience of the parents. Employment and economic integration are not weighed as heavily as these other factors.

Resettlement policies in the United States are very different. The government clearly and publicly prioritizes refugees’ employment, economic integration and achievement of self-sufficiency as soon as possible after arrival. Although all refugees are eligible to receive cash assistance for up to eight months, they must demonstrate that they are actively pursuing a job throughout this time and that they are willing to take any job offered to them. According to federal regulations, an individual who is receiving refugee cash assistance, and who is not exempt for reasons such as medical problems, must accept “at any time, from any source, an offer of employment, as determined to be appropriate by the State agency or its designee” (ORR Regulations, Section 400.75(a)(3)). Additionally, resettlement agencies are pressured by funding constraints to help refugees find employment as soon as possible, preferably within the first three months after arrival. A resettlement official at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo articulated his government’s understanding of successful resettlement in similar terms by describing success as “being given the opportunity to develop an independent life” and referring to living out the “American dream.” The United States provides intensive, individually-focused services to refugees upon arrival with the expectation that the refugee will quickly become self-sufficient and no longer depend upon external assistance. Families who are unable to attain self-sufficiency soon after arrival remain eligible for their state’s welfare program based on the same standards as U.S. citizens.

In comparison to Australia and America, Canada has more moderate expectations of refugees upon arrival and a more flexible conceptualization of successful resettlement. Refugees are eligible for financial assistance for up to one year after arrival, at the same level as citizens enrolled in the social assistance program. Although refugees are expected to continue to seek employment during this time and to accept any “reasonable” offer of employment, refugees do not seem to feel the same pressure toward employment as those is in the U.S. The Canadian government defines a reasonable job as one that considers a person’s skills, education, previous experience, local labor market conditions, and the amount of time that benefits have already been paid (CIC 2003c: 91). Officials also encourage refugees to first look for a job in their area of expertise and only if they are unsuccessful, to pursue any type of employment. The

government defines success in resettlement as the ability to be fully self-supporting three to five years after arrival (CIC 2003d: 73). Immigration officials consider specific factors when attempting to determine whether someone will be successful in resettlement, including the presence of a relative or sponsor in the proposed community of resettlement, the applicant's potential ability to learn English and French and to obtain employment, and personal qualities reflecting resourcefulness which would facilitate the integration process (*ibid*: 74).

These unique approaches to refugee resettlement, combined with each country's domestic public welfare or social assistance policies, result in different methods of regulating eligibility for resettlement. Generally, Australia and Canada maintain more official and unofficial restrictions on those allowed to enter their territories as refugees, while the United States admits refugees with a much broader range of characteristics.

For example, the Canadian government strongly emphasizes the importance of a "demonstrate[d] ability to resettle successfully in Canada" (*ibid*). Although exceptions are made for particularly urgent or vulnerable cases, all government-assisted refugee cases must possess attributes which indicate their ability to obtain employment within one year and cease dependency on all forms of public assistance after three years. The Australian government explicitly states its unwillingness to accept refugees with serious medical problems that will likely "result in a significant cost to health care and community services or prejudice Australians' access to health care or community services" (UNHCR 2004a, Australia Country Chapter: 8). In contrast, the United States admits many of the more difficult medical cases, such as individuals with HIV, and only excludes people with serious mental disorders that would present a danger to resettlement communities or illegal drug addictions (UNHCR 2004a, USA Country Chapter: 4). The U.S. also does not explicitly base resettlement eligibility on an assessment of an individual's potential for success in resettlement, however defined.

## **INFORMATION ATTAINED PREVIOUS TO RESETTLEMENT**

The acquisition of accurate information about life in the resettlement country previous to travel is one of the most important variables determining an individual's experience in resettlement. Refugees receive information about resettlement primarily through informal channels such as personal contacts in the resettlement country, conversations and information sharing among the Sudanese community in Cairo, and the media. The Cultural Orientation (CO) program at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides a venue for more formal dissemination of information about life in resettlement countries, and addresses numerous issues such as access to services, employment and cultural adjustment. This section discusses the information that refugees receive before resettlement, while the following chapter addresses the ways in which this information, or lack thereof, affects the resettlement experience.

### **Information Received from Friends and Family already in Resettlement Countries**

Respondents' conversations with trusted friends and family already in resettlement countries formed one of their most important sources of information about life in resettlement countries.

This information shapes people's perceptions and expectations of their future lives. For this research, respondents in the countries of resettlement were asked to describe their contact with family and friends in Egypt and Sudan and the information they choose to share about life in resettlement.

The majority of participants communicate at least on a monthly basis with family and friends in Sudan (82%), Egypt (67%) and several other asylum countries within Africa. However, respondents reported that they do not often discuss the difficulties they have encountered in the resettlement country during these conversations. A number of reasons were offered, the most common being that respondents did not want to take hope away from those left behind. They described how people see them as the lucky ones because they have been resettled, and how it would be considered dishonorable or rude to mention their problems to others. Therefore, they tend to focus on the positive aspects of life, rarely mentioning the difficulties they face.

I told them I am good. I have a new entry into life in America. I didn't say anything about the operation I need or the jobs or anything, just about my new chance. It would be sad to tell them all of that. – *USA\_01, a single, 36-50 year old Nuba male whose hands were mangled while in detention in Sudan to the point that he can barely eat on his own.*

I tell them how cold the weather is and that it is impossible to get used to, that there is good education for kids and that the language is very hard and everything is hard for the first year but it gets better after that, and that Canadians are nice and try to help immigrants. So I tell them some of the bad, but lots of good. – *CAN\_02, a married Dinka female, 26-35 years old.*

It is bad, it is sensitive to discuss these things. When you move you are not supposed to complain because it is everyone's dream to be here. They would think we were complaining so we wouldn't have to send money. You cannot tell them how hard it is, they will not believe and they will think poorly of you. – *CAN\_18, a 36-50 year old married female.*

Other studies have also found that immigrants in general tend to report only the positive aspects of their lives when communicating with those back home. In Horst's 2004 study of Somali remittances, one young man, who worked in a poultry-packing factory and lived a very frugal life in the U.S. so that he could afford to send money to his family, told relatives on a visit to Kenya that he sells mobile phones and cars for a living so they would not know the difficulty of his situation (11). Similarly, the few respondents who did share the difficulties they had experienced in resettlement with family and friends back home often acknowledged doing so because they were receiving too many requests for remittances. However, these respondents were then presented with a new set of worries centered on whether those to whom they told the truth would believe them.

They will think that I am trying to discourage them from resettling to Australia. They will never believe what I am telling them. Anyway it is much better living here than in Sudan or Cairo. – *AUS\_01, a married Kuku male, 36-50 years old.*

It's a clash, when you tell people it's not as good as you think it is... It's tough. They think that just because you came here and you have a good place now you are just

telling them it's hard so you don't have to send money. – *CAN\_19, a single Dinka woman, 26-35 years old.*

Respondents in Cairo were also asked about the information they received from friends and family members in resettlement countries. Almost all of these respondents had some form of contact with friends or relatives in one of the three resettlement countries, but the information they gathered from the three countries varied. Those in regular contact with friends and relatives in Australia generally discussed sponsorship issues; those with contacts in the United States were warned about crime and the difficulty of needing to rely solely on oneself; and conversations with contacts in Canada tended to focus on the weather.

There are only two seasons in Canada: warm season and cold snow season. During snow season, people use metro as the only means of transport in major cities like Montreal, Toronto and Calgary. If you drive your car and you get stuck on the snow, your car can only be brought back home by helicopter. Everybody has to dress well before leaving the house but the houses are heated very well and it is always warmer at home. – *EGY\_15, a married Nares male, 26-35 years old.*

I was told that education is very expensive in the U.S. and that the Americans don't consider any certificate from any country in the world. Also, that if any black refugee works as a house boy in any white man's house, the black Americans will kill him and that there are lot of crimes in the U.S. society. The U.S. is very large because it has more than 52 states or more. – *EGY\_23, a 36-50 year old Fur male.*

Respondents also received several positive messages about life in the resettlement countries, including information about increased security and stability, the possibility of making money to send home and the educational opportunities available in resettlement. It is interesting to note that the messages conveyed by people in United States, when compared to those from the other two countries, placed a much heavier emphasis on the importance of relying on oneself and the difficulties faced in resettlement.

Many resettled refugees did not reveal to those with whom they were in contact the difficulties they faced in their daily lives. The importance of this information flow, or lack thereof, should not be underestimated. It not only shapes the expectations of those hoping for financial remittances from resettled refugees, but also influences the expectations of those awaiting resettlement with regard to what life will be like once they arrive in their new country.

### **Cultural Orientation to Resettlement Countries**

Although refugees often hear information about their resettlement country from multiple sources, the Cultural Orientation (CO) provided by IOM is typically the only formal source of information to which refugees have access before their departure. Therefore, the CO workshops can play a central role in shaping refugees' expectations for resettlement and were thus a critical issue discussed in this study.

All resettlement countries require attendance at the CO program shortly before departure.<sup>7</sup> The orientation curriculum is developed by each country and facilitated by IOM staff. The content of the sessions therefore differs according to country, but the structure and timeline of the sessions is similar across all three countries. The program lasts for five hours a day over a period of three days, and uses multiple teaching methods including discussion, videos, role plays, written information and oral presentation. General topics discussed in the orientation sessions for each country included: basic history, weather and geography of resettlement country, legal status, housing, employment, transportation, medical care and resettlement services. However, emphasis on specific topics varies with each session. Differences seem to be based both on the orientation curriculum developed by each country and the personal decisions of the facilitator.

In the orientation session provided to those traveling to the United States, work life was heavily emphasized, including information on taxes, reading pay stubs and interviewing. The facilitator discussed the importance of people becoming self-reliant. “In the USA, if you don’t work, no one helps you. Put this in your head: if you’re living in a bad situation in the U.S., it’s your responsibility” (USCO Session, 15 February 2005). This is logical given the U.S. government’s strong focus on employment in its resettlement policy. In contrast, there was very little discussion of law and culture in the United States; they were mentioned briefly in one of the videos shown in class, but there was no further discussion. These two issues were frequently identified by respondents in the U.S. as areas where they wished they had received more information previous to travel.

The orientation for people traveling to Australia discussed cultural issues, including the process of cultural adjustment, in much more detail. The facilitator presented a model for adjustment into a new society which included various phases including a honeymoon period, shock, recovery and stabilization. He also provided three models of integration and encouraged discussion about the ways in which participants thought they would keep their own culture and how they might adapt to Australian culture. The Australian orientation, like that of the U.S., heavily emphasized the importance of learning English, but it spent much less time discussing employment. In a video about the Adult Migrant English Program, the following jingle was repeated multiple times: “English is the key for making the best of your new life.”

The Canadian orientation was similar to the Australian session in that it discussed cultural adjustment issues in depth. In both orientations, participants engaged in a group activity where they read through a set of letters sent from a resettled refugee to her family in Cairo. Participants then determined the order in which the letters were sent based on the stages of adjustment. The exercise helped participants better understand the potential difficulties in the adjustment process. The Canadian orientation only minimally discussed the services that people would receive from settlement agencies upon arrival in Canada. This omission, if it occurs frequently, could contribute to the high number of respondents in Canada who had inaccurate expectations for assistance. Both refugees and service providers noted that new arrivals thought they would receive a much higher level of services than they did.

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<sup>7</sup> For the Australian program, individuals traveling under the special humanitarian program are encouraged to attend the CO session, but not required.

Only eight of the respondents in Cairo attended the orientation at the time of the interview. It was difficult to secure more interviews with people who attended the CO session since it is one of the final pre-departure activities and people are busy during this time with their travel preparations. All respondents in the U.S. and Canada attended CO before their travel, whereas only three of 16 respondents in Australia attended. Australia only began to offer CO sessions in Cairo in 2003 for UNHCR-sponsored refugees and in 2004 for those traveling through the private sponsorship program, which helps to explain this figure.

Respondents across all four locations overwhelmingly found the orientation to contain information that was new, helpful and worthwhile. However, perspectives varied on the overall usefulness of the program. Respondents offered general suggestions for improvement of the CO sessions across all three resettlement countries, and they also provided feedback specific to the CO for their particular country. The impact of the orientations on refugees' adjustment to their new societies and their suggestions for improvement will be discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter.

## **Chapter III: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

In the interviews, refugees discussed numerous aspects of their journeys from Sudan, through Cairo, to one of the three resettlement countries. Throughout these conversations, respondents were asked in various ways about their expectations as compared to their experiences upon arrival. Topics incorporated into this comparative exercise included: the informational and financial remittances received from friends and family who already traveled; respondents' perspectives on the resettlement process and their interactions with the institutions that conduct it; self-assessments of integration and participation in their new societies; and evaluations of success in resettlement as measured by their own definitions of success.

Through conversations with refugees, service providers and representatives of governments and NGOs, it became apparent that there are many issues of significance to refugees in resettlement that are common across countries. The subsections below identify and analyze those issues that were most important to project participants, measured by the frequency and vehemence with which they were mentioned by refugees themselves and by the service providers who work with resettled refugees. One theme runs through the entire chapter, and thus the findings that relate directly to this theme are discussed first: the importance of realistic expectations in facilitating successful experiences of resettlement.

### **EXPECTATIONS & EXPERIENCES**

By speaking with Sudanese refugees on both ends of the resettlement process, this study gained unique insight into the expectations formed previous to resettlement of life in the resettlement countries, and into the differences between these expectations and the experiences of Sudanese already in resettlement. This type of multinational comparison is rare in the literature on refugee resettlement, and the responses we received were thus all the more intriguing.

#### **Expectations of Life in Resettlement Countries**

*Overall Perceptions of Canada, Australia and the United States while in Sudan—*

Asked about their perceptions of life in Canada, Australia or the United States while still in Sudan, many respondents (74%) articulated very positive and generally non-nuanced understandings. For example, EGY\_04, a married, middle-aged Dinka man, stated that in these countries, it is a “very good life, where there is no bloodshed, where the law prevails above all things, and where there is no racism among citizens and everyone is equal [before] the law. There is religious equality.” Many others, like EGY\_30, a married Karko man who was an engineer in Sudan, mentioned the economic possibilities: “Someone can improve his economical status [there] and gain a lot of money if he works so hard...” Other common perceptions of the resettlement countries included: a “dream”-like quality of life across all three countries; fear of the danger, violence and racism on American streets; exaggerations of the size and degree of cold weather in Canada, as well as frequent mention of its good human rights record; and the nice weather and generous people in Australia, although the country is far away,

nearly “at the end of the world.” The response of USA\_11, a young Dinka father of two, is typical of participants’ perceptions of resettlement countries while in Sudan.

I had no clue about the resettlement thing. First I went to Cairo, then someone told me there is a UN office here where people can apply and then they might take you and you go to the USA. So that friend take me there, and he drop me off, and I fill the forms and then it started from there. I was just thinking that America is a different country because, first of all, everyone is talking about the USA – it’s the top of the world. Next, the glimpses of the small information I was watching through the media and the news, it was all saying things were good. I have, like, a good impression or a good idea about the country and I believe this is a good country.

*Overall Expectations of Canada, Australia and the United States while in Egypt—*

When asked about their perceptions of the resettlement countries while in Egypt, it was clear that respondents’ ideas had developed somewhat since they left Sudan. The majority (65%) still indicated primarily positive perceptions of life in resettlement countries, especially as compared to life in Egypt, but these perceptions were much more nuanced. Among those interviewed while still in Cairo, approximately half (23 of 49) expected their lives in resettlement to be better, without qualification, than their current situation. These ideas were influenced by the media, stories from friends and family in the resettlement countries and other general information gathered from prior schooling and word of mouth.

Of those interviewed in Australia, almost all had expected a life of ease and enjoyment, including good employment, opportunities to study, ownership of houses and cars, and safety and freedom. AUS\_01, a 36-50 year old married Kuku male, indicated:

I expected life to be easy, plenty of jobs and opportunities for further studies to get a better university degree and earn good money and enjoy a good life. I expected cheap housing and it to be easy to learn driving and buy a car.

All but three respondents in Canada indicated that despite knowing little more than the average temperatures before their arrival, they had been optimistic about their new lives. When questioned further, both those in Cairo and those already in Canada admitted that they had not known very much about the country, and that they thought it would be similar to the United States except with better government assistance and more educational opportunities. CAN\_02, a 26-35 year old married Dinka woman, illustrates this lack of specific information: “I thought it would be easier and safer than Egypt. My only worry was that the weather would be too cold. I thought it would be easy and free to go to school.”

Significantly, the majority of respondents in both the United States and in Cairo preparing to travel to the U.S. articulated expectations of their new lives that were much less clearly negative or positive than those of people resettled to Canada or Australia. Respondents in the U.S. or on their way there were much more likely to qualify their answers, or to indicate both negative and positive aspects of their lives in the U.S. More than half (15) of those interviewed in the U.S. had believed their lives would be ‘better’ in the U.S.; another nine – many more than for those traveling to other resettlement countries – had had mixed feelings; and two respondents had actually been very worried about their new lives. The thoughts of USA\_05 are typical, though a bit more eloquent than most.

From Sudan to Egypt it was all new things. From Egypt to USA, I thought it would be either very bad or very good. I knew that if I don't work hard, it will be very *bad*. But if I work hard, it can be very *good*. So this is a warning. Here everything depends on you. Not like in Africa. Here no one will give you anything – if you want to die of hunger, you may just die and no one will help. But I know too this is a country of opportunity, for every nation's people are living here in prosperity. – USA\_05, a 36-50 year-old married Moro male living in Washington, DC.

*Expectations of Employment & Educational Opportunities—*

Both Valtonen (1998) and Colic-Peisker (2002) emphasize the importance of employment in refugees' feelings of success in resettlement. Indeed, the employment-satisfaction correlation is commonly accepted. But to what extent does the *type* of employment matter in determining feelings of success? This question, discussed in further detail in the *Participation & Integration* section below, required that we ask respondents about the type of work they had expected to obtain previous to their arrival in resettlement. We later compared these findings with the work they actually obtained and their feelings of success.

When asked about their expectations of their first job in the United States, 13 of 28 respondents across all educational levels indicated that they had been unsure what kind of work they would be able or allowed to do, and that they were willing to take whatever job was available. By contrast, only one in Canada and only four in Australia said that they had been agreeable to taking any available job. Also in the U.S., only two Sudanese had planned to study before beginning work; in Canada, 12 respondents spanning each educational level wished to postpone entering the labor market in favor of study. New American residents seemed well aware that their professional options were limited: only one wanted to be even an office administrator; one trained mechanic intended to continue in this field; the remainder either had no plans or listed unskilled positions like factory, domestic, or retail work.

In Canada, aspirations were higher. This could be due to expectations of greater opportunities for professionals and educational advancement, or to Canada's more selective admissions process, which includes higher education levels as indicators of potential for success in resettlement. Three respondents wanted to be accountants, three others would take "any professional" job, and one hoped to work in office administration. The remainder were either not planning to work in Canada or wanted skilled labor positions, like computer technology and driving. In Australia, three participants intended to be accountants, one wanted to be a nurse, one a pharmacist (as he had been trained in Sudan), one a teacher, and one wanted to work in social services. Only one man thought he would work in a factory, and one woman thought she would work in childcare.

The opportunity to pursue further education was the single most highly-prioritized goal among all respondents, even above employment, both previous to leaving Sudan and after their approval for resettlement. Nearly all respondents in Cairo intended to study English for the first few months or years of their lives in the resettlement countries. In addition, several respondents had much longer-term educational objectives, ranging from truck-driving courses to masters and doctoral degrees in fields as diverse as computer programming, theology, engineering, anthropology, veterinary studies, and international relations. An example of this long-range planning is EGY\_05, a young, single Dinka man with some intermediate education, who stated:

English courses will be the first, right from the beginning for at least a year, then followed by secondary education after one to two years, and finally a university program after three to four years. (*EGY\_05 hoped the Australian government would pay for this education.*)

Before leaving Egypt and when they first arrived in the resettlement country, respondents in the three countries had similar hopes, with the vast majority having planned to pursue further education upon resettlement. In fact, only two respondents in the U.S., two in Canada, and three in Australia indicated that they were *not* intending to continue their studies. Many had no specific plans, but still declared that they would return to school again at some point. These goals were constant across ages, gender and previous education levels of respondents, and did not fade as their lives progressed in the resettlement country.

Before leaving Cairo, most of those who planned to pursue further education in the United States anticipated they would have to work to pay, at least partially, for their schooling. However, respondents in Canada and Australia had high expectations of financial assistance – in the form of loans, grants, or full tuition – from the government for their education.

#### *Experiences of Canada, Australia and the United States—*

When asked to evaluate their lives in the resettlement countries in terms of the expectations they had previous to arrival, Sudanese respondents in each of the three countries were quick to identify where their expectations had been naïve or mistaken. In Australia, respondents generally found that life was different than they had expected, in both negative and positive ways. For example, people frequently indicated that finding a satisfying job was much harder than they had anticipated; however, they were also positively surprised by the amount and duration of financial support received from the government upon their arrival. In Canada, 15 of 25 respondents indicated that their experiences had been different in a negative way than their expectations. The most frequently cited areas of discrepancy between expectations and reality were the difficulty of furthering their education and that of obtaining fulfilling employment. In the United States, on the other hand, the experiences of the plurality of respondents were similar to their expectations (12 of 28) of life there, which had been either positive or mixed. The two respondents who had had negative expectations indicated respectively: that he had been entirely wrong and his life was better in the U.S. (*USA\_18*); and that he was right in that adjustment was difficult, but that he was progressing better than he had expected (*USA\_19*).

#### **Trends Across the Resettlement Countries**

There are a number of trends that emerge in analyzing the data from all three resettlement countries and that are important to note here. First, across all three countries, those respondents who had anticipated a difficult start in their new country and hard, perhaps unfulfilling, work – at least at first – alongside the increased opportunities for education and upward mobility were the most likely to experience realities upon arrival that were similar to their expectations. Significantly, those most likely to have this nuanced perspective on life in their new countries previous to travel were those resettled to the United States. There are many possible reasons for this; some are outlined as hypotheses for future research in the *Conclusions & Recommendations* section below.

Second, the importance of furthering one's education and finding meaningful employment was emphasized by respondents in all four countries. In Canada, respondents felt consistently torn between these two goals, as CAN\_20, a 51-60 year old married man living in Toronto, indicates:

[The government] just give enough money to start but to stay low. You must decide if you want to work a low job forever or go to school, you can't do both. But you need school to get a good job, but you need the low job to live. It is too hard to decide and there is no one to help you. I thought there would be more support, both personal and financial.

In the U.S., respondents were more likely to be both working and taking classes at smaller universities or community colleges. Respondents in the U.S. frequently prioritized finding a job – *any* job – over pursuing educational opportunities, so that they could support themselves and their families. However, nearly all respondents also indicated that they intended to take courses once they were self-sufficient. In addition, those who were not working reported the least amount of satisfaction with their current situations (see the *Participation & Integration* section for more information on this phenomenon). In Australia, even though refugees receive generous financial support from the government, respondents frequently noted the difficulty of finding employment, particularly work that is relevant to their previous fields, as well as the pressure to work hard once employment is obtained. As AUS\_05, an older Zandi woman living in Modbury, states, “The life is not very much different from what I expected. The difference is except from the money I get from the government, it's hard to find work and get money.”

Finally, in both Australia and Canada, the importance and difficulty of obtaining *meaningful* employment seemed to come as a surprise to respondents, who expressed a desire to work both in order to supplement the government assistance as well as to integrate themselves into their new local communities. A related and oft-cited source of frustration was therefore the difficulty of transferring their previous qualifications into the Canadian or Australian systems. Some expressed disappointment with this situation.

I expected to work as a pharmacist and use my skills and experiences I gained in all the years I have been working. After arrival, I took my documents to the Overseas Qualifications Assessment Unit and they were assessed as [the] equivalent of [an] Australian B.Sc. degree. However, when I looked for a job, I did not find any in my field. Employers told me that I need to have Australian work experience or to retrain. I was very disappointed. – AUS\_08, a 36-50 year old Shilluk male living in Poroka, SA.

It is different, it is much harder. The government does not pay for school like I thought, I have to go to school for five years to be a doctor because my qualifications are not recognized and we have to make the hard decision of work or study because you cannot do both at the same time, but you need money to live, but school to really live a real life. It is too hard and no one knows what to do. – CAN\_03, a single, 26-35 year old male doctor living in Toronto, Ontario.

Thus, it seems that in order for people to feel satisfied in their new lives, regardless of their previous expectations, they need to feel that they are contributing to their new society as well as supporting themselves and their families. A 26 year old Dinka father of two now living in Lynn, Massachusetts, USA, articulates this sentiment:

Life here is not easy. It is a little hard. Not working is really bad and really hard because you can't pay the bills and there's the loan still from IOM and how am I supposed to pay these things if I am not working? It is actually really hard. And there are people in Africa too; they need money and they are sick and they call us and they ask for help, but we can't help and they know that there is money here, but they don't know there really isn't. We have to work so hard and I can't work yet – I don't have the job!

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES**

Upon arrival in the resettlement country, all refugees receive some form of assistance, either directly from the government or from an agency specifically tasked to work with them. This assistance provides for the initial needs of refugees, such as cash, accommodation and material supplies like clothing and household items. However, these services can become divisive, particularly when refugees have higher expectations of the assistance they will receive than what is actually available. Given the central role played by settlement agencies in the adjustment process, it is necessary to better understand refugees' perspectives on these services and their relationships with service providers. During interviews with respondents in all four countries, questions on this topic focused on the type of services provided, which groups provided them, which were the most beneficial, refugees' relationships with service providers, and the ways in which assistance differed from their expectations. Answers to these questions only significantly varied in relation to the country of resettlement, the specific settlement area within a given country, and the gender of the respondent.

In addition to discussing these issues with refugees, service providers were interviewed in each of the resettlement countries and in Cairo. Interviews were conducted with service providers in Cairo because the information they do or do not provide refugees regarding the resettlement process and the countries of resettlement plays a role in shaping refugees' expectations of the services and assistance they will receive upon arrival in resettlement. These interviews provided researchers a more comprehensive understanding of the assistance that refugees receive as well as issues that affect service provision, and allowed for a more holistic understanding of the resettlement experience.

### **Expectations of Assistance**

In Cairo, the majority of respondents (90%) knew they would receive some form of assistance in the resettlement countries. However, most of these people either do not know the specifics of this assistance or have inaccurate information about services. All but 10 respondents in Cairo thought that they would receive some type of assistance from either the government or an agency in the resettlement country.

*In any white man country, there is always assistance and I have information that I will be assisted by the resettlement agency through the government of that country. – EGY\_04, a married Dinka man from Southern Sudan who had not yet attended the IOM orientation, 36-50 years old.*

Most respondents (39 of 49) thought that they would receive a combination of services including financial assistance, housing, English classes and help finding a job. People had

diverging expectations for the duration of assistance, with the plurality of respondents thinking they would receive assistance for less than one year (17), followed by those with differing expectations for different services (11), and people unsure of the duration of services (10). These expectations were not significantly different based on the country of resettlement.

When discussing respondents' expectations of assistance in greater detail, it became apparent that some people (15) had an inflated understanding of the services they would receive upon arrival. People had particularly high expectations of obtaining further education, regardless of prior education or skill level. Eight respondents, divided almost evenly among the three resettlement countries, expected either the resettlement agency or the government to provide them with full scholarships to pursue higher-level education or specialized training. One respondent traveling to the United States thought the resettlement agency would help him to obtain a university scholarship and would support him for three to four years while he pursued his education (EGY\_24, a single Fur man from Western Sudan, 36-50 years old, who had already completed university in Sudan). Another, traveling to Canada, expected the resettlement agency to help him obtain a scholarship for graduate study and thought the agency would support him in this endeavor for up to five years (EGY\_25, a single Galeen man from Northern Sudan, 26-35 years old, who had completed some university in Sudan).

When analyzing answers provided by respondents in Cairo, it appears that the eight people who attended the cultural orientation sessions provided by IOM did not have a better understanding of the assistance they would receive than those respondents who had not yet attended. Out of the eight people, five either did not know what services they would receive or had an unrealistic or incorrect understanding of the services provided in resettlement. For example, a 36-50 year old married man from Western Sudan traveling to Australia, who had already attended his CO session, expected that the government would "give me a job, help me integrate with Australians and pay for me to do my Masters degree" (EGY\_31). These misconceptions of the assistance provided are echoed by some respondents in the resettlement countries and by service providers. One possible explanation for this finding is the relatively short amount of time of the classes given the number of topics to be covered, particularly when the information provided is markedly different from what people hear from informal sources. These dynamics will be further discussed in the last chapter.

### **Refugee Perspectives on Assistance**

Refugee responses regarding the services they received and their relationships with their settlement agencies varied considerably between the three countries. These differences seemed to vary primarily in accordance with refugees' expectations and the differences in policies and practice in each of the countries, as opposed to with characteristics specific to the individual such as age, level of education or region of origin.

#### *Australia—*

Respondents in Australia were the most pleased with the services they received and found that they were generally similar to their expectations. One respondent even remarked that the services exceeded his expectations.

It was very good. I didn't even believe that they were going to give me all what I got. That's what I kept telling my friends in Cairo and Sudan. – *AUS\_12, a 26-35 year old single man.*

In discussing specific types of assistance, respondents in Australia, arriving both as refugees and through the private sponsorship program, overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of the financial assistance they received from the government.

Money is the most important and furniture from the Australian Refugee Association because I can't live without any income since I do not work and the furniture is expensive in the market. I can not afford to buy them. – *AUS\_06, a single Fur man from Western Sudan, 36-50 years old.*

Respondents mentioned a number of other types of assistance, including furniture, clothing, initial accommodation and rental assistance. However, these were noted only briefly and in combination with financial assistance.

The majority of respondents (14 of 16) in Australia, arriving both as refugees and sponsored cases, were very positive about their relationships with the agencies that assisted them, often using adjectives such as “kind, friendly and caring” to describe the staff members. However, informants did not seem to have a relationship with any one service provider or case manager. This dynamic could be a result of the Australian service model, which does not employ a case management approach. Respondents in Australia were generally happy with what they received from the agencies, especially the financial assistance, but expressed disappointment that they were not aided more to integrate into Australian society, especially in obtaining meaningful employment.

#### *Canada—*

Respondents in Canada discussed the services they received in greater detail than those in Australia, particularly the English classes, financial aid, assistance in obtaining documentation, and general orientation. Obtaining provisions, such as furniture, clothes and food, was most commonly mentioned as the most important type of assistance provided. Overwhelmingly – 14 of 17 UNHCR-referred refugees – respondents in Canada emphasized that the services they received were much *less* than what they were expecting. Assistance in finding employment and pursuing further education were the most frequently-cited areas of disappointment.

I thought they would help us to have a life here, to live and to have jobs and to study. But they don't. There was no help to get a good job and only some help with English. For school I have to pay myself. – *CAN\_22, a married Balanda man from Southern Sudan, 51-60 years old.*

These frustrations about the gaps in services often corresponded to either a tense or non-existent relationship with the service providers. Twelve of 17 respondents either said that they had no relationship with staff at their settlement agency or that they had a difficult relationship with them. The most common frustration was that staff was too busy to see them and could not provide them with the type of assistance they wanted, primarily meaningful employment and education.

It is interesting to note that while respondents in Canada tended to list many more services provided by their agency than respondents in Australia, most Canadian respondents were quite

frustrated at what they perceived to be significant gaps in the services. One possible explanation for this difference is the type and amount of services provided in each country. Although refugees receive many different types of services in Canada, the level of assistance is generally not enough for newcomers to live comfortably on governmental assistance alone. In contrast, humanitarian entrants in Australia usually receive a sufficient amount of both financial and non-financial assistance from various governmental agencies and do not feel pressure to begin working.

#### *United States—*

Respondents in the U.S. seemed to be the most polarized about the services they received from their resettlement agency. Most respondents in the U.S. felt very strongly – either positively or negatively – about the services that they received from their resettlement agency.

First when we got here they got us the apartment and they gave us money for transportation and they helped us with the medical and they pay our food expenses, \$195 every month for the food, and they are just trying to tell us the way we can live here – like advice and which kind of job we are supposed to do and when you find the job where and just to get along with the people you work with, and how not to lose it, and they will help us find the work too. All the things we have here [in the apartment] is from [the resettlement agency]. We bring here just few things – the mattresses and everything they brought us – they made the life here for us. – *USA\_18, a single Latuka man from Southern Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

But there was great variation in the services that people noted receiving from their resettlement agency. These ranged from “nothing” (USA\_16, a single Dinka man, 26-35 years old), to basic core services, to a vast array of services in all spheres. Many respondents stated that they thought the differences were dependent on the state in which a person lives, their particular resettlement agency, and characteristics of the individual refugee, such as the level of English and whether they have family living in the same area. For example, one respondent thought that he received less assistance from his agency because he spoke a higher level of English (USA\_21). The variance is likely related to the structure of the U.S. federal refugee resettlement program, which guarantees only the most basic forms of assistance (Refugee Cash Assistance, Refugee Medical Assistance, etc.) are provided in a standardized manner across all 50 states. Several state governments, like that of Massachusetts, supplement the federal programs with unique funding and administrative support structures. However, some respondents were also frustrated because they thought that staff at resettlement agencies were too busy to help them because they were always working with so many other new arrivals.

Although one group of respondents was quite vocal about their frustrations with their resettlement agency, the majority (18 of 28) said they had a good relationship with their agency.

When we first come they treat us as friend, recently I consider them as my family because they are very good. – *USA\_A4, a married woman, 51-60 years old.*

However, one source of tension for many respondents was the pressure put on them to be self-sufficient shortly after arrival. People expressed frustration both at not receiving enough money

from their agency to pay for their basic expenses, and at the pressure they felt to take whatever job was offered to them.

I used to go to them and they try to advise me about the life here... Now I have to explain to them my situation and they say in this country you have to run, but I am new here. I don't even know where to run so we just go back and forth. – *USA\_03, a single Muru man from Southern Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

What they did was actually pretty good – the whole idea was they put us on foot to be taking care of ourselves – it's really one of the basics and really very good. What I want though is to not allow all the refugees to just do manual labor – they should do some sort of career training. Like me I have worked for Tyson for 3 years packing chicken and it's really not going anywhere. – *USA\_04, a married Muru man from Southern Sudan, 36-50 years old.*

In the U.S., respondents frequently identified other sources of assistance, particularly churches, as playing a role in their settlement. These other groups supplemented the services received from resettlement agencies and often helped informants for a longer period of time.

### **Service Providers' Perspectives on Assistance**

Service providers in each of the resettlement countries discussed many of the same frustrations that refugees face throughout resettlement, and those in the U.S. and Canada acknowledged the tense relationship refugees often have with their resettlement agency.<sup>8</sup> Service providers in each country attributed these difficulties primarily to the unrealistic expectations that refugees have about the services that they will receive and, secondly, to an overall shortage of funding to provide additional services. Regarding expectations, agency staff thought that refugees expected resettlement agencies to provide many more services than realistically possible.

They are coming with extremely high expectations, I don't know what goes on in the orientation before they come, but they come here expecting free housing, free education and that they'll get a good job right away. – *Head of Settlement and Integration Services at an agency in Alberta, Canada.*

Many refugees come to us with the preconception that they will have a large furnished house, no rent payments, that they will receive more extensive assistance from the agency, access to 24-hour free transportation services, and they often believe that can have an infinite dependency on case workers. – *Program Director at a resettlement agency in Arizona, USA.*

Sudanese coming from Cairo think Australia will be utopia! When they arrive in Australia they expect more financial help, some of them they even apply to the government to buy houses for them. *Program officer at a migrant resource center in New South Wales*

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<sup>8</sup> Staff from thirteen resettlement agencies were interviewed; 7 from the U.S., 4 from Canada and 2 from Australia. Staff in the United States completed questionnaires electronically, whereas staff in the other two countries were interviewed in person using the same questionnaire.

Specifically, staff at agencies in Canada frequently mentioned employment and education, whereas those in the U.S. commonly discussed refugees' misconceptions of the role of the resettlement agency.

A lot of them think that we are going to give them a job when they come here. They are surprised that we only help them do their resumes and guide them. They're also surprised about the ESL, they seem to think that they get a year of free education, not just ESL if their English is below a certain level. It causes a lot of disappointment ...not just among the Sudanese, but with all refugees. – *Head of Refugee Services at an agency in Alberta, Canada.*

Most refugees expect that their 'sponsor' is a rich individual and do not understand why the agency is 'so stingy.' [They think] the agency/sponsor will continue to pay their rent and other bills when they have income, be it Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) or TANF (welfare), and even after they are employed. – *Director of a resettlement program in Nevada, USA.*

The issues that service providers identified as important tended to be the same ones identified by refugees when discussing their expectations for assistance, namely, an inability to spend sufficient time assisting each refugee and difficulties in obtaining employment and education.

Service providers were concerned that this disjuncture between refugees' expectations of assistance and the reality they were able to offer made the adjustment process more difficult for refugees and strained the relationship between the two parties.

Some of them get this attitude where they feel hard done by the government and they start to get bitter and negative about their lives. You see it a lot here in the office. Sometimes I wonder if we're not putting out some political and social profile that we can't live up to. [Researcher asked her to elaborate.] Well, we spread the news about how great Canada is to live in and people come here expecting paradise. They don't realize that it's not great for everyone who lives here. – *Head of Settlement and Integration Services at a large agency in Alberta, Canada.*

With a limited budget, caseworkers cannot fulfill refugees' desires and expectations. This causes tension between refugees and caseworkers, and is often a cause of frustration during the resettlement process. – *Program Director at a resettlement agency in Arizona, USA.*

As exemplified in the previous quote, many service providers attribute their inability to provide more services to clients to a lack of funding. All of the staff interviewed in Canada stated that lack of funding was the biggest challenge they faced in trying to assist refugees.

Almost everything we do is beyond what the government requires. We have a budget for only 13 hours per refugee! Our counselors spend at least double that with every case and have huge case loads of 200 per counselor. – *Head of Settlement and Integration Services at a large agency in Alberta, Canada.*

Staff in the U.S. also mentioned other types of challenges, such as the lack of affordable housing, transportation difficulties and frustrations in finding suitable employment.

## **Analysis**

The difficulties faced in the resettlement process, as expressed by both refugees and service providers in Canada and the U.S., are supported by other research in both of these countries. Steven Gold, in his book on the resettlement of Vietnamese and Russian Jews in the U.S., states:

[These difficulties] result from the near impossibility of the task at hand: delivering elusive elements of social membership on demand. No matter how well-funded a resettlement agency is or how skillful its staff, the major goals of resettlement (economic self-sufficiency and cultural adjustment) are difficult to attain (1992: 143).

There are also several institutional constraints that hinder the resettlement system. Resettlement agencies tend to be short-staffed, are often competing for scarce resources and face numerous bureaucratic restrictions and obligations (Gold 1992: 143). These constraints make it extremely difficult for program staff to provide services to refugees beyond those core services mandated by the government. Although staff interviewed for this project seemed aware of the difficulties refugees face in the adjustment process and the frustrations they feel toward the agencies, they often felt powerless given funding constraints and the government resettlement policies.

In contrast, respondents in Australia were much more satisfied with the services they received and generally had quite positive relationships with the various staff providing these services. One probable cause for this difference is the resettlement policies in each country, as refugees going to Australia receive financial assistance and English classes for a longer period of time with little pressure to begin employment. In Canada and the U.S., services are more limited and refugees are under great pressure, particularly in the U.S., to begin working in any type of job very soon after arrival.

However, although there were discrepancies across the countries regarding satisfaction with services, these discrepancies did not correlate with how respondents viewed the success of their resettlement experience. As will be shown in other themes addressed in this chapter, there were many other variables which affected whether or not respondents thought they had a successful integration experience and were participating in the resettlement country. For example, all of the respondents in Australia who described their relationship with service providers as extremely positive also stated that they were not participating in Australian society. In contrast, all of the respondents in Canada who thought they were participating in the culture also described their relationships with their service providers as either non-existent or difficult. Therefore, although the settlement agency can play an important role in the overall resettlement process, there are many other variables that affect how an individual perceives his experience, which will be discussed in the coming themes. The finding that the agency is not the key to refugees' feelings of success in resettlement reflects Doreen Indra's research on the resettlement of Southeast Asians to Canada, in which she noted that the circumstances forcing a refugee to flee his or her country, in addition to the factors involved in adjusting to a new

society, often cause a high amount of stress and that many of these stressors are ones “that no resettlement scheme could mitigate” (Indra 1993: 240).

## **PARTICIPATION AND INTEGRATION**

Acculturation occurs when two different cultural groups come into contact with one another, and one or both groups are changed by the adoption or adaptation of features from the other’s culture. The acculturation strategy chosen by an individual or group depends on the attitudes they hold, the attitude of the host society, and the circumstances of the minority group or individual. Resettlement countries, which play the role of majority culture, also select an acculturation strategy. Of the four acculturation processes described by Berry (1986: 2), integration is the goal most often articulated by major immigrant-receiving countries, and it is the stated strategy of the three subject countries examined in this study. Although the stated acculturation strategies may be similar, the degree of cultural integrity encouraged within the various countries can vary significantly. In line with Valtonen’s (1998: 42) examination of Middle Eastern refugees in Finland, this section investigates refugee integration by studying the degree of their participation in various sectors of the resettlement countries’ societies.

### **Participation in Resettlement Countries**

#### *Employment—*

Employment is often seen as the key indicator of successful integration of new immigrants and resettled refugees, as argued by both Valtonen (1998) and Colic-Peisker (2002). Since the present study highlights refugees’ perspectives on their own resettlement experience, respondents were asked not only whether they were employed, but also whether they were satisfied with the work they had obtained.<sup>9</sup>

In Canada and the United States, roughly half of all respondents were working at the time of research, while in Australia one-third of respondents were employed. In Canada and the United States, the majority of people were initially employed three to six months after arrival in the resettlement country. There were also several respondents in Canada who had found their first jobs after a full year in the country. In all three countries, first jobs tended to be low-paying manual labor positions such as factory work or service jobs.

Attitudes toward job satisfaction differed between the three resettlement countries. In the United States and Australia, almost all those working reported high job satisfaction, while in Canada only half of those employed replied positively to the question regarding employment satisfaction. It is possible that the responses from the United States were indicative of that country’s policy of encouraging more rapid entry into the labor force than in the other two countries. People in the United States often emphasized that although their job may not be ideal, they had been encouraged to find work quickly and were thus happy to be employed.

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<sup>9</sup> See also *Expectations & Experiences* section for information on respondents’ employment goals previous to resettlement.

Yes. Of course, because it is the first work and they tell us in the orientation that the first work we just have to do anything but you have to work hard and then it will go in your record. And they say we can't say no 'til we build our lives and we have our certificates, so just do good and it will be good for you. The Americans themselves are doing this work, so it is good, and there are people from all different countries too. – *USA\_19, an engaged Fur male, 26-35 years old.*

In Australia, of the five respondents who were working, four seemed happy to have the work and emphasized the skills they were learning. AUS\_14, a single, middle-aged man living in Comberdown, NSW, who was working in a supermarket at the time of the interview, explained that he enjoyed his work since it paid decent money and he was learning skills necessary for life in Australia. The acquisition of skills and financial gain were emphasized by all of the respondents who enjoyed their job, except for one individual in Australia who enjoyed his work in a lab. He had worked in the pharmaceutical industry in Sudan and had been able to find work in a lab in Australia. He voiced great satisfaction that he was able to find a job in his field.

In Canada, it seemed the type of work and whether an individual felt over-qualified factored more significantly into the responses than in the other two countries. Those who enjoyed their work cited reasons such as feeling useful to their community or feeling empowered by their jobs. As one married man who had started his own used car business in Vancouver stated, “I am in control of my own business and [I] am my own boss. That is why I like my work” (CAN\_06, 26-35 years old).

Those who did not enjoy their jobs in Canada felt that due to previous education and work experience, they were overqualified for the manual labor positions in which they were currently employed. It is interesting to note that in Brooks, Alberta, where four of the five respondents were working at the local meatpacking plant – and earning the highest incomes of any Canadian respondents – all four voiced dissatisfaction with their work. They complained that there was no respect for their skills and that the work was too hard and messy. The importance of respect and meaningful employment was emphasized by the fifth respondent in Brooks who quit his high paying job at the meatpacking plant, reducing his hourly wage by half, to work in a local department store:

It is better than Lakeside [the meat packing plant]; at Wal-Mart [the department store] there is respect. There is no manager and no employee, just associates and we are all equal, and there is respect. – *CAN\_12, a 36-50 year old Balanda male.*

#### *Education—*

Although the vast majority of respondents in all four countries had high hopes for their pursuit of further education in resettlement,<sup>10</sup> many faced significant difficulties. At the time of the interviews, 12 of 28 respondents in the United States had been able to attain some form of further education since arrival, while eight in both Canada (of 25) and Australia (of 16) had been able to do so. Those who had accessed education tended to have been in the country for approximately two years. Respondents from the United States had more often been in the

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<sup>10</sup> See *Expectations & Experiences* section for greater detail.

country longer than two years, which may help explain the larger number of individuals in the U.S. who had accessed education at the time of their interviews.

The most common reason given for delaying education in Canada and the United States was the need to work first and save money. In Australia, however, the majority of respondents felt that, first, they needed to learn more English. Several also seemed to feel torn between employment and education. As mentioned earlier, this was especially true in Canada where many of the respondents, particularly those nearing the end of their first year of government assistance, were just beginning to address the dilemma of either working or going to school.

The government does not pay for school like I thought. I have to go to school for 5 years to be a doctor because my qualifications are not recognized, and we have to make the hard decision of work or study because you cannot do both at the same time. You need money to live, but school to really live a real life. It is too hard and no one knows what to do. – *CAN\_03, a single, 26-35 year old male from Khartoum.*

Although this issue was more prevalent in the Canadian responses, it was also noted as a problem in other resettlement countries as well.

Their [the refugees'] preparation for life here varies considerably, but the one thing that appears to be constant is that they want what they want... and that is to go to school. This is a positive, but frequently becomes a big issue when they learn/realize they must also support themselves via a job. They want to go to school exclusively, which is just not realistic, or allowed by welfare regulation and/or policy, unless they forsake welfare. Receipt of welfare equals a job. No welfare, they are free to do as they choose. – *Bureau Chief of a U.S. State Refugee Office.*

Because of this pressure, the majority of those who were studying were also working to support themselves. Some even became disillusioned with the idea of education, as a 26-35 year old man living in Alberta explained.

I thought it would be easy to go to school here but I even have Canadian friends who are working in the meat plant with me. They have engineering degrees and they're in the slaughter houses! They have to pay off their loans and they can't find work that pays enough, only this. I wanted to finish my engineering degree, but now I think why? Why if I'll still be stuck working the same job after just to pay my debt to the government? – *CAN\_09, a single Dinka male in Canada since 1999, working at a meat packing plant.*

There does appear to be a link for the refugees interviewed between pursuing education and feeling they are participating in society. Those who have managed to pursue further education see it as an important means of integrating into society. As one married, 36-50 year old Shilluk man who arrived in Australia in 2000 stated when asked if he was participating in Australian society, "Yes, I am an active member of the University of South Australia and clubs." At the time, he was pursuing a university degree, but was not employed. The opportunity to study not only offers individuals the chance to interact with the resettlement country population on a regular basis, but as one Canadian respondent explained, it provides a sense of normalcy and of becoming a "typical" citizen (CAN\_09).

*English Language Skills—*

The importance of English skills to participation in the resettlement society cannot be underestimated. Mamgain’s study of refugees in Portland, Maine (2003) found that a refugee’s skill level in English upon arrival was the most important factor in his or her ability to earn higher wages. In all three resettlement countries, the lack of English language skills was mentioned as a significant barrier to integration and participation in society. This was especially true in Canada and Australia, where almost every individual who indicated that they were not participating in their host societies cited lack of English skills as one of the main reasons. Governments and resettlement agencies also emphasized the importance of learning English.

The English has to come first. I think the others, employment, friends... it all comes after the English. If they don’t learn English I don’t think they will have a successful time. – *Head of Resettlement Department in a resettlement agency in Calgary, Alberta.*

English levels, both before and after resettlement, varied among respondents with the majority having had at least a beginning knowledge of English before resettlement. The amount of English training received after resettlement also varied, both between individuals and across the three resettlement countries (Table 9).

Some of the variations can be explained by the different ranges of services provided by the resettlement countries and their subsidiary states or provinces. However, several respondents reported difficulties in pursuing their English studies due to financial constraints. Either their government assistance was about to end and they needed to begin working; or the aid that they received from the government would not cover extra English coursework in addition to their normal expenses. Many women also mentioned the difficulties of attending class because they could not find suitable or affordable childcare. However, while English language skills appear to be a linking factor in all areas of participation and integration, increased English language coursework is not necessarily the complete solution, as those in Australia, who receive 510 hours of subsidized English language training, consistently mentioned lack of English skills as an obstacle to their participation in society.

**Table 9: Length of English Language Training in Resettlement Countries**

	<b>USA</b>	<b>Canada</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	7	5	3	15	21.8
Less than one month	0	1	0	1	1.4
1-3 months	5	3	0	8	11.6
3-6 months	4	1	0	5	7.2
6 months to 1 year	7	10	9	26	37.7
More than one year	5	5	4	14	20.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

*Social Activities—*

Researchers also attempted to gauge respondents’ interactions with the resettlement country populations and to understand the relationship between these interactions and respondents’ perceptions of their participation in the host societies. Therefore, respondents were asked about their social activities and how they first became involved in them. For men, the most common activity was sports, mainly soccer, while women frequently mentioned church activities and visiting friends. The vast majority of respondents found their social activities through the

Sudanese community. The minority who mentioned activities outside the Sudanese community were mostly younger participants who were students or who had found activities through co-workers. This highlights the importance of employment and education in creating opportunities for newcomers to participate in resettlement society.

## **Overall Participation**

Taking all of these issues into consideration, respondents were asked whether, overall, they felt as if they were participating fully in their respective resettlement countries. Answers were similar across all three countries, with roughly half the respondents in each country believing they were fully participating. However, the reasons cited to explain their feelings of participation and/or integration varied.

In the United States, those who felt they were not participating in society, or who had mixed feelings on the issue, most often indicated cultural differences as the main reason for their lack of integration. Regardless of the length of time spent in the United States, many believed that while American culture was good and they felt welcome in their communities, the differences were just too great to fully participate in society, and therefore the majority of their relationships were with Sudanese.

The USA society is very different from our society, different tradition. The way they live and the relationship between the people are different. – *USA\_01, a single, 18-25 year old female living in Manchester, NH.*

In Canada and Australia, on the other hand, the main reason given for lack of participation was the lack of English language skills.

I cannot speak the language good, and I am working in a place only with other refugees. I do not know any Canadians, in some ways it is almost like I am still in Sudan. – *CAN\_23, a single Acholi female, 18-25 years old.*

I still have English problems, and I only communicate with Sudanese people and socialize with them. – *AUS\_17, a married, 26-35 year old male.*

Those who did feel they were participating in their resettlement country's society tended to stress very practical everyday indicators and interactions with original Canadians, Australians or Americans.

I do the same work, I eat the same food, we go shopping the same, we take the same buses – most of the things we do are exactly the same as the Americans do. But not everything. There are many things that will have to come with time, maybe after some years. – *USA\_19, an engaged, Fur male, 26-35 years old.*

I am taking courses with Canadians. I have Canadian friends. I am saving like a Canadian so my children can go to school. – *CAN\_14, a married Baka male, 36-50 years old.*

It is clear that refugees' perceptions of their participation in the resettlement society are affected by the degree of interaction with the citizens of that country and their feelings of "fitting in," whether through employment, education or social activities. The extent that individuals believe themselves to be participating in these different aspects of the resettlement society can have an effect on how they perceive the success of their resettlement experience, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

## **PERSPECTIVES ON SUCCESS IN RESETTLEMENT**

Like participation in society, successful integration and resettlement are goals shared by both refugees and the governments of the countries to which they resettle. When measuring successful integration, governments tend to employ quantitative indicators. The Canadian government, for example, defines successful resettlement as an individual being able to support themselves and their dependants within three to five years after arrival (CIC 2003d: 73). In contrast, recent studies on refugee resettlement and integration have found that factors like quality of life should be considered when evaluating successful integration and resettlement. In her study of Middle Eastern refugees in Finland, Valtonen states: "life quality or its absence is assumed... to be indicated by the gap between the self-reported goals of those resettling and their actual participation" (1998: 42). In an attempt to build on this idea and provide insight into the indicators of success refugees themselves identify as important, researchers in the present study asked respondents in both Cairo and the three resettlement countries to discuss the factors they felt were important to successful integration and resettlement and to then evaluate the success of their own resettlement experience in relation to these factors.

### **Indicators of Success**

Respondents in Cairo were asked how they would determine if they had been successful after their first year and after five years in their resettlement country, while respondents in the resettlement countries were asked what they considered to be successful resettlement or integration. Responses from all four countries were somewhat similar. The two most frequently cited indicators of success were finding employment that provided a good income and obtaining some form of further education. Learning English was also frequently mentioned as a priority. This corresponds closely to the responses received by Valtonen, who found that employment and educational or vocational training were the settlement goals prioritized most often by her respondents (1998: 45). This trend is also noted in a study of refugee resettlement to Alberta, Canada which found that "by far the most important issues raised by all refugees for succeeding in Canada is learning English, followed closely by finding a good job (Abu-Laban, et al. 1999: 96).

There were also some differences observed in the answers given across the four countries. Respondents still in Cairo placed a greater emphasis on their ability to send money home to family as an indicator of success than did those who had already resettled, perhaps because of unrealistic expectations of life and wealth in the resettlement countries. In the U.S., obtaining citizenship was more frequently mentioned than in the other two resettlement countries, and while integrating into the society was commonly desired by respondents in the U.S. and Australia, it did not appear in any of the Canadian responses.

### **Personal Assessment of Success**

Respondents in the three resettlement countries were also asked if they considered their own resettlement or integration experience to have been successful. They were asked to judge their personal success in terms of the definition they had outlined earlier, rather than by any standard definition imposed by the researchers. In Australia, eight of the 16 people interviewed believed they had a successful resettlement experience. In Canada, 13 of the 25 informants believed their experience to be successful. Contrastingly, the respondents from the United States were much more positive, as only one of the 28 respondents indicated that he had *not* had a successful resettlement or integration experience, and the rest of the respondents provided mixed (4) or positive (23) responses.

Contrary to researchers' expectations, employment status did not appear to affect the respondents' evaluations of their personal success. Australia had the lowest number of respondents working, with only one third of interviewees employed, while approximately half of the respondents in both Canada and the United States were employed at the time of the research. Yet in all three resettlement countries, employed respondents were almost as likely to say they were unsuccessful as those who were unemployed, and vice versa. In the U.S., only 16 individuals were employed at the time of interviews, but 23 believed they were having a successful resettlement and integration experience. Responses were similar in Canada and Australia.

What does seem apparent is that among those who are employed, it is job satisfaction and not simply employment status that plays the more significant role in the perception of personal success. In Canada, for example, of the 13 respondents who were working, the nine who enjoyed their jobs, or thought their jobs were "good enough", felt that they were having successful or mixed resettlement experiences. The four who did not enjoy their jobs did not feel they were having a successful resettlement experience. One Dinka man, who was working at a meatpacking plant which paid very high hourly wages, was very negative when discussing his integration and success. However, his friends who were present during the interview all thought he was very successful because of his ability to purchase luxury items such as a large screen television, stereo system and a car. He disagreed:

No, I am missing out on life. Just work and sleep and eat. Never even see my brother and sister that live with me, no time for friends. I'm tired and stressed out all the time. –  
*CAN\_09, a single Dinka male, 26-35 years old, in Canada since 1999 with intermediate English skills and employed in a meat packing plant.*

The importance of meaningful employment was also highlighted by a married Shilluk male, 36-50 years old, who had been living in Australia since 2002 but who was not employed at the time of interview. He stated, "Without being offered good work in a field of my training, I would never have successfully resettled" (AUL\_08). When individuals are determining whether or not they have been personally successful, finding a job is important, but more emphasis appears to be placed on obtaining meaningful and fulfilling employment.

Furthering one's education came a close second to employment when respondents discussed their ideas of successful resettlement and integration. Those already studying in Canada and

Australia were more likely to think of themselves as having a successful resettlement experience than those delaying their education due to lack of money or English language skills. In Australia, six out of eight of those delaying their education believed they had not had a successful resettlement experience. In Canada, those already studying all believed they were successful, while of the 12 who were delaying their studies due to financial difficulties, only four thought they were successful. Similar results were also found in the United States as those who were studying at the time of interview all thought that they were having a successful resettlement experience.

Another factor affecting individuals' perceptions of personal resettlement success was the degree of assistance they received versus the assistance they had expected to receive. In Canada, only seven respondents thought they had received as much assistance as they had expected – but all seven believed they were successfully integrating. Of the 17 respondents who did not believe they had received enough assistance, only six thought they were successful. Similarly, in Australia, all respondents who did not believe that they had received as much assistance as they had expected also believed that they were had not yet successfully integrated.

As discussed earlier, one key indicator of successful integration is the extent to which individuals feel themselves to be participating in their new society. To this end, the ability to communicate in English appears to have the greatest effect on respondents' evaluations of their participation in their new country and therefore on their perceptions of their own success. It is generally evident that if someone believes she is participating fully in the host society, then she should describe her integration and resettlement experience as successful. This supposition is particularly supported by interview responses from Canada and Australia. In Canada, of the 11 respondents who did not believe they were participating fully in Canadian society, nine also believed they were not having a successful integration experience. Similarly, in Australia, of the 10 individuals who did not feel that they were fully participating in their new society, seven felt their experience had been unsuccessful. AUS\_01 highlights the importance of social participation to successful resettlement.

I can say I have successfully resettled or integrated if I am employed and given opportunities for advancement like the hosting citizens and fully participating in the social, cultural, economic and political activities of the country in equal level as the citizens. Then I will say I have successful resettlement and integration. – AUS\_01, a married Kuku male, 36-50 years old, living in Australia since 2001, with advanced English skills and unemployed at time of interview.

A number of general conclusions can be drawn when evaluating the respondents' answers to questions regarding their degree of personal resettlement success. Those who felt they were *not* having a successful resettlement or integration experience tended to focus on specific problems they were facing such as lack of employment, lack of educational opportunities and an inability to integrate with the local population due to language and cultural difficulties. As the respondent cited above from Australia explained,

I don't feel I am integrating yet. Successful integration involves being employed and given opportunities for advancement like the hosting citizens, participating in social, cultural, economic and political activities of the country at an equal level as the citizens. Since I am still studying and not employed and not participating in all of the above cited

activities, I consider myself and my family not integrated at present. – *AUS\_01* (see above for biographical information).

Despite differing numbers, responses by those who felt they were successful were similar across all three subject countries and tended to focus on the future. As Colic-Peisker found among Bosnians in Australia, “regaining control over one’s life and a feeling that one can plan for the future seems to be one of the best predictors of a generally positive outlook” (2003: 13). Although many respondents had not yet achieved the goals they articulated earlier as indicative of successful resettlement or integration, they seemed to see at least a concrete possibility of achieving them, as illustrated in the following quotes from the U.S. and Canada, respectively.

Well actually I consider myself a successful person because everything I do, it goes successfully. I pay my rent every month with no late charge; I paid my IOM loan on time; I even have a credit card now... And the kids are doing well in school – they don’t repeat the classes – it’s good. I hope all the dreams I have will go as expected – the green card is at hand; the citizenship will come in 2005; and from there we’ll see where to move. And I’m in process also maybe next year applying for this mortgage for house... I think it is going well. These are indicators: you put things forward, and you hope, and you go for it. – *USA\_04*, a married Muru male, 36-50 years old, who had been in the U.S. for 2-4 years, possesses beginning English skills, and is employed in a meat packing plant.

...It’s been good because I’m just about to start my freshman year at school and I have four more years. But I’m on the right path I think... Your first time, the first six months or one year it’s just hard you can’t understand everything. – *USA\_13*, a single Dinka male, 18-25 years old, arrived in USA with advanced English skills 2-4 years ago, employed as a cashier at time of interview.

It was very hard in the beginning and is still hard, but it is better and will keep getting better. I will be able to go to school soon and then things will be better. You just have to take the time to learn how things work here. You just need a positive attitude and everything will be fine. – *CAN\_01*, a single Nuba male, 36-50 years old, worked as an accountant in Sudan and Cairo, has advanced English skills, and was unemployed at time of interview.

Another interesting point is that those who believed themselves to be successful gave reasons for their success that often did not correlate with the general definition they had earlier provided for successful resettlement or integration. Often more personal reasons were given when evaluating their own experiences, such as family reunification, health care, the existence of rights not available in Sudan and considerations for the future of their children.

Canada is a good country. Here you are Christian, I am Christian, Khalid is Muslim and we are all here together. This is too hard in Sudan... the government will not allow it. Here I am free and I can feel it and they can’t take it and I will get an education, it will be very hard but it will happen if God wills it and my wife will come and all will be well. It will be hard but well. – *CAN\_16*, a married Dinka male, 36-50 years old, arrived in Canada in 2003 with beginner English skills, still unemployed at time of interview.

As I mentioned before, we met our main goal, as we care much for our kids not ourselves at the moment, we can establish life for us, any kind, but the kids are much important for us. – *AUS\_13, a married 26-35 year old male, who arrived in Australia within the past six months and was unemployed at time of interview.*

It is important to reiterate that in Canada and Australia only half of the respondents found themselves successful, while 23 out of 28 respondents in the United States felt they were successful. One possible explanation, as discussed above when dealing with individuals' expectations of life in the resettlement country versus their experiences, could be that refugees traveling to the United States tended to encounter fewer differences between their expectations and their actual experiences, although this area requires more research before further conclusions can be drawn. What is clear, however, is that the factors refugees see as contributing to successful integration or resettlement are not necessarily the same as those identified by the governments of the receiving countries. While governments and academics often see employment and labor market integration as a key indicator of successful overall integration (Valtonen 1998; Colic-Peisker 2003), the refugees' perspective does not seem to emphasize income or employment as an automatic indication of personal resettlement success. Evaluation of their integration and resettlement experience is highly subjective, and additional indicators, such as access to education, job satisfaction, contentment with the assistance provided by governments and resettlement agencies, and the level of social participation, are often given just as much importance as employment when refugees evaluate the success of their own integration and resettlement experiences.

## **Chapter IV: CONCLUSION**

One of the major aims of this research project was to provide an opportunity for refugees to voice their thoughts and perspectives on their resettlement experience. Throughout the conversations that produced the findings discussed in earlier chapters, refugees, service providers and researchers all offered suggestions for improvement of the resettlement process as well as for future research investigations. Researchers then compiled and sifted through these suggestions, noting particularly the possible effects of resettlement countries' policies on refugee integration, in order to identify the most logical and practical recommendations for improvements. Throughout the catalogue of suggestions, three arose with much greater frequency than others: increased English language training; fostering more realistic expectations of life in resettlement previous to travel both in the Cultural Orientation sessions and in the communications between refugees in Cairo and those already in resettlement; and overall improvement or facilitation of the information dissemination and feedback mechanisms in Cairo.

This chapter first identifies the possible broad-based effects of resettlement country policies on refugees' successful resettlement and integration, although it is difficult to isolate specific causal relationships between these two phenomena with real scientific confidence. The chapter then details the three most frequently cited recommendations made by refugees, settlement agencies and resettlement country governments for improvements to the resettlement process, and offers practicable means of implementation. Finally, the chapter provides several possibilities for important future research by interested scholars or policy-makers.

### **IMPACT OF GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES ON REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

The country of resettlement is one of the most important variables in our analysis of specific themes related to the resettlement process. Each of the three resettlement countries examined in this project maintains its own laws, guidelines and policies regulating the entrance of refugees and the assistance they receive upon arrival. Given the differences in these policies, it is particularly interesting to note trends specific to each of the countries. The broad scope of this research renders it difficult to draw firm conclusions, but it is possible to identify several potential hypotheses for future research, compiled later in this chapter. Furthermore, there are indeed clear trends in each of the countries which are of interest in understanding the integration process and that will be examined here.

#### **Canada**

In Canada several distinct trends were noted. First, many respondents felt torn between obtaining employment and pursuing further education, and expressed an intense frustration at not being able to re-certify their prior training in Canada in order to obtain a job in their profession. As discussed earlier in this report, the Canadian government employs unique criteria when determining an individual's eligibility for resettlement, primarily based on his potential for successful resettlement. These determinations, combined with the government's emphasis on and "selling" of the educational opportunities available in Canada, have resulted in the

arrival of many refugees with high levels of education and professional backgrounds in their countries of origin. Unfortunately, before they traveled to Canada, many respondents with specialized training, such as accountants and pharmacists, were not aware that they would have to obtain recertification before working in their professional field and that they might encounter difficulties when attempting to do so. This problem was compounded by the lack of information they received from their resettlement agencies about how to re-certify. Often, respondents were unsure whether they should try to re-certify first so they could work in their profession or take the first available job merely to support themselves and their families while they attempted to re-certify or obtain further education.

Second, many informants discussed how difficult it was for them to obtain employment. While the government encourages newly-arrived refugees to seek employment, they are also provided with one year of financial assistance during which they can take English or French classes. Therefore, the majority of respondents started to seriously look for a job only at the end of their first year, at which time many of their government-provided services are reduced. In addition, follow-up meetings with resettlement agency representatives cease at the 10-month mark. The timing of the decrease in services led many informants to feel confused and uncertain about how to find a job. Although assistance is provided for newcomers for up to three years after entering Canada through the Integrated Services Program, many refugees expressed the need for more assistance at the end of their first year when they are feeling overwhelmed and worried about the withdrawal of governmental financial assistance.

Third, there is a high level of secondary movement, with approximately half of the Canadian respondents moving in their first year. This may be caused by the policy of sending newcomers to destination cities in more rural areas, such as the Maritime Provinces, in an attempt to increase migration to economically-depressed areas with shrinking populations. However, many of these areas have few work opportunities and weak social networks; resettled refugees quickly perceive this and move to bigger cities to be closer to family, friends, or better employment and educational opportunities.

### **United States**

In the United States, resettled refugees receive the least amount of financial and other forms of assistance, and they are expected to work and become self-supporting as soon as possible. As a result, resettlement agencies in the U.S. come under intense pressure from the government and their own national offices to ensure that most refugees start working within the first few months of arrival. The agencies then transfer this expectation to refugees themselves. This project has noted both positive and negative aspects of this policy and found that there is great variation in people's perceptions of this emphasis. Positively, this approach can build self-confidence and satisfaction when people do obtain employment and begin to see progress in their new lives. It also encourages the self-sufficiency and independence that is so highly prized by the U.S. government and in U.S. society. As compared to Canada and Australia, a much higher percentage of respondents in America considered themselves to have had a successful resettlement experience, which may be partially due to their rapid incorporation into the American workforce and thereby into other aspects of American culture. However, there are also negative outcomes as a result of this approach. In emphasizing "on-the-job" learning, this policy approach limits the amount of time newcomers can devote to intensive

English language training. It also limits the long-term employment possibilities for refugees as there is not time to re-train, obtain new skills and/or certifications, or to further their education previous to starting work. In addition, the emphasis on early employment can also have serious negative consequences for those who are unable to obtain employment quickly because of physical disability, poor language skills or a passive personality. Decreased self-esteem, depression, withdrawal, social isolation, and heavy dependence on friends or family are merely a few of the possible negative results for refugees.

Second, the curriculum developed for the IOM cultural orientation sessions preparing people to travel to the U.S. places great emphasis on the difficulty of newcomers' life in and adjustment to the U.S. Intimidating refugees at the orientation sessions with stories of homeless people dying alone on the streets or of refugee families breaking up as a result of stress and conflict provoked by cultural differences may seem cruel, but it makes a huge difference upon their arrival in resettlement. When compared to those resettled to Canada or Australia, respondents in the United States reported having been much better informed about the difficulties of adjustment, and therefore, they were much less surprised or disappointed upon arrival in their new country. On the whole, those who had been forewarned about cultural differences and the sometimes daunting challenges of moving to an entirely different society were also more motivated – whether by fear or by hope – to succeed as individuals and as family units in the new system than those who had had purely positive perceptions of life in resettlement.

Finally, the United States admits more than five times the annual total of any other receiving country through its refugee resettlement program each year. This policy has had numerous positive effects on the resettlement and integration processes of individual refugees. These include: increased levels of information available to those traveling to the U.S. via friends and family already in the country; stable, established communities scattered throughout the country into whose support networks new arrivals are welcomed; and the existence of successful, satisfied role models on whose foundations newcomers might construct their own new lives.

### **Australia**

In contrast to the United States, refugees and humanitarian entrants settling to Australia encounter extremely generous social welfare policies. Entrants are provided with up to two years of English instruction and are under no pressure from the government to obtain employment during this time. The financial assistance provided by the government is enough, particularly for families, to live relatively comfortably. Refugee respondents benefit from this assistance in terms of the opportunity to study English for a much longer period of time and to participate in training programs previous to starting work. In addition, refugees in Australia tended to have less tenuous relationships with service providers than the respondents in the U.S and Canada. Australian respondents most often characterized their relationships with service providers as kind and friendly, which may be due to the generous government assistance and the lack of pressure on refugees – and on resettlement agencies – to obtain immediate employment.

Although these benefits greatly facilitated entrants' initial adjustment to Australia, many respondents indicated that they did not feel like their resettlement had been successful or that they were participating in Australian society. They attributed this lack of integration to being

unemployed and not having opportunities to interact with Australians. Many respondents discussed the extreme difficulties they faced in finding a job. In addition, many respondents did not see great improvement in their English skills even though they had taken ESL classes for the entire 510 hours, or two years, for which they were eligible. One possible explanation could be the low level of interaction the newcomers have with native Australians and therefore the fewer chances they have to use their English in a practical setting and with native speakers.

Australia is also unique in the number of private sponsorship cases it accepts each year. This practice is quite happily perceived by refugees in Cairo, particularly those who have been denied recognition as refugees by UNHCR and who have then been accepted for resettlement via Australia's private sponsorship program. The program also allows the government to accept a larger number of people than it would otherwise be able to, as its costs are lower for humanitarian entrants. The majority of people traveling from Cairo are sponsored by family members, members of their tribe or friends. One drawback to this approach, however, is the difficulties that entrants can face upon arrival due to a lack of support from their sponsor. Some of our respondents noted that sponsors were often unable to provide much assistance to the new arrival and so people were forced to learn how to negotiate the new system on their own. Respondents also noted that they feel great pressure to sponsor their friends and relatives; one of the motives for beginning the sponsorship process is to decrease the amount of remittances they are requested to send to Cairo. This dynamic can help explain why many sponsors are unable to provide much assistance to newcomers upon arrival.

### **Implications of these Trends**

This section has provided a brief overview of some of the effects of policies unique to each of the three resettlement countries. Clearly, there are potential positive and negative effects of each policy, depending perhaps most heavily on the individual and the way in which she is able to grasp and interact with the new laws, regulations and systems. Given the complex nature of policy-making and the multiple stakeholders and pressures involved in such processes, it is beyond the scope of this research to make recommendations for changes to resettlement country government policies. However, it is important for those policy-makers and stakeholders to understand refugees' perspectives on and perceptions of the ways in which these policies influence their settlement experience.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As an alternative to recommending sweeping policy changes among resettlement country governments and intergovernmental organizations, this section will provide several other, more practical recommendations for improving the resettlement institutions that already exist. Many of these recommendations focus on the importance of disseminating accurate information in a timely and carefully prioritized manner. The following suggestions are broken down into two sections: ones specific to the IOM Cultural Orientation Sessions, and more general recommendations that address the UNHCR and embassy resettlement processes in Cairo. All suggestions aim to facilitate the overall smooth adjustment and integration of refugees resettled from Cairo into their new host societies.

### **Cultural Orientation Sessions**

One of the key variables that influences the settlement experience – and really the only one over which policy-makers might assert any control – is the amount and type of information about the resettlement country refugees are able to access prior to travel. Currently, the IOM Cultural Orientation program provides the only formal mechanism through which this kind of information is disseminated. Respondents in all four countries generally found the orientation to be useful. However, they also provided concrete suggestions for ways in which they thought it could be improved in order to better prepare them for migration. What follows is a compilation of these suggestions, offered in the hope that better preparing people for resettlement will improve their overall settlement experience.

The orientation, it is ok, but in spite of what they are telling us people are still having their high expectations. We are thinking of how we can stop this... they have to say this in the orientation: OK, when you come to the States, you are going to start from the zero-level. Even if you know the language, you are going to have to enroll for ESL classes. You will have to work any entry-level job. The money you are getting will not be enough because you have the loans and you have some other expenses to be paid. The work is unbearable, but you have to work, there is no way out. And the other thing is the cultural part of it. They need to tell especially about the cultural part of it because this is the most difficult and people are facing a lot of problems here because of it. – *USA\_21, a single 36 year old Kakwa male now living in Manchester, New Hampshire.*

#### *General Suggestions—*

Respondents provided both general and country-specific suggestions. The general recommendations can be broken down into four major categories. First, respondents wished that the orientation sessions could last for a longer amount of time, or that the information provided be chosen more carefully. Three days, or 15 hours, was not enough time for many people to understand and remember all of the detailed information with which they were provided, or for them to digest the information and identify topics on which they needed to ask more questions. A respondent in Australia expressed this sentiment, shared by many others:

It was not so helpful. It was only the ABCD of it. It was given in a rush when I was thinking about the journey and how life will be in the new country. – *AUS\_01, a 36-50 year old married Kuku man from Southern Sudan.*

Given the challenge of extending the orientation timeframe, the information provided should be carefully prioritized. Essential discussions about the culture of the resettlement country and specifics of what to expect in terms of government assistance and employment and educational opportunities should be emphasized over more detailed information such as systems of transportation, how to read a pay stub or detailed information about obtaining permanent residency status or citizenship.

Second, informants also asked that more information be provided about day-to-day life in the resettlement country. They noted that some of the information given is too basic, leaving them without a good understanding of the reality of life in the resettlement country. Respondents particularly asked for more information about culture, laws and the difficulties that they will

face throughout the resettlement process. A woman in Cairo approved for resettlement to the United States said:

They told us about the laws in theory but they didn't tell us about the reality and whether this assistance is fixed over all the country or varies from one state to another. My husband was treated in a different way. He stayed with his relatives for two months without a job and the resettlement agency provided him just with tickets to get food. He got assisted financially once after two months of his arrival. He wasn't even able to call me because he had no money. I need more information about the society and the real life for refugee families. – *EGY\_32, a 26-35 year old married Nuba woman from Western Sudan.*

This more detailed information could be better provided in a longer orientation, but can also be discussed in Cairo if other subjects are de-emphasized. This would also allow people time to think about and adjust themselves to the larger socio-cultural differences before their travel. Our respondents' stated need to digest the bigger differences first might also help to explain why the largest number of questions in a recent USCO session attended by one of our researchers were about the weather and American history.

Third, many respondents noted that some people have a difficult time fully understanding the information presented at the orientation and suggested that interpreters for first languages, even if they are tribal, be more readily available at the sessions. The vast majority of participants in this study attended the orientation in Arabic, although for many this was not their first or most comfortable language. Funding constraints and administrative difficulties are likely responsible for the lack of interpreters; however, the money and time that may be saved by not having to repeat the information later would perhaps offset these initial costs. This suggestion was articulated both by refugees in Cairo who had recently completed CO and also by informants in the resettlement countries. In attending the CO sessions for each country, researchers in this project also noted the difficulties encountered when Arabic is the primary language used. In at least two of the three sessions, there were individuals with only an elementary knowledge of Arabic. Although all facilitators tried to explain the major points in both English and Arabic, one of the facilitators was much more adept in his ability to do this. It was clear in all of the sessions, primarily from the questions asked by participants, that they did not fully understand the material presented.

Fourth, many informants stressed the vital role played by the orientation facilitator and thought this individual needed to have more specific qualifications. Several staff members at various resettlement agencies in both Canada and the U.S. recommended that the orientation be conducted by someone who has either lived the resettlement experience or worked for a significant amount of time with refugees, preferably in the target country of resettlement and its service systems.

One qualification stands out above any other qualification to be a CO instructor – an extensive experience resettling refugees at the local level in the United States. – *Director of a resettlement program in Nevada, USA.*

On the other hand, many respondents thought the ideal candidate would be a Sudanese person who had previously traveled to the resettlement country as a refugee, as this type of person would have a better sense of the reality of life in the resettlement countries and would be able to

address specifically Sudanese concerns about this reality. If this type of individual could not be found, most respondents thought it was most important that the presenter had lived in the resettlement country for a significant period of time.

The orientation is different depending on the presenter. If the person lived in America, it will be easier to give the orientation because he will have more clues about life in America, even about different states, because he already knows that. But if the person who is giving the orientation is just coming from, you know, other countries or is just somebody who is working in the UN or in Egypt, but he doesn't have any clues about America, he will not deliver right. Because people will take what he said, and when they go there and they find something different, they will say oh, that person did the wrong thing. But it was because he didn't have any clue about America. That's why I think that a person who is going to give the orientation should have lived in America first. – *USA\_22, a 24 year old Dinka male from South Sudan, now living in Lynn, Massachusetts.*

Clearly, the importance of the facilitator role cannot be underestimated. Given the difficulties involved in moving to any new culture and the complexities inherent in settlement policies and practice, the facilitator must have a nuanced understanding of the settlement process and be able to communicate these issues to people in a clear, participatory and straightforward manner. In attending the CO sessions, researchers also noted vast differences between classes based on the teaching skills of the facilitator. The students were much more engaged – and seemed to understand more of the information being presented – in one class primarily because the facilitator used explicitly participatory teaching methods and was able to connect with the class. In addition, some of the information presented in each of the classes was either incomplete or inaccurate. Given the breadth and specificity of the information covered, it is extremely difficult for facilitators to present all of the information accurately if they have not been involved in the refugee system in the respective countries.

#### *Country-Specific Suggestions—*

In addition to the general recommendations above, feedback varied according to the resettlement country of the informants.

*CANADA:* Respondents in Canada discussed the CO sessions in much more negative terms than those in the U.S., and Sudanese in Canada provided the most suggestions for changes they thought should be made to the orientation program. Twenty-one Canadian respondents thought additional information should be included in the orientation and nearly the same number made suggestions for improvement. The vast majority of Canadian respondents thought that the orientation should better convey the difficulties that refugees face when resettling to Canada. A Dinka woman in Canada summarizes this sentiment, also expressed by many others there:

The orientation should have said how the life really is, you know, people come here with high expectations. What the orientation says is not the correct picture – that you will have a perfect and better life – and that is why people are depressed. That's why certain people are struggling. This reality is not what they are presenting. – *CAN\_19, a single Dinka woman from Southern Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

In particular, respondents suggested that more information be given about the difficulties faced in obtaining employment, particularly a job which best utilizes someone's skills and previous qualifications, and in pursuing further education. A story told by a refugee in Cairo may shed some light on how an overly positive perception of life in Canada could be held by refugees pre-departure. This man, who had no prior education and worked as a driver in Sudan, had recently finished CO and was preparing to travel to Canada.

I was told the story about an 80 year old man in Canada who died while he was still a student in the university. Learning never stops in Canada because people are competing every year with technological developments which everybody has to adjust himself to.  
– *EGY\_15, a married Nuer man from Southern Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

Although information about the challenges of pursuing further education may have been communicated, this individual remembered this story above all and expressed hopes of continuing his education upon arrival. However, according to respondents in Canada, it can be very challenging to pursue further education there, and they wished this had been more clearly stated before they traveled.

Service providers in Canada agreed that refugees often arrive with unrealistic expectations, particularly related to employment and education. These providers thought that the challenges that refugees face in resettlement needed to be more strongly emphasized to people before they traveled.

They should be told how hard it will be to find a good job. That their first job is likely to be low-paying and manual labor and that they shouldn't expect to have their qualifications recognized in the first few months after they arrive. – *Head of Refugee Services at an agency in Alberta.*

Given the frustrations noted throughout this paper, particularly for those resettled to Canada and Australia, the orientations for these countries should be modified to place greater emphasis on the difficulties of adjustment and integration.

UNITED STATES: In contrast to Canada, respondents in the U.S. generally thought that the orientation presented an accurate picture of life in America. Twenty-three of the 28 respondents in the U.S. thought that, overall, the session was worthwhile and helpful. When asked about the type of information presented, many respondents stated that the presenter discussed how difficult life would be in the U.S. and that refugees are only dependent on themselves.

They told us that life is not easy like in our minds; not to think that we can go and sleep and get money like this; that we will really have to work hard. – *USA\_09, a married Bani Hal man from Western Sudan, 36-50 years old.*

Many respondents stressed that they learned they would need to take whatever job is offered to them and that they would need to work before they could start studying.

Some of what they told me I forget, but they tell us everything, like work first then school, you have to take care of yourself, you have to take care of your future, you have to take care of your kids because there is too much freedom... the life in U.S. is hard but

you have to try. – *USA\_12, a married Zandi woman from South Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

Surprisingly, two respondents in the U.S. were concerned that the orientation exaggerated the difficulties and dangers they would face in resettlement, leaving the respondents somewhat scared to travel to their new country.

We come from Sudan. We were at war you know. While we are in the orientation when you are trying to tell us that in America thousands of people are being shooting from the guns in the street and we are almost sure that a lot of accidents happen here in America – what will I feel? I will become afraid because I just came from the place of problems and I am also going to the place of problems?? Then there is no use for me to go there. When I go there then I will live my life just trying to be – or otherwise just go and close my door early and when anybody knock at the door I will not open it... but then we come here and we find it is different. – *USA\_19, a recently engaged Fur man from Western Sudan, 26-35 years old.*

However, while the respondents in the U.S. generally thought they were provided accurate information in the CO, service providers in the U.S. overwhelmingly thought that refugees arrived with inflated expectations of life in America.

Many refugees come to the U.S. without knowing about life in America, or a concrete understanding of the cost of anything in this country. Their expectations are normally high, thinking that America will provide the solution to all their problems and that life will suddenly become comfortable and prosperous without sacrifices and hard work. – *Staff Member at a National U.S. Voluntary Agency.*

Refugees' expectations most of the time do not correspond with reality. We believe this to be a result of inadequate orientation provided to them overseas along with their psychological inclination to perceive the resettlement into the U.S. as the answer to all their problems. – *Assistant Director at a resettlement agency in Texas.*

Service providers also thought that the orientation needed to place an even greater emphasis on the importance of early employment and self-sufficiency.

After arrival you can not go to school or study English to the exclusion of work. You must work first and study second. The agency that is helping you has only enough money for the first several months' rent and any welfare you receive will probably not be enough to cover your living expenses, so it is either work, find a friend to move in with or be homeless. – *Bureau Chief of a U.S. State Refugee Office.*

Given the scope of this research, it is not possible to explain the disconnect between the perceptions of refugees and service providers, but it would be an interesting area to explore in future research, and some hypotheses will be offered in the relevant section below. In an effort to bridge the gap between the information that people receive in CO and the reality of life in resettlement, the U.S. Department of State contracted a private organization, the Center for Applied Linguistics, to develop pre-departure orientation materials for refugees and resource materials for people working with refugees. In addition, CAL, through its Cultural Orientation Resource Center, has developed an exchange program in which IOM staff travel to

the U.S. to meet with resettlement agencies and learn more about the realities that refugees face, and resettlement agency staff are escorted overseas to learn more about CO sessions and refugee processing. These exchanges have been useful in correcting misconceptions and providing a venue for agency staff to recommend ways to strengthen the orientation. In 2003, a staff person from a resettlement agency in Kentucky came to Cairo and met with service providers involved in the entire resettlement process. Many of her recommendations for ways to improve the orientation were similar to the suggestions made by our respondents and outlined here. These suggestions included prioritizing the information provided to refugees to emphasize the most important, providing English classes to prepare refugees for departure, and working in greater partnership with local NGOs and churches to provide additional orientation information to refugees (CAL 2003: 3-4). This exchange program is a tool that could be more widely utilized to help IOM staff provide more accurate and practical information to refugees before departure. Other resettlement countries should consider adopting a similar program to help ensure the accuracy of the information presented during their CO sessions.

### **Information Dissemination & Feedback Mechanisms**

When recommending improvements to the resettlement process as a whole, respondents frequently indicated that they did not have a clear understanding of the resettlement process because they were only provided information one step at a time. For example, refugees were consistently informed at the end of their UNHCR resettlement eligibility interview – if determined eligible – merely to proceed to IOM after four months and look for their name on the board there. The next steps, including the filing of a family tree, yet another case screening at IOM, interviews with the immigration officers of the resettlement countries and medical examinations, were not always detailed. In addition, it is difficult for one entity, such as UNHCR, to provide detailed information about what will happen at another entity, such as a resettlement country embassy. This gap in the provision of thorough information is understandable given the multiple institutions involved in the processing of one individual's case. However, the gap is problematic for refugees who, as a result, often rely on inaccurate information gathered from friends and family rather than any formal sources to construct their ideas of the resettlement process and life in the resettlement countries. Combined with the well-documented trust issues between refugees and institutional authorities in Cairo (see Kagan 2001, Grabska 2005, for further discussion on this theme), the circulation of inaccurate information can lead to frustration and confusion.

When questioned about the information gap, institutions in Cairo explained the difficulties they face when guiding refugees through the resettlement process:

I don't know that we do a brilliant job of that. We try and we have certainly tried much harder in the last year and a half, but it is certainly front-end heavy. Once we have made a determination for people, we don't see those cases again and they are basically out of our hands unless they are rejected, and we have very high acceptance rates – 85 and 95 percent – which is tremendous. So we don't really have any contact with refugees after they are accepted, unless they are rejected, which in that case they come back and we have specific criteria by which we evaluate the rejected cases. That we don't share and we don't share it because... Well, we share the general information, but not the specifics just as we don't share the specific information for how you qualify for a referral, the basic information is there, it's available ... but the very detailed stuff we

don't get into so that people don't change their story to try to fit into our criteria. – *Resettlement Officer at UNHCR RO Cairo.*

This lack of information sharing is not only a problem between refugees and institutions but between the agencies themselves. While representatives of UNHCR, IOM and the resettlement country embassies in Cairo have regular interagency meetings to discuss issues related to resettlement processing, there is little to no contact between the agencies in Cairo and those in the resettlement countries. As an official at the Canadian Embassy responded when asked about feedback from Canada,

Any feedback we receive is usually negative and very irregular. For example, if someone gets into major trouble with the law CIC [Citizenship & Immigration Canada] may contact us to see if there were any indicators or problems beforehand. Sometimes they also contact us if people divorce very soon after arrival, if it appears to be an obvious marriage of convenience so that we can try and avoid cases like that in the future. But as I said it's very sporadic, maybe 4 or 5 times a year. – *Official at the Canadian Embassy in Cairo, paraphrased.*

This type of feedback could be extremely useful in providing embassies and institutions in Cairo with a better understanding of the difficulties that refugees are facing in particular resettlement countries; thereby facilitating a broader dialogue about these difficulties and the ways in which agencies can help refugees become better prepared to travel.

In addition, refugees do not have the opportunity at any point in the resettlement process to provide feedback on or ask questions about this process. On an individual basis, they can submit a letter to UNHCR with questions or complaints, and the organization attempts to respond to each inquiry in a timely manner. However, according to refugees who have used this system, the answers frequently come too late, if at all, and with too little information. The Canadian embassy maintains a drop-box for general suggestions, but has no other mechanism to receive feedback. The United States embassy official interviewed for this paper admits that he receives no direct feedback either from refugees or from the U.S. resettlement agencies; he considers himself lucky when government officials or agency representatives pass through Cairo and he is able to have informal conversations with them on this subject. The Australian embassy does not receive much feedback, but a representative indicated that they do receive some feedback from NGOs, churches and at refugee community leader meetings. A UNHCR official indicated the difficulty in engaging refugees in policy discussion and in creating forums for feedback to be provided.

Almost none, almost no feedback. What little there is would be negative. [There is] never an opportunity for direct group feedback – “This is good. This is bad.” – No. Generally, people are only interested in their own particular circumstances, their own cases. If there is a complaint, usually it is not about the policy, but about a person's individual case. So you never have a policy sort of discussion about criteria. We never get that kind of feedback at all... The refugees themselves are not interested in a policy discussion. – *Resettlement Officer at UNHCR RO Cairo.*

Although there are many constraints to the exchange of accurate and respectful information and feedback in Cairo, refugees often faced considerable difficulties as a result of the lack of such

systems. Therefore, disseminating accurate information about policies and procedures could be a service that non-governmental organizations or refugee community-based organizations could offer more systematically and objectively than the institutions themselves, particularly if they operate in close cooperation with UNHCR and the embassies. The role played by non-governmental organizations in the orientation and information dissemination process in Cairo may be increased, and probably without significant initial expenditures. One church-based program in Cairo, Refuge Egypt, is already providing a class for refugees to discuss various issues related to resettlement. Lessons learned from this program could inform other NGO- or church-based programs. Church and non-profit organizations could hold more informal and longer-term information sessions and ‘shadow’ orientations with specific groups of refugees, not only providing them the opportunity to communicate in their own language but also likely increasing their comfort level when it comes to asking questions. With some minor funding provisions from the resettlement country embassies, and venues provided by churches or NGOs, volunteers from the American University in Cairo, the embassy communities, and other institutions could facilitate these longer-term classes, and refugee volunteers could interpret.

In addition, these information sessions, if conducted in close cooperation with UNHCR, IOM and the resettlement country embassies, could be used as a venue for refugees to express their concerns about the resettlement process. The NGO or community organizers could then act as liaisons between refugees and the institutions that serve them, diffusing tensions, advocating for both sides to each other, and providing a forum for frank and open dialogue between service providers and receivers. An interesting point to note here is the difficulty of the situation in which UNHCR finds itself in Cairo, as the role of liaison and advocate described above is precisely that filled by UNHCR in all other national contexts where it does not conduct refugee status determination. For better or for worse, however, the situation in Cairo places UNHCR in an often adversarial position with regard to refugees, and the NGO community could be extremely important in bridging this gap in the resettlement process, and thereby bring the two sides closer together.

### **English Language Training Previous to Resettlement**

Another role that could be played by the NGO and church-based community in Cairo is that of English language training provider. Several respondents suggested that refugees approved for resettlement be given the opportunity to attend intensive English classes in Cairo while awaiting travel. These people indicated that the general adjustment process in the resettlement country, including obtaining a job, would be much smoother if they had a higher level of English – or at least basic vocabulary and grammatical skills – available to them upon arrival. They stated that as well as providing something concrete to do to prepare themselves for their new lives while still in Cairo, refugees would be able to “hit the ground already going fast,” as one respondent (USA\_22) expressed in his own newly-acquired English, and begin working, socializing and integrating with Americans, Canadians and Australians immediately. Service providers echoed this suggestion as they discussed the vital role that English plays in the adjustment process.

Refugees should be told the importance of learning English and if at all possible have some classes before they arrive. – *Head of Settlement and Integration Services at a resettlement agency in Alberta, Canada.*

Resettlement countries should consider funding NGOs or churches to provide intensive English classes to people who have been approved for resettlement. Again, there exists a wealth of resources in Cairo to draw upon in establishing these classes – a large part of which is readily found in the embassy and expatriate communities, and at the American University in Cairo. Given the central role that English language skills play in the overall integration process, these classes would be an extremely lucrative long-term investment, as they would help refugees integrate more quickly into the resettlement country society.

## **FINAL WORDS**

At the end of the research and analysis phases of this project, the foremost conclusion in the minds of the research team was one over which we agonized before even setting out on this investigation: *Successful resettlement of refugees to third countries is highly dependent on the individual, personal and situational circumstances that make each refugee – like all other human beings – unique.* That said, out of a multitude of possible variables and via a thorough investigation of the research findings, this study has identified one key variable which can significantly facilitate the achievement of successful resettlement by individual refugees: accurate, timely information, and the realistic expectations of resettlement that it shapes.

When refugees' expectations are confirmed by their experiences of resettlement, they are much more likely to feel that they have achieved success. The most significant determinant of a refugee's perception of success in resettlement was not her unique demographic profile or even her country of resettlement. Regardless of her individual characteristics and her geographical location, it was the amount and accuracy of the information available to her previous to her actual resettlement. This information, gleaned from the media, her community in Cairo, conversations with friends and family already in resettlement countries, and the IOM Cultural Orientation sessions, shapes the refugee's expectations of her life and experiences in the resettlement country. Across all three countries studied in this project, those respondents who had anticipated a difficult start in their new country and hard, perhaps unfulfilling, work alongside the increased opportunities for education and upward economic mobility were the most likely to experience realities upon arrival that were similar to their expectations. As greater amounts of accurate information become available to an individual prior to her resettlement, she becomes more likely to form accurate expectations of her life in the resettlement country. The more accurate her expectations, the more similar her experiences will be to her expectations. The more similar her experiences to her expectations, the more successful she will feel in her new life – regardless of other factors like her level of participation in the host society, her past experiences, the country in which she lives, the amount of time she has spent there, the remittances she is expected to send home, or her own definition of successful resettlement.

Information provided to refugees awaiting resettlement should encompass the resettlement process in Cairo, the history and policies of the resettlement country, services provided in detail in each resettlement country, resources for further learning while in Cairo, opportunities available and not available in resettlement, English language classes, and anything else of possible interest to refugees being resettled. The information should be allowed and encouraged

to circulate as freely as possible, because it *will* circulate regardless of any attempts to control it, and it should be tactfully monitored by stakeholders like refugees, UNHCR, IOM and the resettlement country embassies to ensure its accuracy. The best facilitators of this flow of information would be objective parties like NGOs or community-based organizations, who could act as liaisons between the refugees and the institutions that serve them.

## **HYPOTHESES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST**

Finally, many interesting issues emerged in the course of this study that researchers were not able to explore in as much depth as they would have liked given the initial project design. The following is therefore a collection of several of these topics and research questions, all of which could be explored more fully in the future, based either on the information gathered through this study or on the findings of other research projects.

### **Feedback and Information Dissemination**

- How can feedback and information-sharing in Cairo (and other sites of resettlement processing) best be improved, especially given government and international organization confidentiality issues? Would the NGO community be able to assist in this area? Could they conceivably act as a “buffer” between UNHCR and refugees – disseminating and gathering information to and from both sides?

### **Expectations and Experiences**

- Across all three countries, those respondents who had anticipated a difficult start in their new country and hard, perhaps unfulfilling, work – at least at first – alongside the increased opportunities for education and upward mobility were the most likely to experience realities upon arrival that were similar to their expectations. Significantly, those most likely to have this nuanced perspective on life in their new countries previous to travel were those resettled to the United States. This could reflect the quality of the IOM orientation to the U.S., the prevalence of U.S. media in the rest of the world, the large size of the Sudanese refugee community in the U.S., and/or the close communications between those Sudanese in the U.S. and those awaiting resettlement.
- Does the year an individual left Sudan, or do the motivating factors behind a person’s departure, affect their expectations of life in Egypt and/or of life in the resettlement countries?
- Do people in Cairo anticipate (expect) that they will remit money home to Sudan or to any countries of first asylum previous to their travel to resettlement countries? To what extent do they understand the pressure that will be on them once they are resettled to remit money home?

### **Discrepancies in Agency and Refugee Perspectives**

- What are the reasons for the discrepancies between U.S. agency perceptions of refugees' preparation and understanding of what their lives will be like in their new country, and refugees' own feelings about their preparation and understanding of their new country?

### **Differing Responses between Resettlement Countries**

- Why is integration mentioned so much less frequently as a goal of newcomers to Canada than it is mentioned by newcomers to the U.S. and Australia?
- We observed differences in success responses – U.S. refugees seemed to feel much more successful than those in other places. What could explain this trend?
- We noted differing definitions of successful participation and integration across resettlement countries; why? Are these definitions informed by national policies? What other factors contribute to the development of these definitions?

### **“Cultural Differences,” Gender Roles and Gender Relations**

- Many young Sudanese men in the United States and Canada have displayed a tendency to adopt what they perceive to be typical African-American styles of dress, speech, and action, much to the dismay of the Sudanese communities and young Sudanese women. Why are young men seemingly much more likely to attempt this ‘segmented assimilation’ than their female peers? Is this kind of assimilation adaptive?
- Also, several older and/or married women in Canada and the United States mentioned that they had been unable to continue in employment, English language courses, further education or career training, or social activities because of a lack of affordable childcare and/or their husbands’ insistence that they remain home with the children. For many, this led to feelings of isolation and depression, and severely impaired their acquisition of the English language.

### **Race and Racism Issues in Resettlement**

- Why do refugees destined for the United States worry about their interactions with African-Americans so much more than those traveling to Canada, which also has a large African-Canadian population? Where do these negative impressions come from?
- Is segmented assimilation more prevalent in the United States than in Canada? Are there other explanations for this adoption of African-American cultural traits?

### **Motivating Factors for Secondary Movement within Resettlement Countries**

- Is employment always the primary motivation for large-scale secondary movements or are there other factors involved? What affect does this have on service providers who may not be prepared to handle extra cases?
- What affect can large influxes of African immigrants have on the local population of small, rural communities such as Brooks? How do they perceive the changes to their community?

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## Appendices

### **Appendix 1. Additional Statements by Research Participants**

#### **Life in Egypt**

Life is very difficult in Egypt and that some people are selling one of their kidneys in order to survive. - *EGY\_01*

Her mother was telling her that there is no education in Egypt. People are living on Oshim (remittances) to survive. Her husband was telling her to wait in Sudan to allow him to attend the UNHCR interview. If he get recognized, she can then come to be added to the file and that will make life easy for the family. - *EGY\_12*

[his half brother told him:] Egypt is a very good country and that all refugees are being collected every year and taken to USA without any interview. - *EGY\_19*

I expected the Egyptian to treat us from the Sudan as brothers like we treat the Egyptians living in Sudan, but they treated us harshly. I also expected the UNHCR to be responsible for the refugees who arrived in Egypt from Sudan but no assistance was given to the refugees. They are left to look after themselves without health and educational services which are very basic for any human being, being refugee or citizen. - *AUS\_01*

When he came, he had no expectations. He ran out of the country to save his life. He said that life is very difficult and there is no room for other things like studying apart from work. Every refugee is the master of his fate. If he wants to behave like ‘*shabaab el-gangs*,’ it is up to him.

First, when he came and applied to the UNHCR and he was recognized and given resettlement appointment, he was very happy. But again, when he went for durable solution interview and he was resettled locally in Egypt, he was dismayed. He said that the Egyptians are good people. You only have to understand their way of life. They have been kept isolated from the rest of the world even if you check their geography books; they talk only about their cities like Alex, Luxor, Sharm El-Sheikh, etc. When the black Africans from Southern Sudan poured in large numbers, they were shocked. He said when he rented his present apartment; the window glass was broken four times by the stone throwing neighborhood children as a way to discourage them to move somewhere. But he kept on repairing the broken windows without touching the neighborhood children. Now, he said that his neighbors became his best personal guards. His daughters can go down even at 2:00am in the morning and nobody touches them. You have to stay cool with Egyptians and avoid violence. - *EGY\_06*

I think it was a nice place, better than Sudan. But when I got there, I found everything is different. I thought the people were good like our people in Sudan but when I came there everything is very different. Other times in my life I did not see things they are doing. But when I was in Sudan I did not see that kind of thing they are doing to Sudanese people there. Like they threaten Sudanese very bad there even the building which I was living there they drop all doors and the windows without any reason they just stoning and stoning every day until they broke all the doors and the windows. If you are walking on the street like this you will just find somebody slapping you without any reason even in the Metro somebody will just come there and touch your skin, “are you really taking shower or not?” A lot of things. Even I become very angry I say if not because of James I would have go back to Sudan because life there is not good and the police will say this is not his work his work is just to see the cars, not to help you. If somebody is killing somebody there this is not his work. And somebody will come there and hit you with the car and he say because you are black that’s why they did not see there is somebody here. Yeah! There is some Sudanese who are killed in Cairo many of them. Some go to workplace – you

know there is no work there? – people there they work in the houses or family some they throw from the balcony up there without any reason. Some they kill in the hospital, different ways... Some time you go to work they will not pay you. Even me I work with somebody when the time comes for him to give me my salary he refuse to give me the salary and I just leave the work like that. He say if you ask the money I will kill you, and then you will be afraid to ask the money. - *USA\_17*

I thought Egypt going to be too much better, but really there is still a big problem. No education, no money, no work, just like Sudan. Especial harassment to Sudanese – because we are obviously not from Egypt, they do bad things, they pour dirty water on us. Some people are there for 7-10 years. If there are issues between Egypt and Sudan, refugees are deported... Those two years in Egypt were a very hard time. Even I didn't expect to be alive here today. - *USA\_03*

That is a big No [it was not how I expected]. After 10 days, I was arrested on my way to church with my child and my wife... My colleagues came and defended me though. But I didn't get to church that day. There is also the harassment on the streets, stones thrown at you, they always taking things from you... In those three years, I aged 60. - *USA\_05*

No I didn't imagine life would be so hard. It was very harsh and even the social environment was very hostile like even on the public transportation they will bump me or poking me or even outright beating me. Like I said, it is a hard time because I am stranded in the way and they will come all against me and I might get really hurt and people have those kinds of small knives that the people carry so they can even slash you. The options were all grim. Like the environment the social environment was so aggressive and so hostile. We were subjected to grave violations for example we were renting a flat from somebody and we went just for a visit me and my wife to stay over with our friend for just 3-4 days and the son of the owner saw us and he came up and though they were Christians those Egyptians they didn't give us any break they didn't act like good Christians. So they came and they threatened us and they said now all of you get out of the place and we say no, we rent the place from your dad and we need to talk to your dad and he said no way and he start calling some of his friends and people to destroy the place and to force us to leave the house and go outside... And then as you might know you have to pay like one month in advance in Egypt and so we were kicked out and he didn't give us the money from that and they were like exaggerating the bills so they were saying still you need to pay more and even you still owe us more so forget the deposit. So we were kicked out and robbed of our money that they owe us and we were threatened and even if we call the police it would have been worse they might have captured us. No I didn't imagine life would be so harsh, and even if I was in Egypt up to now I would have lost my mind. - *USA\_11*

I had no problems in Egypt, I had a good time there, I could make a life. But my problem was with my wife, she would go out shopping and they would throw things at her even when she was 8 months pregnant! Everyday I would come home and find her angry and sad. I had no problems but Egyptian people they don't treat other people right. It was better for me, I was making good money. - *CAN\_12*

There were no good jobs so I had to clean even though in Sudan I am a teacher and I had many problems with Egyptians. There is no life there for refugees. I had many problems with landlords and had to move around a lot. It took so long to get a UN ID that I was never safe and always worried about security. - *CAN\_16*

The Egyptians were very rude, it was very hard there, they would throw things at me when I walked in the street to go to church, so I had to go at night when less people were around and the police were no good and would not help. I was surprised to see other people treat people in that way, because we are ordinary people, there is no war or hate with Sudan and Egypt. I was so surprised I almost didn't wait the whole two years, many times I almost went home. - *CAN\_17*

The Egyptians behave in very strange way. For example, the employees in the pharmacy when they come to work in the morning, they kiss themselves, men and ladies both alike. This is not acceptable in our Dinka culture. Another man is not supposed to kiss another man. His objection to this was reported to the boss and he was called in for questioning. He told the boss that was he hired to come and do some work or to kiss other men? He asked the boss if he is willing to do kissing every morning and get his full pay or to be exempted from morning kissing and he concentrate on that and he get the full pay. The boss told him just to do his work. - *EGY\_07*

He found the life in Egypt very devastating. He said that when he came to Egypt, he was thinking that everyone who came here and applied to UNHCR got accepted and resettled to a third country. Also, he never knew there was something called 'local resettlement' in Egypt. He said that life in Egypt is so hard and people's mentality gets disorganized and confused. People stay for a very long time, about two to five years, and sometimes more. Some stay indefinitely hoping that humanitarian immigration forms will take them. It is a very awkward scenario. - *EGY\_09*

I was surprised by the racism and the bad treatment of cleaning ladies. The Egyptian lady in the house I worked would say bad things and I would eat the same food as the dog, one Sudanese cleaning lady was killed by her Egyptian *madame* and nobody did anything about it. - *CAN\_05*

No, it was not like I thought, because I never been to big cities... it was crowded and very complicated. The buses and the numbers on them – it is very different and the Egyptian way of life is all misbehavior – they just throw you, and curse, and I just don't like the place very much. - *USA\_04*

## **Impressions of and Expectations for Life in Resettlement**

For the majority of [Sudanese refugees], Canadian geography is Toronto, Brooks and Calgary. They think Toronto is the capital and that Brooks and Calgary are the other two important cities in the country. – *Official at the Canadian Embassy in Cairo.*

My expectations were that when I arrived Australia, I would get a good job, buy a car and a house and enjoy life. There would be no more problems regarding money and accommodation. - *AUS\_03*

I expected life to be easy and I would get money soon and become rich to be able to help my family in Sudan. I thought I would get work right on arrival but this is not the case. Many people with high qualifications from African and some European countries are unemployed so I would not expect getting a better job unless I get Australian qualifications. - *AUS\_06*

I expected to work as a pharmacist and use my skills and experiences I gained in all the years I have been working. After arrival, I took my documents to the overseas qualification assessment unit and they were assessed as equivalent of Australian BSC degree. However when I looked for a job I did not find any in my field. Employers told me that I need to have Australian work experience or to retrain. I was very disappointed. - *AUS\_08*

Before – many people – we used to hear in Africa there – some people they used to talk – I don't know if it is true, but they say you will just be given empty house like this, then you will be given a remote. Then if you want to sleep then you will just press the remote, then the bed will come from somewhere you don't know, then you just sleep. If you are hungry, you just press the remote, then will come the table. Then you press the food, then the food will come automatically. Everything is automatic. Even the car, you just open with the remote. Or on the street, every street has a place with the service like this without money – you cannot buy it with money – you just go and press and you take the order and then you go. But many things for free here. Then every morning you have – here they have like a trailer used to bring milk every morning to every

home, they used to bring it for free, milk and meat here in America. Even you cannot walk by foot in the streets, they used to say. And at first, I used to believe it was true, but when people come here, they used to say something different than that one. - *USA\_17, Sudanese woman in her late 20s, in the US for just over one year.*

I thought it would be very different from Sudan and Egypt, that people would be nice and it would be clean and safe and my daughter said very green with lots of trees. And it would be quiet and I would grow old in peace and the government would look after me. - *CAN\_14*

## **Resettlement Process in Cairo**

When I came to Egypt I registered with UNHCR and was recognized and scheduled for resettlement to USA. I didn't like USA. I requested a form from my wife's relative in Australia and he sent me the form. I filled the form and was accepted by the Australian embassy. I decided to come to Australia with my family and abandoned the UNHCR process to the USA. - *AUS\_01*

It is slow and frustrating; it added more trauma to my experience instead of reducing it. Refugees should be taken care of right away as soon as they arrive in a second country where they seek refuge but I was left alone without any care by either UNHCR or the Australian embassy in Cairo. - *AUS\_06*

It takes so long, but I think that is because of the big number of applicants. Too many people want to be resettled. They wait anyway, because they know that is the only way, or easy way for many of them to get to go to AU, US or Canada. - *AUS\_14*

## **Changing Gender & Family Relations in Resettlement**

At Sudanese parties they look you over with no respect and then when you turn them down they get angry and say it doesn't matter...that they don't need us because they can get white girls now. They use that like an insult. I tell them 'the only white girls you can get are the trash the white men don't want' they don't like that. - *CAN\_19*

How to control the children to maintain their culture will be very difficult. For example, the children should only speak Dinka in the house to preserve their culture, but they may start speaking English in the house and it will be difficult to prevent them. [I am] also worried about [my] relationship with [my] wife because there is so much freedom in Australia and wives sometimes desert the family. For example, there could be issues about who manages the money since [we] will probably have a bank account in both of [our] names. - *EGY\_09, a married Dinka male, 36-50 years old, approved for resettlement to Australia.*

I would maybe go for visits, to see my mother, but not for a long time. There are too many opportunities here for me and my children. They can go to school and so can I. - *CAN\_05, a woman from Juba, Sudan whose husband has been missing since 1996.*

I am too old to go back. See my grand-daughter there? [Respondent points to her teenage grand-daughter as she passes in front of us.] See how she is dressed and how she goes to school? I could not do that in Sudan, I had to get married; that is what we do there. There is freedom here. I wish for her to stay and for me to stay. I am old, but I can still enjoy the freedom for a few years. - *CAN\_17, a 72 year old Acholi woman.*

...There are people who came ahead, especially the families, because they are finding life here is a bit different from what they are expecting. Culturally, it is different and the families they are having problems, because in our African tradition people used to quarrel in the family and all

this. For example, you will have problem with your wife, and you have to discipline your children through beating sometimes. But here when they came they found it different. When I was still in Cairo, we were hearing about families splitting and breaking down because when there is a minor quarrel in the house and somebody will just call 9-1-1 and the police will come and the husband will be taken out of the house and blah blah all of this. Problems. To us it's normal – even the wife knows it's normal – but here they say 'No, you are abusing the wife, and even children'. You [speaking to the researcher] don't beat them, but our children are disciplined through beating! So they cannot even assimilate to that culture. So they are finding it very difficult. This is what we have been hearing. Even there are some people who are saying the States is not good; 'if you have children, don't come to the States'; and all these things. Because our system, we are used to disciplining the child through beating, and here they say if you beat the child the government will come and take the child from you and *khellas* you will not find the child again. So they cannot... It's really difficult. – *USA\_21, a 36 year old Kakwa male living in Manchester, NH, USA.*

We have a major problem here with the Sudanese; we've had to request extra staff so that we can deal with it. There are fights every night. Not just between the men, but between husbands and wives and men and their girlfriends. Every night there are new complaints. I think the drinking plays a big role in starting the fights. (*RCMP officer, Brooks, AB*)

The domestic problems are terrible. Did you know that the police now have to check the woman's bite with her teeth if she is reporting her husband for abuse, because so many of them are scratching and biting themselves before calling the police? I'm not saying that no domestic violence happens, I'm just saying a lot of the time the women use it as a tool to escape. They instigate the fight so they can call the police, or they hurt themselves. So many of them leave their husbands as soon as they get to the airport, I think they come here wanting to leave them, just waiting for the chance. – *Resettlement Case Worker in Brooks, Alberta*

We were married in 1998 in Sudan; we came together to USA... [When I arrived in Egypt], my wife she was already accepted for the resettlement and for the refugee and to go to USA, so when I came I just did the *idaafa* [the addition to her file at UNHCR] and then I come with her here. But after two weeks here in USA she left, she moved to Nebraska to live with her friends and she took my daughter too. – *USA\_20, a 26-35 year-old Lulubo male. He has not heard from his wife or four year-old daughter since they moved away.*

No one told me it would be so hard to control my family here. My wife was different and was taking control of the children without me. We had problems; we had bad fights and the police said I had to leave and not see her or my children. How can they not let me see my children when I still pay for them? No one told me about this. – *CAN\_13, a now-single male...*

## **Feeling Welcome in Your Neighborhood**

This is my second apartment. I lived down the street before – it's called Western Avenue, in Lynn. And I will tell people I am born at Western Ave and they will start laughing, saying 'What are you talking about?' And I say 'Yeah, that's where I was born, in the United States on Western Ave...' I was born in Sudan a long time ago, now when I came to the US, I live on Western Ave, so that's where I am born. – *USA\_08, Dinka man in his late 20s, in the US for four years.*

Yes. Because in here in US you never think about people can know you the neighborhood can know you but I feel welcome... I feel to know them and I always like to say hi to them if I see somebody like he wanna know you will feel this person want to get along with you, you can feel it and I like someone to... the next apartment over here they are Spanish so I say hi to him and he say hi to me and we were interested to talk to each other so we introduce each other and we

know each other now so he knows me and I know him... and also there is downstairs apartment she also know me because when I go out in the morning I will see her and we say hi to each other and one day she invite us for her son's birthday... she is Spanish also... I didn't go because I am busy man though. *[at this I say 'you're already so American! that's sad!' and Simon asks why and I say 'because you don't have time for your friends!' and he responds...]* That's how this country wants me to do... I have time but I always spend more time with my job and I have a little time with my friends. It's sad I know it's sad but you have to because if you give most of the time to your friends then somebody told me if you wanna go around a lot then you will be a broke man! But if I wanna have time with my friends then I will have time with my friends. We have fun – we laugh, we eat, you know, but not always. - USA\_08, *Dinka man in his late 20s, in the US for four years.*

People are friendly to us and they do not look at us like we are different. It is safe for my children to play outside and if I had problems I know they would help me. It is a multicultural place and there are lots of immigrants and the Canadians are used to talking to them and helping them. -CAN\_15

## Successful Resettlement

We arrived in Australia and my little kids started going to the child care. They started their first steps in their future education. So that all what me and my wife care about. I started studying English, and after I will get a good job, so that makes me feel our resettlement is really all right so far. I can say it is successful after all. - AUS\_13

No, everything was new to my family and me. My culture is so different from the Australian culture regarding child rearing, family laws and so on. - AUS\_03

No. Because I am not doing any thing now that could benefit the society. It's only the Adult English class I am attending. My participation in any activity is hindered by language difficulties. Somehow but not really successful yet; I am very much relying on assistance from friends and hire interpreters when I have appointment with service providers. I cannot speak English and don't understand when white people talk to me. I am not independent, I had to depend on other people for communication. - AUS\_05

I do not know, but I live here and doing shopping and go to school, use public transportations. That makes me feel like I am doing well. - AUS\_12

Like from the resettlement side? *[I don't know - no, I guess from your personal side. How would you know if your resettlement had been successful?]* I will know when I get along with the life here like I know my way how to get the job, and I know my way how to find an apartment for myself, and I know a way how to look for a good time for myself, I know how to go to movies by myself, I know how to deal with things, and I know how to get to the computer and find out what I'm looking for, directions, whatever. Like me, I am resettled in the States, I know where these people when they come here they are looking for things. If I want to there are some jobs in the website I will go to the computer I will go to and apply for that through email... It is strange isn't it? What do you think about this? *[I think you're totally right!]* I know how to order pizza on the phone, I know how to order my food, I know and when I call I know what kind of food I want! First thing when I came here, what is a good restaurant and what is a good food to order and whatever... but right now when I call pizza I say hey I need a pepperoni please or I need a pizza with extra cheese on it. This must mean somebody know something! - USA\_08

It is very hard and will take a lot more work to have a really good life but it is better than Cairo and now that I am going to school and doing something with my life I feel that I am on the right

path and that things are starting to go good. I did not feel this 6 months ago, then I was very depressed and thought I would die, but now it is better. - CAN\_03

It is hard but I will finish high school and go to university soon and get a good job. It will just take time. Maybe it is easier because I am younger and do not already have qualifications and a big life back in Sudan. - CAN\_11

I came here expecting something but here this is the law, who am I to change it? If I complain I can't change it. There are three types of immigrants, if he is uneducated he will think of money and having cars, if he is in the middle of his education he will dream of education, the third is someone who was someone in Sudan, he was a professional so he will dream of being someone again, he will not think of money only he will think of upgrading his status and education to be someone if he goes back to Sudan one day. They are always thinking back, 90% are always thinking to go back. So the three basic things are money, education and being able to go back. And I don't have those. - CAN\_12

No, because I will not be able to fully learn English because soon my lessons stop and I cannot afford more and I want to go to school but there is no money, but I can't get a job to make money to go to school and improve my English if my English is bad. It is a circle that does not stop and a decision that is impossible to make, work or school? We need both. - CAN\_18

According to what I understand, when you become one of this community, for example, I hope the life will be more easy. When the life will be more easy you will feel, because you will be feeling that you are one of them. Then you will just not – what you will take responsibility that you are supposed to take for your family, outside from that which is outside from you – just for the family... *[more USA\_18's thoughts now I think...]* When I become one of for example all the people of this area I become like them, and I will never feel like I am outside or I am a refugee or I am apart from that certain place like from Sudan – I will be and they will treat me as if I am one of them. *[USA\_19 continues...]* Of course you need some time here to see success. It is not something that can happen in two or three months – you need maybe 3 or 4 years. And you know, the more you live here the more you know about it and the more you can be successful and know what is good and what is bad. And then... just everything needs time.

## **Participation in Resettlement Country Society**

Yes. They are nice people, good people. We are not like Americans though – I can't tell you because I don't have more experiences this is their country I am a refugee but no one does bad to me – of course no one is bad or anything... yes, it's good but we are different, no let's say we're the same. We have the same freedoms and the same lifestyle... - USA\_09

Yes. Because we are sharing a lot of things with them, this is one of the things that will tell us that we are trying to get better in their culture, but not all. But some of the things, like we are working the same in the same workplace as them, and try to get in the same buses as them, but it is difficult to know the important things that we are supposed to know. We are not sharing going or knowing our neighbors; maybe their culture is different from ours. And then the most thing is that if we are trying to meet them in their places and try to talk to with them but it is not easy. That way we could know how it is better. - USA\_18

Yes! Since they brought me here, I am here, you know? I am living like an American citizen, and I must become a citizen – this is my goal! I have surrendered myself to be a citizen here. There is nothing different between me and the other Americans – they are here and I am here and I am going to be an American, there is no difference. *["do you see a difference you?" he asks, and I respond No, I was just thinking that refugees might feel like there are differences between them and other people...]* me, I see that there really are no differences. There is no difference between

me like this and them like that or like you... we will all be Americans. And I will be a citizen and I will have children here and they will have their children too... - USA\_20

At the moment, I don't think so. Still, because I have been here 3 months. Maybe after I work I will feel better. Maybe with the job I am doing, yes, maybe partly, maybe, but not yet. [*What would be full participation?*] Because I am now three months only, and the only people that I know are the Sudanese who are here, and well the Americans that I knew them are only people who are at the agency and at the place I am working now and it's only two weeks in the place of work! So I don't know whether I am really fully in the society. Not exactly. There are a lot of things to be done, if I'm moving around, maybe if I have a car, interacting with them, going to the club, maybe I will be fully. But at the moment, no, I don't think so. - USA\_21

I am now a Canadian citizen, have Canadian friends, and I play golf like a Canadian. I have added the Canadian culture to my life. -CAN\_01

## **Community Organization**

The immigrant communities that have been here for a long time like the Chinese and East Indians, they have an easier time because they have an established community. But the new groups like the Sudanese don't have that and it makes it harder. So I guess I'd say for the community to be organized and be able to help each other. And I think that my community is not starting good, no one has a good sense of direction, they are heading no where. Like think of all the money the people who live in Brooks are making and they are wasting it! If we could get organized and help each other everyone would have more success. - CAN\_19

....they should help the Sudanese community to get organized so that they can start helping each other. That is the important thing, to rebuild our community. - CAN\_11

## **Private Sponsorship As Compared to Government Assistance**

Church [helped us the most]. My mother was very sick when she came, with cancer and they were there from the beginning to the end. That's the advantage over government sponsorship sometimes, there's that more humanitarian side. They drove us to the hospital and helped us to see a doctor without a health card and came to visit and looked after my sister's children. You don't get that with government sponsorship, people come to me at my work because it's too hard to get a hold of their counselor and we are supposed to push them back but there is no one to help them. - CAN\_19

## **Race Issues in Resettlement**

If any black refugee works as a house boy in any white man's house, the black Americans will kill him/her and there are a lot of crimes in the U.S. society. - EGY\_23, a 36-50 year old Fur male.

The African-Americans do not like the refugees and tell them that you came here to be slaves; she [her cousin] told me about a Sudanese guy who was killed by the African-Americans. - EGY\_33, a 26-35 year-old Nuba woman.

They [young Sudanese men] think that they are all pimps and "gangstas" now that they are here. They don't respect us and [they] want us to be like the women from their homes [in Sudan], they don't respect that we're different. - CAN\_26, a 27 year-old Dinka woman who has been in Canada for 10 years.

About the racism, he [the relative] feels discriminated by the American even they don't say it directly because they afraid of the law which prohibits it... On the other hand, the white Americans are much better dealing with the refugees [than the African-Americans are], they do not often get into with them. – *EGY\_33, a 26-35 year old Nuba male.*

Everyone is friendly, and they are used to a multicultural country so they don't look at you funny, but sometimes here in Calgary I feel some racism, like on the C-train when white people get on you can tell they're scanning the available seats to try and find one not next to a black person or an Indian, not all the time but sometimes you see it. – *CAN\_19, a young Dinka woman, 26-35 years old.*

Brooks is small and the people don't like us here. They like us to work but not to talk to. They pretend they do not understand you in the stores and they stare at you like you have done something wrong just by being there... I think they would be happier if there were not Africans here. – *CAN\_22, a Balanda man, aged 51-60.*

I grew up comfortable with how I looked, so to go through that, people thinking I was different and making fun, it was hard. – *CAN\_19, a 27 year-old Dinka female.*

## Remittances

Oh no. [Requests for money come] not only from Cairo, also from Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan... every week people call. Every week we have to get up in the middle of the night. Sometimes I just put the phone [off] and we don't get up. – *USA\_02, a married Dinka female with three children, 18-25 years old.*

We have four families so we're sending to four places in Sudan. Whenever we can we send as much as possible. I can say almost 60% of our money goes to Africa. All the time they ask, if I open my email you will see it full of the asking for money. If they can't call they email. – *CAN\_12, a 36-50 year old married Balanda male.*

"Once a month I send \$150 USD to family in Sudan, it is an obligation, just like rent" (CAN\_06, a married 26-35 year old male).

"I save money every month to send to my friends in Egypt and my relatives in Sudan. I know they need help; I been there before" (USA\_A1, a young single woman, 18-25 years old).

Many people they do that [send sponsorship forms] not because they just love their family and friends and they want to be with them in Australia, but they do that because it is much easier for them to bring them here as they gonna be dependent on the government help and not depend and rely on them financially. That is very true, I heard people thinking that way; just because it is much harder to save money while your family and friends waiting for you to send them money overseas.

I can't afford for the moment [ to send money home] because I am still settling my family and getting myself, my wife and children to school. – *AUS\_01, a married Kuku man, 36-50 years old.*

I save a lot, but you cannot save too much, you have to think of your future here and my children's futures. So I bought a house in a nice area and I save money every month for their university and then if there is some left over I send it. – *CAN\_15, a married Dinka woman, 36-50 years old.*

Yeah, they asking for money, a lot! Because you know how difficult the life is there. You are in U.S., maybe your life is better and you're working and making money. They don't know that you're paying rent and if you have car, you have to pay for your car. Everything here is money, and what you get is sometimes not enough for yourself even, and you will send what you have, you can send them what you have and you can tell them that's what you have, but sometimes they don't believe you. Maybe they will say that you are lying, you have money but you don't want to send to them. [Researcher asks, 'Why do you think they think you are lying?'] Because they know that America is a big country and good economic and they will see you when you send pictures, you wear good clothes and you have car and all these things can make them believe you have money. They will think if you have car you have money, if you wear good clothes and you eat good, you have money. That's the things that they believe. – *USA\_08, a 26-35 year-old man who fully supports his wife in Cairo while working to sponsor her travel to the U.S. to join him.*

It's another burden; some people understand, some don't. Like when I'm sending money I'm cutting money off my budget here, and some people don't understand, and use us. Like some cousins call and make requests for money for things you wouldn't really think of needing. Some are just using and some really do need it. But you can't say no. You're thinking ...with all the stories you hear... that I'd rather give up a jacket or shoe here if they really need the help. It's stressful. – *CAN\_18.*