

Introduction

Refugee youth often act as cultural, linguistic, and institutional intermediaries for their families. These youth may need to translate, negotiate, and advocate for their needs with educators and administrators. While education is a path to integration for refugees, my research explores how their role might present unique and understudied challenges.

Research Questions

- How do refugee youth adjust to American schools?
- How do refugee youth experience and negotiate their role as cultural intermediaries in schools?

Methodology

Literature Review

- Conducted searches on Hoya Search, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, and EBSCO Education

Interviews with service providers

- Prepared Grand Tour questions and conducted semi-structured interviews with participants by email, phone call, and Zoom

Discussion

- Washington D.C.'s system of refugee services, which was bolstered to serve Central American refugees in the 1980s, faces funding shortages today.
- Refugee youth must navigate
 - new family dynamics,
 - English learning,
 - bullying, and
 - deportations.
- How refugee youth adjust to schools depends on their
 - country of origin, age, family, school, and journey.

“[Anti-immigration policy] has been the worst thing for the mental health of service providers.”

“In schools with good ratings, there are good school staff who can address [refugee youth's] concerns.”

“The community needs mental health services... Especially in light of ICE.”

Conclusion

- Refugee youth are often too afraid to advocate for themselves. Furthermore, their translations may not be accepted by schools.
- Instead, service providers translate and act as cultural brokers between refugee families and schools during parent-teacher conferences.
- Amid ICE raids and deportations, service providers maintain a sense of normalcy for refugee youth.
- They teach life skills, e.g. how to ride the bus, to refugee youth.

Citations

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