

Supporting Evidence for Implementation # 3:

Bhutanese Refugees in the United States: Their Dietary Habits and Food Shopping Practices Upon Resettlement

APA Reference:

Kiptinness, C. & Dharod, J.M. (2011). Bhutanese refugees in the united states: Their dietary habits and food shopping practices upon resettlement. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 6, 75-85.

Level of Evidence:

Level V: Qualitative Study

Summary:

One of the main obstacles that Bhutanese refugees face during resettlement is the transition from a rural community influenced by agriculture to more urban communities. Persons are also faced with being forced to integrate within their new community by adopting societal and cultural values that may not necessarily coincide with their own belief. This article focuses specifically on the difficulties of community integration within the realm of food practices. Food practices including weekly grocery shopping trips, unavailability of familiar foods, using electronic food assistance programs, and having to budget are daunting unfamiliarity's refugees are forced to face. On top of this, refugees also have to deal with the language barriers each and every time they set foot in a grocery store. The article also mentions various other ethnic groups expressing the same concerns and feeling limited to shopping only at ethnic stores due to lack of support from workers in the store,

limited knowledge about foods available, and again, the language barrier (Kiptinness & Dharod, 2011, p. 76).

Researchers utilized observational methods and detailed semi-structured interviews to gather measurable, qualitative data. Observations were held in Bhutahnese households (2-3 hours) and conducted while Bhuthanese mothers were preparing either lunch or dinner.

Notes were taken in regard to what ingredients and cooking utensils were being used. In person semi-structured interviews were also conducted with topics (4) focusing on

“(1) previous living conditions and lifestyles; (2) food shopping in the United States; (3) dietary and meal preparation habits in the United States; (4) differences between previous and current dietary and food management habits” (Kiptinness & Dharod, 2011, p.78).

Common themes discover among participants were that they previously lived in refugees camps over 17 years, had families of 4 with 2-3 members being 18 years or younger, about $\frac{2}{3}$ did not receive formal education, all reported fair-poor understanding of English, and all were also utilizing food assistance programs (Kiptinness & Dharod, 2011, p. 78-79).

Results of the study came to multiple conclusions. One was that many families after spending time in the United States, became acculturated. In their home countries, they had access to fresh produce and maintained very healthy diets; however, in the Western world, families are adopting bad habits surrounding food purchasing and food consumption. These habits have led to people developing various negative health effects. Researchers also found that many new families initially often rely on those of the same ethnicity for transportation to grocery stores, which limits accessibility to stores and items they may prefer to visit.

Food assistance programs were also found to be extreme limiting factors for families because of the items available for purchase.

This article supports our want to provide aid to members of SHIM within the grocery store. The research highlights that many are unable to cook as they used to due to limited accessibility and support within every aspect of physically going to the store, shopping, and checking out. The grocery binder we have created is something that we believe has great potential to cater to the specific needs of the population. Through the binder, we have translations and side by side comparisons of languages, pictures of certain products that they be more familiar with, and a map where to find items through the store. We also only highlighted foods that SHIM members (who are mostly Bhutanese) commonly used. These foods include fresh produce mostly, speaking to the article's piece on how many members came from a community focused on agriculture. This article really hits the nail on the head pertaining to reasons why we thought the grocery binder would help in promoting overall accessibility through local grocery stores.