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# Multi-Method Research in Partnership with Myanmar Refugee Women in Dallas, Texas: Understanding How Ethnic Diversity Influences the Design and Development of a Resettlement Community Center

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# The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2017 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

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**Research Panel:** Human Rights Practice

**Presenters:** Chie Noyori Corbett and David Moxley, University of Oklahoma

**Title:** Multi-Method Research in Partnership with Myanmar Refugee Women in Dallas, Texas: Understanding How Ethnic Diversity Influences the Design and Development of a Resettlement Community Center

**Abstract:**

Founded in 2015, the Myanmar Women's Research Project (MWRP) incorporates multiple participatory methods to help refugee women from Myanmar/Burma conceive of, conceptualize, develop, and sustain a community center devoted to resettlement. The project recognizes the multiple ethnicities and religious groups composing the Myanmar community and is committed to multi-ethnic participation of Myanmar women who form a community with considerable need for resettlement assistance.

Indeed, refugees from Myanmar are some of the most vulnerable in the United States, and they face numerous challenges in accommodating American culture. The city of Dallas hosts one of the largest Myanmar communities in the United States, and its members contribute to a growing diverse and talented greater community of South Asians who are enriching the culture of Dallas.

The project recognizes the arduous journey many Myanmar refugee women have experienced in their resettlement process, transiting through either Malaysia or Thailand to resettle finally in Dallas. Living in a local community called Vickery Meadow, Myanmar women are working with the presenter-researchers to develop a community center the capacities and activities of which can fulfill the multiple resettlement needs of the participants, and facilitate their involvement in American society through language acquisition, education, employment, child care, and youth development.

The project has created several participatory structures including data collection processes sensitive to the cultural attachments of the participants, community forums in which participants can identify their priorities for resettlement, workshops incorporating artistic methods in which participants can create images of the support systems they want for themselves, and youth involvement in the research process.

The presenter-researchers will share with conference participants how they worked closely with Myanmar women to use their community and cultural assets to conceive of and develop the community center prototype. And, they will highlight how key project interactions reflect a strong interpersonal dimension of human rights involving mutual respect for culture and ethnic identities, and the promotion of the dignity of involvement and control over actions designed to protect and advance the well-being of participants.

**About the presenters:**

Chie Noyori Corbett, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

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