

# The Bhutanese

*Fleeing their homeland in 1991, the Bhutanese spent seventeen years living in refugee camps in Nepal. Now, they hope for a new beginning in the U.S.*

## Timeline

<b>1880s!</b> <i>The Lhotsampa leave Nepal to resettle in southern Bhutan at invitation of Bhutanese government.</i>	<b>1950s!</b> <i>Bhutanese government strips the ethnic Nepalese (Lhotsampa) of citizenship rights.</i>	<b>1990</b> <i>Bhutanese government forbids any expression of Nepalese culture in attempt to create coherent national identity.</i>	<b>1990-3</b> <i>Government arrests and tortures Lhotsampa leaders. Lhotsampas leave for refugee camps in Nepal.</i>	<b>2007</b> <i>Bhutanese have option of being resettled in third party country. Over 78,000 refugees initially request to be resettled.</i>	<b>2010</b> <i>89,500 Bhutanese remain in the camps. 16,500 more scheduled to be resettled by January 2011.</i>
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## Culture

*The Bhutanese refugees originally migrated from Nepal to Bhutan in the 1880s. This ethnic group is also referred to as the Lhotsampa. While living in Bhutan they retained much of their cultural traditions including Nepali language, dress, and festivals.*



## Life in the Camps

*In the camps, the Bhutanese received building material, food rations, access to education, and basic medical care. Pit latrines and malnutrition contributed to spread of diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid, and malaria. Over 100,000 people lived in seven camps administered by the UNHCR.*



## Resettlement

*After seventeen years of living in the camps, the Bhutanese were offered an opportunity for resettlement by the UNHCR. Between 2007 and 2009, over 20,000 Bhutanese were resettled in third party countries. By January 2011, the UNHCR expects to have 56,500 Bhutanese still awaiting resettlement.*



# Brief Overview of Refugee Resettlement

*Millions of refugees are assisted by the UNHCR yearly. Only a small percentage of people are chosen for resettlement in a third party country. For those considered to be resettled in the United States, numerous opportunities and challenges await.*

## UNHCR!



The UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) provides assistance to refugees with help from other NGOs. The UNHCR works with governments to ensure durable solutions for refugees including repatriation and resettlement.

## United States!



The U.S. government, which resettles the most refugees of any other country, partners with ten national voluntary agencies (Volags) for successful a resettlement process. Current populations being resettled include the Bhutanese, Burmese, and Iraqis.

## Chicago, Illinois



The five Chicago resettlement agencies include Catholic Charities, World Relief, Interfaith (Refugee One), Heartland Human Care Services, and Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago.

## Services!



Agencies will provide refugees with housing, English language training, cultural orientations, as well as assistance in applying for government benefits, scheduling medical appointments, enrolling children in school, and finding a job.

## Challenges



With the chance to begin a new life comes the challenges of learning a new language, transitioning to a new culture, paying rent, and finding consistent, living-wage employment.