



Integration for Peace: Tool for Facilitating the Integration of New Migrants and their Receiving Communities

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Executive Summary

Social and Cultural integration of new migrants in the United States has been relatively successful in the last couple of decades, but typically only focuses on regular forms of immigration. For undocumented or irregular migrants, integration becomes more difficult as they have less access to such programs due to fear of detection or lack of adequate information. Smooth and effective integration into a foreign environment plays an immense role in improving a new immigrant's ability to succeed in their new environment, as well as promotes the social and psychological wellness of the individual, their families and their receiving communities facilitating empathy and a culture of peace. This project will incorporate and utilize already existing programs and tools and supplementary tools created to be available for and accessible to all new immigrants and their receiving communities. It will not only assess, measure and address success through language proficiency, socioeconomic attainment, political participation, living situation, and interaction with their respective communities, but also through overall wellness/happiness, using the subjective happiness and the psychological well-being scales. To do so, an online tool will be created and used in two pilot Washington D.C. public schools. The results from these pilot schools will lead to further expansion on a states and eventually national level.

Acknowledgements

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*e pluribus unum*¹

“Economics and events abroad - religious persecution in England, the Irish and German potato famine, the failed revolutions of 1848, the Russian pogroms, Stalin, Hitler, and the two European wars, the strong post world War II recovery of Western Europe and Japan, the creation of the state of Israel and, as ever, boom and bust - have always influenced immigration. But in the past half-century, spiking Third World birth rates, the rapidly growing economic gaps between the booming developed world and the underdeveloped world, have brought great wave of new faces - yellow, black, brown - to places that had never seen them before (Schrag, 2010).”

This excerpt published by the Immigration Policy Center and written by scholar Peter Schrag summarizes, though with some omissions² and use of choice language³, immigration patterns on a global scale and is especially representative of the composition of the North American people. The United States in particular has experienced four major waves of immigration (Schrag, 2010; Jimenez, 2011; Martin, 2013). Each of these waves brought its own problems and tensions with the existing populations but it is in this last and most recent wave that we will focus on. This new wave consists primarily of people from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, a significant racial and ethnic shift from the mostly European⁴ origins of the first three waves (Schrag, 2010; Jimenez, 2011; Martin, 2013). This has changed the face of the United States and has transformed it into a richly multicultural country. Though it has always been known as a nation of immigrants, both coming voluntary and forced, it has never been more diverse than it is today.

¹ Latin for “From many, one,” the motto of the United States according to President 44. <https://origins.osu.edu/history-news/god-we-trust-or-e-pluribus-unum-american-founders-preferred-latter-motto>

² It is important to note that he is using a Eurocentric historical approach and that not all immigration was or is voluntary (i.e. slave trade).

³ Use of “Third World,” “Developed vs Underdeveloped,” racial categorization narratives.

⁴ While there were many immigrants coming from eastern Asia and Mexico, Europeans came in larger numbers than any other group in the first three waves of immigrants.

This is both the country's greatest strength and source of conflict. The introduction of new groups of people has always been a mixed responses, from being welcome with open arms to being met with distrust and at times hostility. Despite this, new groups of immigrants have historically been able to integrate smoothly over time with little help from the federal government (Jimenez, 2011). "Integration today is happening organically in host communities despite a lack of comprehensive government policies that would aid immigrants' advancement (Jimenez, 2011)." This is due to the conditions that have been present in the United States that facilitate successful integration into society. A 2011 paper written by Professor Tomás R. Jimenez and funded by the European Union, in collaboration with the Migration Policy Institute, on integration found that there are five indicators of integration, which we will go into more detail. We will also explore the different approaches to integration through US history, the challenges/barrier of/to integration, how it is being approached on the local and national level, as well as internationally, and its importance. Through this systematic approach we can formulate a better understanding of integration and its central role in this prospective project, whose purpose it is to facilitate access to integration services and build awareness of immigrant issues.

With the support of the labor union American Federation for Teachers, the project will consist of an online tool which will address the need for immigrant integration programs as well as the barriers that make more successful integration possible. It will also create a safe and inclusive space for people that would otherwise be too afraid, either due to their immigration status or some other underlying factor, to seek services and information on immigration integration. The tool is meant to be used by all people, immigrants and native born, and will be piloted in two public schools in Washington D.C.

Indicators of Integration

Indicators of integration are markers that indicate the degree to which an individual or a group has integrated into society. Each indicator is a key component in the integration process. In this section we will dive deeper into each of the indicators of integration identified by Professor Tomás R. Jimenez (2011). These indicators will not only give a better understanding on what is necessary in integration, but will also reveal the changing nature of the integration process and the need for more intervention and access to services. These indicators will be used as support for the development of the online tool being proposed as well as measures of the degree of integration in the practical project.

Language Proficiency

Proficiency in English is necessary in order to fully participate in US society (Jimenez, 2011). A major determinant of language acquisition is the socioeconomic background of the immigrant over the course of their lives. Coming from a more affluent environment or having access to quality education in one's country of origin can affect how well or how quickly one becomes proficient in a new language (Jimenez, 2011). According to a 2011 and 2013 US census report, individuals who spoke Spanish at home were less likely to speak English "very well" compared to households who spoke other languages other than English (Ryan, 2013; Zong & Batalova, 2015).⁵ With a very high proportion of immigrants coming from Spanish-speaking countries, language proficiency become a serious concern that should be addressed.

Miscommunication and inability to speak the same languages as their children can create conflict

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey used a scale of very well, well, not well, or not at all to measure self reported language proficiency. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/acs-22.pdf>

between the child and parent. “Many parents experience the stress of not being able to speak the language, with adult and child role reversal when children learn English more quickly and need to act as interpreters and negotiators with health care and school officials (EDC, 2011)”

Socioeconomic Attainment

Socioeconomic attainment is perhaps the most important indicator of integration as it is dependent on other indicators. Over time immigrants should be able to elevate their socioeconomic attainment, and they do. While the second generation of immigrant groups surpassed their parents, when compared with the societal standard, in the case of the US this is non-Hispanic whites, they still fall short (Jimenez, 2011). This could be due to a number of factors; racial/ethnic prejudice, access to high quality public education, language acquisition, residential environment, etc.

Political Participation

This is both the formal and informal sense. Formal political participation is determined by one's legal status, the most important aspect of political integration, and encompasses the active participation in the political process. In this indicator citizenship as a measure is necessary to realize one's ability to fully participate in the political process through the right of the voting. Informal political participation covers participation in political activism, membership in local government councils (such as town associations) and town meetings (Jimenez, 2011). Through informal participation, residents, regardless of their legal status, can have a stake in the decision making processes that affect their daily lives.

Residential Locale

Rates of ethno racial segregation between communities and rise in socioeconomic status measure integration (Massey, 2001; Jimenez, 2011). Where a person settles is another influential indicator of their integration progress. Immigrants often tend to settle in communities where they have some sort of ethno racial connection that can ease transition, less language barriers and culture shock, and provide a sense of support. Due to this, immigrants have traditionally concentrated in large urban areas with an already established immigrant community (Massey, 2001; Jimenez 2011). In last few decades the trend has shifted somewhat with more and more immigrants settling in nontraditional immigrant cities and suburbs, such as those in the southern and middle of the country (Jimenez, 2011). Researchers have found that immigrants residing in nontraditional immigrant communities experience more residential segregation from non-Hispanic whites than those living in more traditional immigrant communities (Zuehlke, 2009; Jimenez, 2011). Less segregation, or less isolation of communities, typically changes in the second generation, though stagnation also takes place due to other factors such as socioeconomic exclusion (Jimenez, 2011).

Social Interaction with Host Communities

This is determined by rates of intermarriage, between different ethno racial groups, and perception of belonging, if one feels like they have achieved what it means to be an American (USCIS, 2006; Jimenez, 2011). Intermarriage and acceptance of intergroup relations rises significantly after the second generation, compared to their parents (Brown et al., 2008; Jimenez,

2011; PRC, 2013). Perception of belonging is both determined by an individual's own perception as well as the perception of them by others. This perception also rises over time but is contingent upon exposure to different groups, changes in policy and political climate, representation in society, such as representation in media and politics, and a number of other factors (Jimenez, 2011; Bloemraad & de Grauw, 2012). For example, the more exposure a community has to different groups of people, the more likely they are to have favorable opinions of the those groups and the less likely they to see difference between them.

Immigrant Integration Policy: Then and Now

As we have discussed, immigration is nothing new in the United States, a nation forged by immigrants (USCIS, 2006). Thus, immigrant integration has been approached in many different ways. Here we will be discussing three of the main policy styles; from the more hands on to the more organic approach.

Americanization Movement

The Americanization movement began as a response to mass European migration and the first World War and peaking in the 1920s (Jimenez, 2011; DPLA, 2017). With the help of the private and public sector, immigrants were provided with English language learning at night schools and civics education (Jimenez, 2011; DPLA, 2017). Unfortunately, not all legislation provided such positive support. Other legislations, such as “prohibiting immigrants who had not been naturalized from holding particular jobs or the banning of foreign languages in public settings,” were made to strip away traces of their heritage (Jimenez, 2011; DPLA, 2017).

Active Approach to Integration

After the Americanization Movement of the early twentieth century lost traction, the United States took a less proactive approach to integration, limiting integration “active, coordinated integration policy” to refugees and asylum recipients, only 15% of which actually receive assistance (Jimenez, 2011). It leaves then the majority of refugees and asylum recipients, as well as other immigrants coming from similar situations but not given refugee or asylum status due to geopolitical contexts, with little to no assistance from the government. This too is changing with the federal and local governments taking initiatives and opening new offices and programs dedicated to the integration of new immigrants and their families (USCIS, 2006; Jimenez 2011; CSII, 2015).

Laissez Faire

Let the people do as they please. This has been the most dominant and widespread approach the United States has taken towards immigrant integration since its inception. The success of this approach relies heavily on four key factors: personal motivation, anti-discrimination legislation, a high-quality public school system and a robust labor market (Jimenez, 2011; Bloemraad & de Grauw, 2012). Although this approach has worked generally well, though unevenly, in the past, the key factors that allow for this to happen have run into a number of problems.

Challenges to Integration

As discussed earlier, integration is not a smooth organic process. There are a number of factors that can create difficulties or barriers for those trying to integrate into society. In exploring these barriers, one can form a better sense of what needs to be considered when developing the materials and medium of the project being proposed.

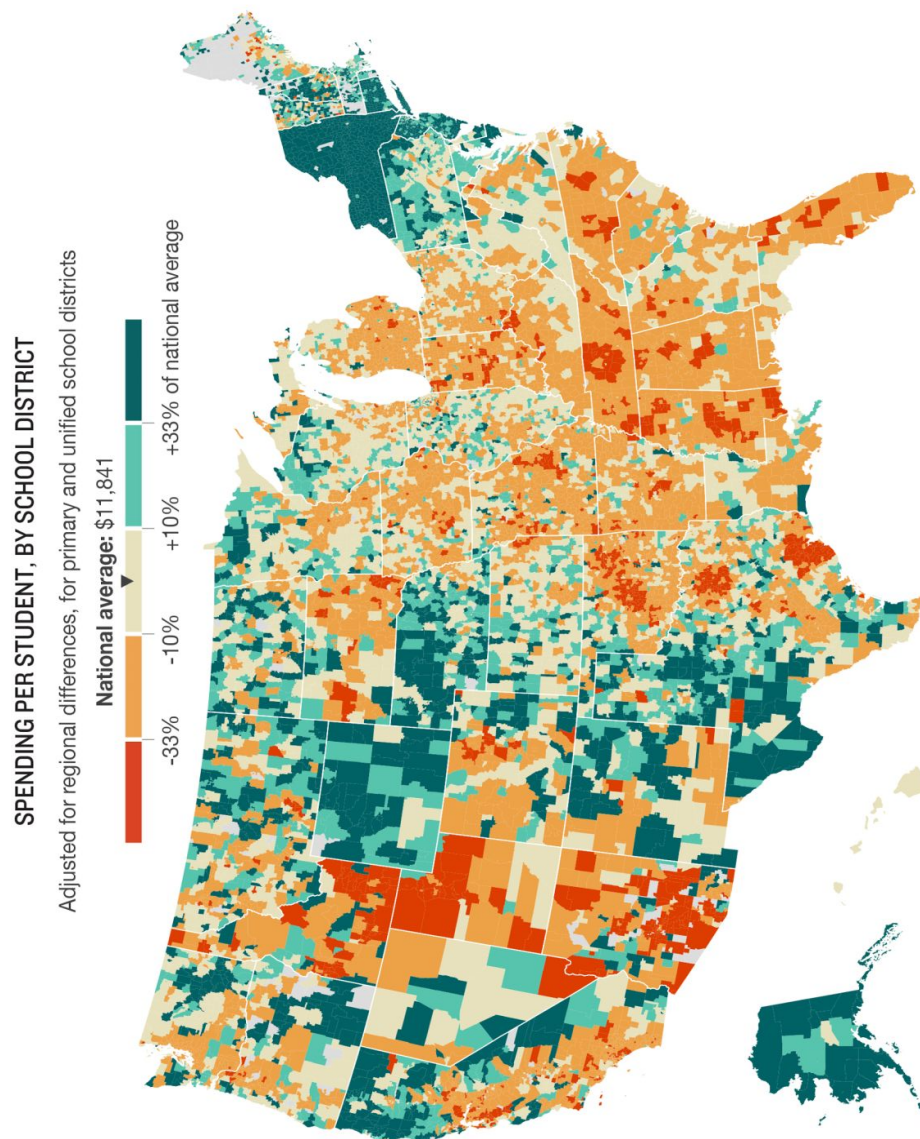
High-Quality Education

Schools provide a variety of services crucial to integration. As the United States Department of Education stated in a report by its Equity and Excellence Commission puts, Education is the key to a strong democracy, economic competitiveness and a worldclass standard of living. In recent decades, however, America has lost its place as a global leader in educational attainment in ways that will lead to a decline in living standards for millions of our children and the loss of trillions of dollars of economic growth (USDE, 2013).

For immigrants, school can act as a socializing agent that provides children an opportunity to interact with people of other backgrounds. They also provide both children and adults with training and information that is essential to their social and economic integration process (Jimenez, 2011). Unfortunately, the quality of education in the United States varies great from state to state and even district to district (illustrated in Figure 1), with public education depending on property taxes for funds (NCES, 2017; USDE, 2013; Rabinovitz, 2016; Turner, 2016; Blad 2016). The reliance on property taxes for school funding makes it difficult for children living in low-income neighborhoods to receive the adequate amount of funding for an equitable and high

quality education. This is especially problematic for immigrant communities, who make up about 23% of public school students, 30% of which live in poverty (Figure 2), as most live in these types of communities (CIS, 2016).

Figure 1.



Source: Education Week, U.S. Census Bureau (Turner, 2016)

Figure 2.

	Immigrant Households	Native Households	Total
Number of school-age children (5 to 17)	11,601,195	42,058,611	53,659,806
Share of total school-age population (5 to 17)	21.6%	78.4%	N/A
Number of students in public school	10,932,453	37,633,314	48,565,767
Share of total public school enrollment	22.5%	77.5%	N/A
Number of students in private school	795,903	4,964,197	5,760,100
Share of students attending private school	6.8%	11.7%	10.6%
Average number of public school students per 100 households	64	38	41
Average household income	\$72,556	\$76,203	\$75,665
Number of public school students speaking a language other than English at home	8,322,059	2,745,651	11,067,710
Percentage of students speaking a language other than English at home	76.1%	7.3%	22.8%
Share of total foreign-language student population	75.2%	24.8%	n/a
Number of public school students in poverty ¹	3,197,748	7,300,205	10,497,953
Share of public school students in poverty ¹	29.3%	19.5%	21.7%
Share of total student population in poverty ¹	30.5%	69.5%	n/a

Source: Figures for school enrollment and language are from the 2014 public-file of the ACS. Income figures are from the 2015 public-use file of the CPS ASEC.
 Figures for public school enrollment are for those ages five to 19 who report they are enrolled in a public elementary, middle, or high school. Figures do not include those in public pre-kindergarten programs.
¹ Poverty population excludes some public school students who are primarily in foster care.

Source: 2014 and 2015 Census Bureau Data, Center for Immigration Studies (2016)

Legal Protection from Discrimination

Each wave of immigrants has been met with their own sets of challenges; most notably discrimination. Immigrants “experience resentment, discrimination, and hostility in their new communities (EDC, 2011).” To protect these newcomers⁶ from this and enable social cohesion, anti-discrimination laws are implemented by the government to ensure equal opportunity (Bloemraad & de Grauw, 2012). This means that people cannot not legally deny others access to education, housing, employment, or the ability to vote based on their identifying factors⁷

⁶ It is also important to note that this experience is not exclusive to immigrants, but also to minority groups that are not representative of the societal standard; non-Hispanic Whites.

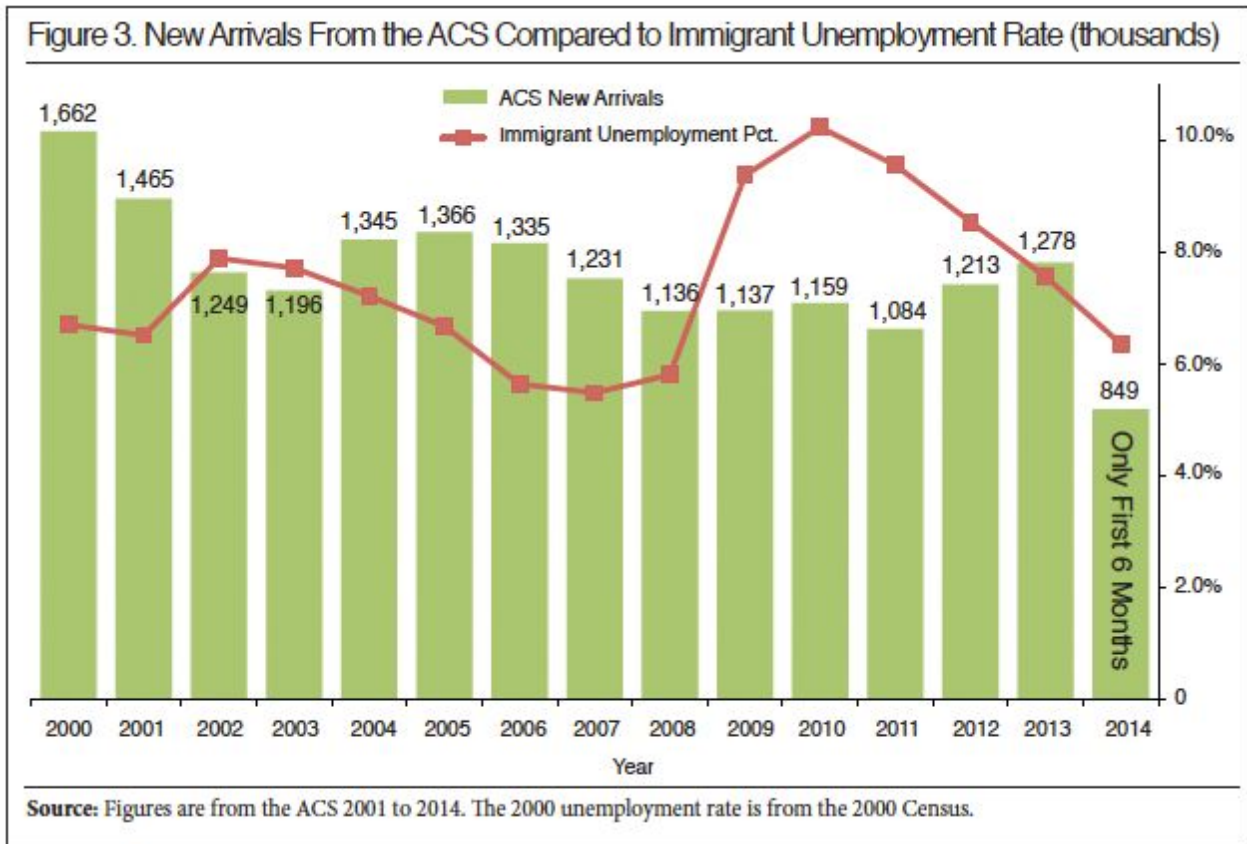
⁷ According to the *Statement of Equal Opportunity Laws and Policies* this includes race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, military service, or

(Bloemraad & de Graauw, 2012; Harvard university, 2017). Unfortunately, despite having these laws in place to protect immigrants from discrimination, they still face unequal opportunities compared to the native born population and barriers to fully and successfully integrate into society (Jimenez, 2011). Immigrants' wages tend to be lower than of native born due to a number of factors such as level of education, literacy, language proficiency, discrimination and legal status (Jimenez, 2011; Smith & Fernandez, 2015)

Robust Labor Markets

The United States, along with the rest of the World, experienced a financial crisis and began its great recession in December of 2007 (BLS, 2012; Federal Reserve, 2013; EPI, 2017). This resulted in the loss of millions of jobs and a rise in poverty (BLS, 2012; EPI, 2017). "Unemployment and inactivity can result in social exclusion if they persist over time (OECD/European Union, 2015)." For immigrants this is seriously concerning. As seen in Figure 3, the increase in unemployment only slightly affected the rate of immigration (CIS, 2016). This is likely to do with the perception of the United States as a country of opportunity as well as the state of the world's economy. With immigration not slowing down, immigrants find themselves in a tough situation where they are lacking in choices and can become vulnerable to unsafe working conditions to survive.

Figure 3.



Source: 2014 and 2015 Census Bureau Data, Center for Immigration Studies (2016)

The struggling labor market also makes it difficult for upward economic mobility. It is supposed that with time and with each following generation, immigrants improve their economic status (Jimenez, 2011). In the current economic climate, immigrants are more likely to have difficulties integration into society.

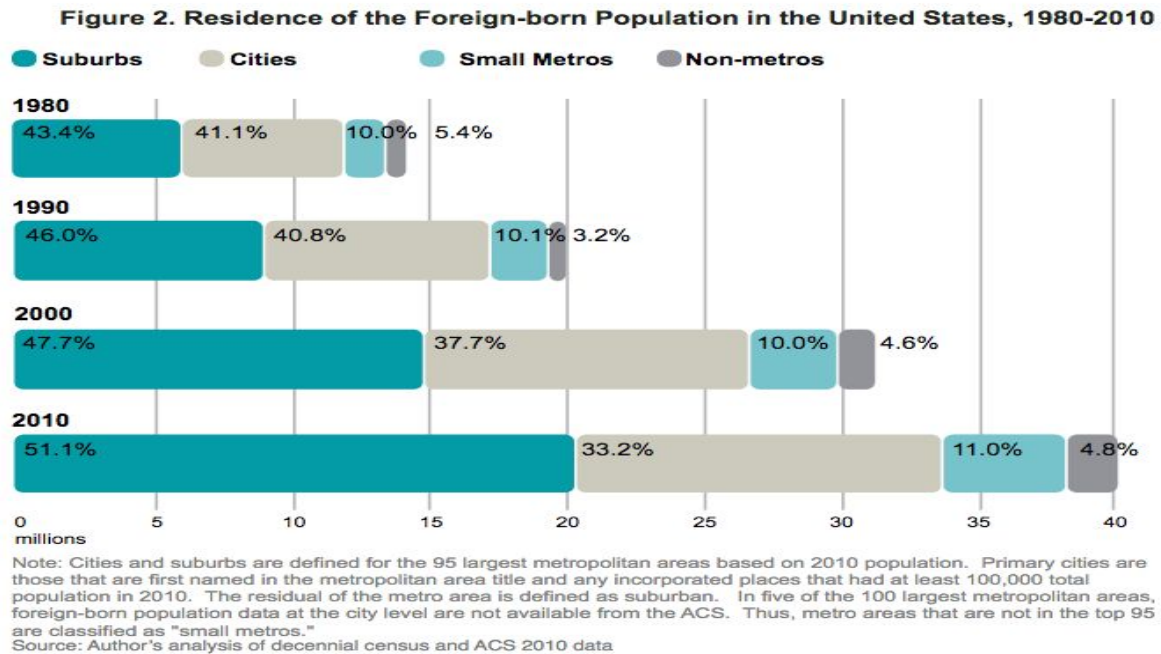
Immigration Status

Immigration status is one of the largest, if not the largest, barrier/deterrent to integration (Jimenez, 2011). This is due to the fact that “undocumented families or parents fear exportation, a significant stressor that may keep them from finding higher-paying jobs or receiving health care, or prevent their children from seeking higher education (EDC, 2011).” Fear of deportation and loss of salary also make undocumented immigrants more vulnerable to workplace violence and unsafe working conditions.

Integration Programs in the US

As mentioned earlier, historically the United States has taken a generally *laissez faire* approach immigrant integration, with a limited amount of programs available throughout the country. While this has worked well in the past, factors which have been relied on for the “natural” success of integration have changed over time. With the global financial crisis, threats to public education and growing racial/ethnic tensions rising from a rise in nationalist sentiment, interventions need to be made to ensure the similar or improved rates of success. Though immigrant integration programs have been few and far between, concentrated in certain metropolitan areas with long histories of immigration, more and more programs have been established on the local level (CSII, 2015; Jimenez, 2011; Wilson & Singer, 2010). *This trend can be seen in Figure 4 and Figure 5.*

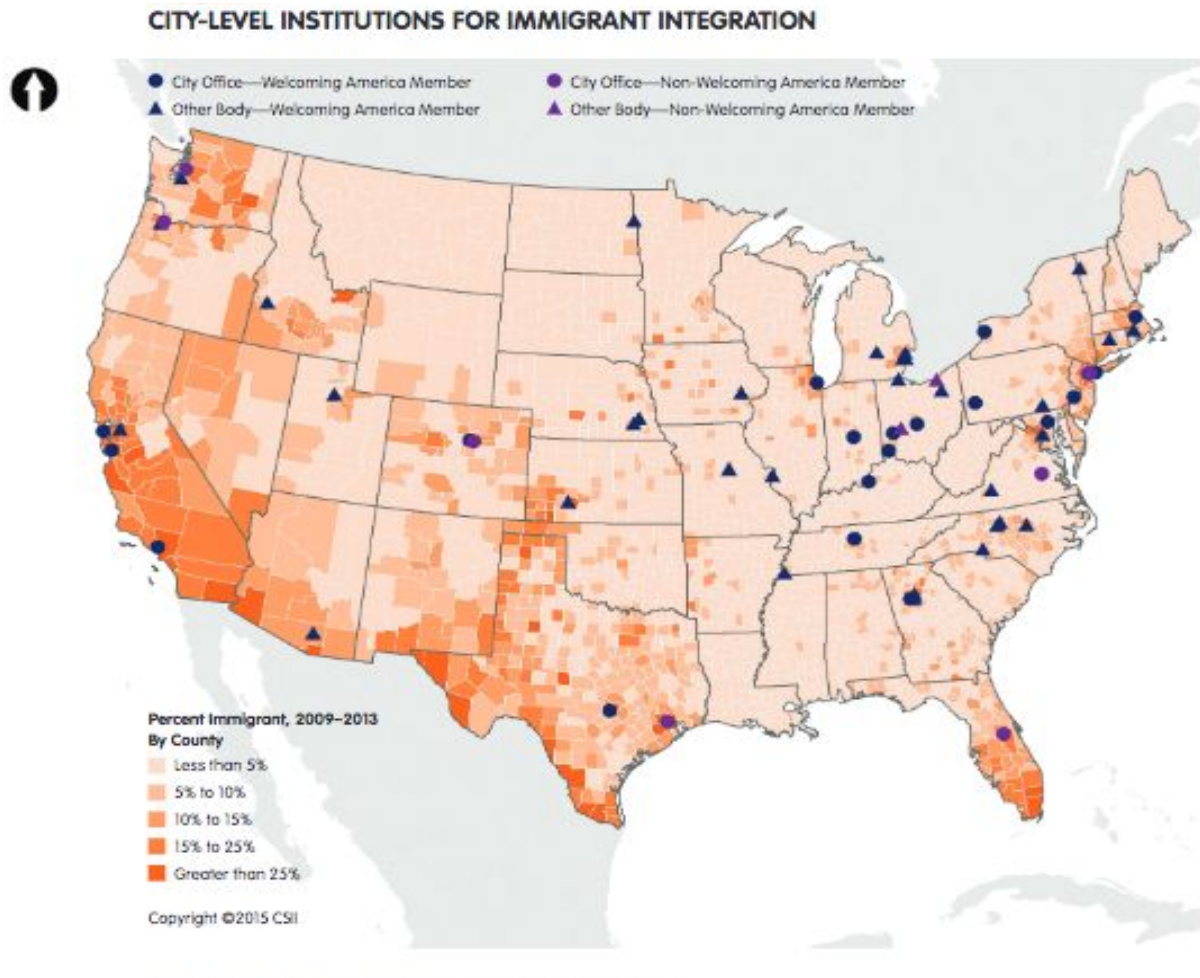
Figure 4.



Source: Author's Analysis of decennial census and ACS 2010 data, Wilson & Singer (2016)

Here (Figure 4), derived from the Brookings Institute's Metropolitan Policy Program 2011 Report, we can see the changes in immigrant settlement from 1980 to 2010 (Wilson & Singer, 2011). In 1980 immigrants tended to settle equally in cities and suburbs. This started to change drastically in the turn of the century, with more immigrants settling in suburban areas than cities. This is likely due to the slowing rate of new immigrants coming to the United States, as seen in Figure 3, compared to the rates of new arrivals in the 1990s and 2000s (Wilson & Singer, 2011; CIS, 2016). With a lower rate of new arrivals, the matured immigrant population, those living in the United States for 10 or more years, represent a large percentage of the total immigrant population. The longer immigrants live in the country, the more likely they are to settle into less traditional immigrant cities and into suburbs.

Figure 5.



Source: USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (2015)

This increasing trend in integration programs is especially important for “nontraditional” immigrant cities that have just recently experienced a demographic shift and culture shock which can facilitate hostilities between the native population and newcomers (CSII, 2015; Jimenez, 2011). “For these cities, creating bridges between new arrivals and long-term residents is key to fostering harmony (CSII, 2015).” This is evident in the 2006 national survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Pew Hispanic Center (PRC, 2006). They found that native born people living in cities with high concentrations of foreign born people had more

positive views of foreign born people that those with medium to low concentration of foreign born (Figure 6). Such results are not surprising, as the context in which new arrivals enter affects their overall experience. The best contexts/environments are those with “long-standing institutions to incorporate immigrants, mature immigrant communities to facilitate the process, and a native-born population familiar with newcomers (CSII, 2015).” This is no longer the case in much of the country.

Figure 6.

More Familiar, Less Troubling			
	<i>Concentration of foreign born in area*</i>		
	<u>High</u>	<u>Med</u>	<u>Low</u>
<i>Immigrants today...</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Are a burden because they take jobs, housing	47	55	65
Strengthen the US with their hard work & talents	47	39	27
Mixed/Don't know	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>
	100	100	100

* Percent foreign born in respondent's zip code, based on national survey only. Analysis limited to those whose parents were US born.

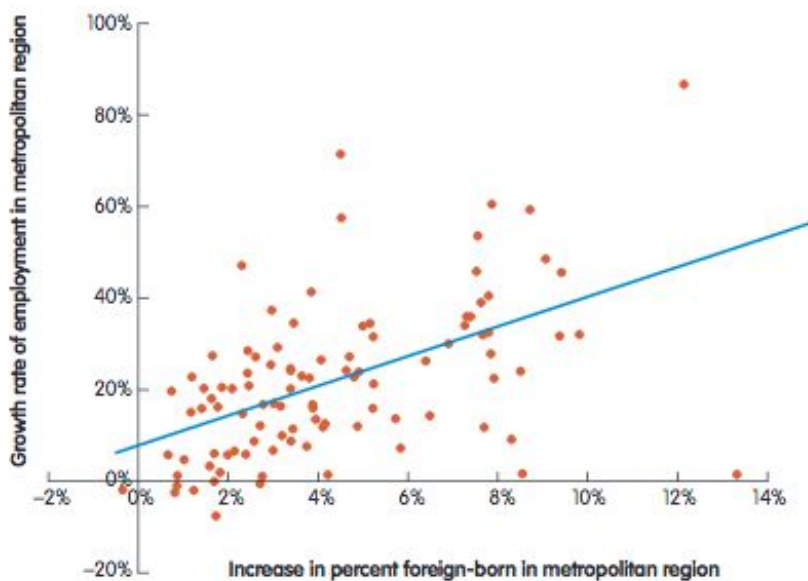
Source: Pew Research Center for the People & the Pew Hispanic Center (2006)

The University of Southern California's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration put out a Americas Society/Council of the Americas and Welcoming America report titled *Opening Minds, Opening Doors, Opening Communities: Cities Leading for Immigrant Integration* (CSII, 2015). In this report they found that, as of 2015 “there are currently 26 official

city offices for immigrant integration across the nation, and another 37 bodies - task forces, commissions, welcoming offices, efforts, etc. that are also promoting immigrant integration at the municipal level in some form (CSII, 2015).” The programs available vary depending on the context of the place, but have all proved to be extremely beneficial to the social and economic advancement of their communities. As we see in Figure 7, there is a direct correlation between the growth rate of employment and the increase in the foreign-born population in a city.

Figure 7.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND SHIFT IN THE PERCENT FOREIGN-BORN FOR THE 100 LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS, 1990–2008



Source: PERE analysis of the Urban Institute's Metro Trends database and the Building Resilient Regions database.

Source: USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (2015)

These three cities/case studies highlight the discussed trends above:

Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Metropolitan area, which includes the city of Atlanta and its surrounding suburbs, has seen a relatively recent, dramatic increase in its foreign-born population. In just 10 years, from 2000 to 2010, the foreign-born population saw a staggering 68.8% increase; mostly coming from Latin America and Asia (ARC, 2013). According to the Migration Policy Institute (2017), approximately 2 out of every 5 immigrants in the Atlanta Metropolitan area are unauthorized immigrants. Such a significant unauthorized immigrant population, mixed with sudden demographic changes, creates real concerns for the integration process of the community as a whole. To deal with these concerns, as well as to counter the anti-immigrant sentiment backed by the passage H.B. 87⁸, local government acted and the Welcoming Atlanta office was created (CSII, 2015).

The program, consisting of a 20 point plan, offers “a focus on community engagement [reducing barriers to civic engagement and creating dialogue between newcomers and receiving community], talent development [investing in resources to increase workforce potential], and public safety [fostering trust between law enforcement and foreign born community] (CSII, 2015; Welcoming Atlanta, 2017).” City officials view the immigrant population not as a threat to traditional institutions and community, but as an opportunity to grow and prosper as a society, seeing diversity as strength and an asset.

⁸ House Bill 87, or the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011, is an anti-immigration legislation similar to the Arizona SB 1070 passed in 2010.
<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/116631.pdf>

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, like many cities along the rust belt, experienced a shift from a steel manufacturing dependent industry and population decline in the late 20th century (CSII, 2015; City of Pittsburg, 2017). Unlike many other rust belt cities, the city has gone through a renaissance period, revitalizing the city through a change in industry and emphasis on immigrant population. Like Atlanta, the city of Pittsburgh sees immigrants as a source of economic growth, needing high skilled workers to fill positions in their new expanding industries. What sets this city apart is its work and cooperation with already established initiative and activities in the community that cater to the foreign born population. Rather than working in place of, they work with other organizations, allowing them “to streamline and expand their services” and “engage in ‘bigger conversations’ (CSII, 2015).”

A notable program based in Pittsburgh is the City of Asylum Artist Residency Program. They “offer a broad range of literary programs in a variety of community settings to encourage cross-cultural exchange (City of Asylum, 2017).” They also “contribute to dismantling stereotypes and increasing awareness of international crises (CSII, 2015).” Through community engagement this program creates a space for open dialogue, encouraging mutual understand, empathy building, and a peaceful community.

San Francisco, California

Unlike the previous two cities discussed, San Francisco has a well established immigrant population. The challenge here is not to diffuse tensions, like Atlanta, or to revitalize the city’s economy, like Pittsburgh. In a city with a long history of welcoming immigrants, and a sizable

foreign born population, they seek to establish stronger, more integral ties with the immigrant population, including them in policy formulation (CSII, 2015). To accomplish this the city hosts two municipal agencies, the Immigrant Rights Commission (IRC), at the local advisory level, and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA), at the policy and direct service level (CSII, 2015; OCEIA, 2017).

OCEIA is unique in the sense that it targets most of the needs of integration. It “promote[s] inclusive policies and foster[s] immigrant assistance programs that lead to full civic, economic and linguistic integration (OCEIA, 2017).” This is crucial in a time when the city has been experiencing a substantial rise in housing costs, pushing out vulnerable communities, displacing them out of their communities (CSII, 2015). To combat this, the OCEIA provides grants and funding to other local non profit organizations to help guide and assist low income residents (many of them immigrants) in this complex market (CSII, 2015; OCEIA, 2017).

Faith-Based Organizations

It should also be important to mention that faith based organizations, most prominently Christian charities, have been the primary providers of integration programs for immigrants and refugees in the United States for decades (USCIS, 2006). They help immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers resettle and provide them with legal and social services to help them integrate into their new communities.

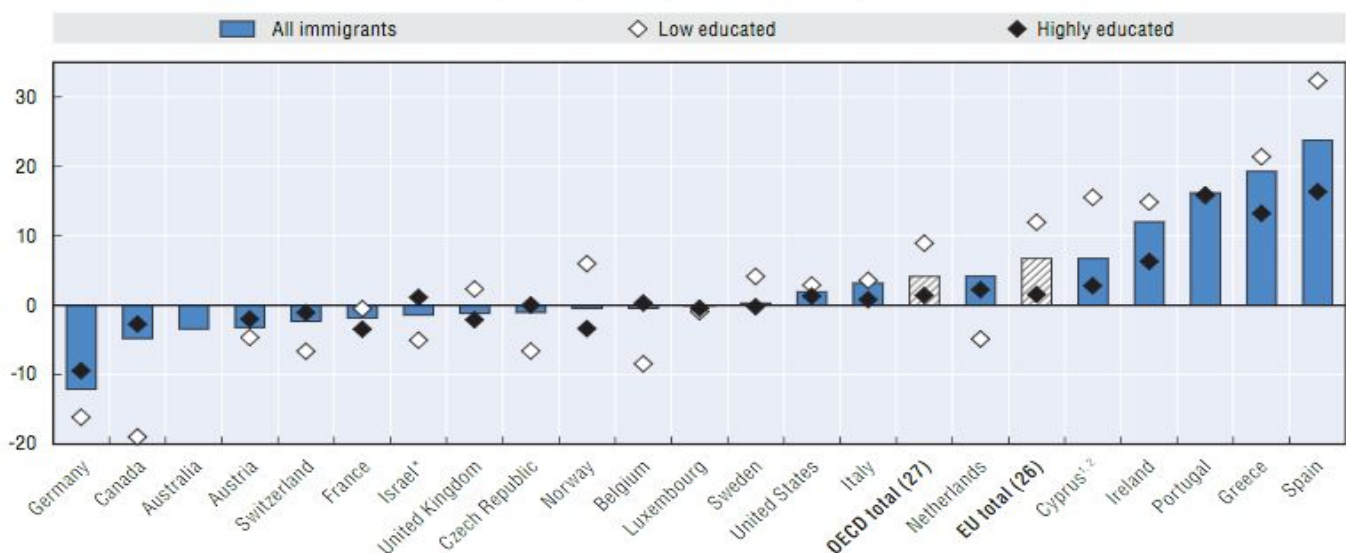
Integration Around the World

The world financial crisis has particularly affected immigrants in Europe, with immigration to the continent becoming more and more difficult and populism on the rise in many countries as a response (Collett, 2011). A study conducted by the Migration Policy Institute in 2011 titled *Immigrant Integration in Europe in a Time of Austerity* found that the struggling economy, changing political climate and growing anti-immigrant and anti-muslim sentiment have pushed many countries in Europe to cut investment on the integration of immigrants (Collett, 2011). In both the United States and Europe immigration “entwines a fear of imported terrorism with the older xenophobia of natives threatened by ethnic diversity (Porter, 2015).” Unlike the United States, immigrants, both with high education and low education, seen in Figure 8, have a harder time finding employment in the European Union (OECD/European Union, 2015). As discussed earlier, this leads to economic exclusion and difficulties integrating.

Figure 8. Source: OECD/European Union (2015)

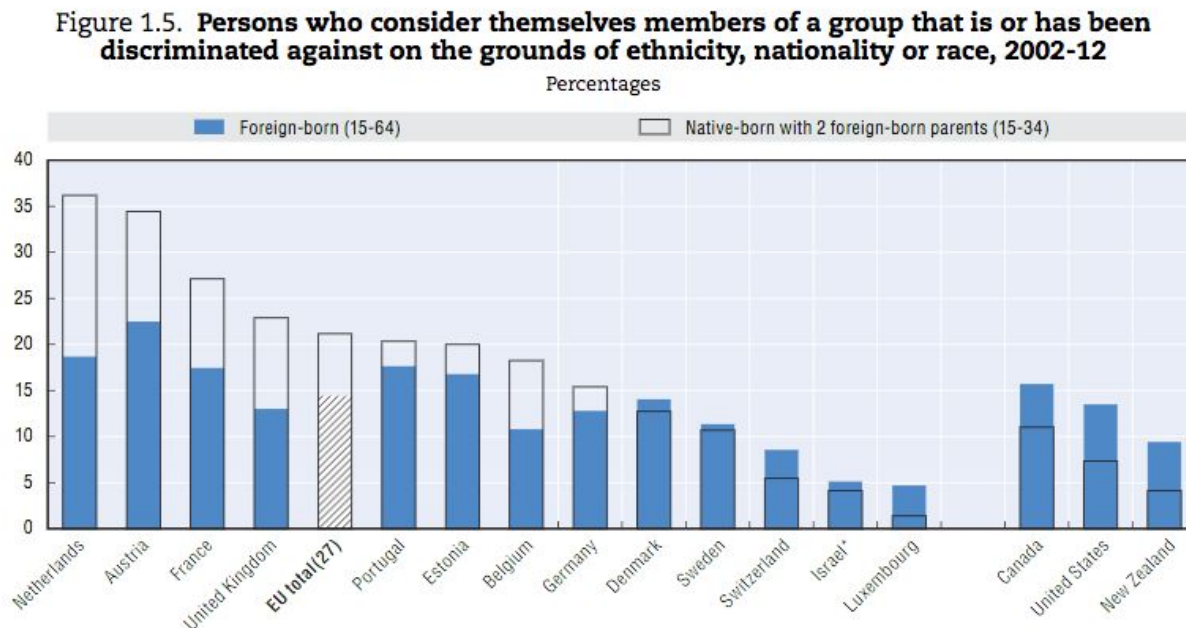
Figure 5.A1.7. Change in unemployment rates between 2007 and 2012 of immigrants who arrived between 2003 and 2007, by educational attainment levels

Percentage points (persons aged 15-64)



Aside from the economy, discrimination is another major contributing factor in making it more difficult for immigrants to integrate. When compared to the United States, in Figure 9, immigrants in the European Union perceived that they were more discriminated against, even in the second generation (OECD/European Union, 2015).

Figure 9. Source: OECD/European Union (2015)



Despite overall cuts in investment towards integration at the national level, city and regional government in many European countries are still making integration a priority. For example, in Spain there is INMIGRACIONALISMO, an organization which promotes “comprehensive communication, awareness raising, and advocacy strategy to improve the treatment of immigration in the Spanish media,” PARTIS in Portugal, a program which funds “artistic practices for social inclusion,” and Learning Unlimited in the United Kingdom, a program to

give access to language learning and integrating non-EU mothers of school children, just to name a few (European Commission. 2017).

Conclusion: Importance of Immigrant Integration

“Integrating immigrants and their children into the labour market and society as a whole is vital for promoting social cohesion and economic growth of host countries and the ability of migrants to become self-reliant, productive citizens (OECD/European Union, 2015).”

There is no doubt of the importance of successful integration of immigrants into society.

Immigrants, past and current, are fabric of “American” culture. Though a nation whose very roots were derived from welcoming newcomers to a foreign land, it has not always been the most welcoming to immigrants. Fear of the unknown brings with it feelings of hostility and tension between the native populations and the new arriving groups of the time. Each wave of immigrants has felt this friction, but none face more challenges in integrating into American society than those coming after the second half of the 20th century. The majority of immigrants are no longer coming from Europe, but rather from Asian, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, thus changing the demographics of the country. In the last 20 years, immigrants have further diversified the American landscape by settling in areas of the country that have not been as exposed to such populations as traditional immigrant cities with long histories of immigrant communities. Though, in the past, the United States has tried implementing involuntary integration programs, and still offers federally funded integration programs for refugees and asylum recipients, though given to only a few of the total, it has generally taken a hands off

approach to integration. While this “laissez faire” approach has worked in the past, immigrants organically integrating quite smoothly into society with time, the conditions that have made its success possible are no longer the same.

Today’s wave of immigrants is facing many challenges that hinder their ability to integrate properly. Mostly originating from more impoverished backgrounds in the “Global South” these new immigrants do not fit the societal standard, non-Hispanic White, and a large percentage come with low levels of education. Legal status, or lack thereof, also adds new degrees of difficulties for immigrants to integrate fully. One of the most impactful and universally shared challenge immigrants today face is the global financial crisis. Despite all this, hundreds of programs and initiatives designed to assist with the integration of immigrants have popped up all over the country at the local level. Cities and other local governments have recognized the benefits immigrants bring to their communities and the importance of investing in their integration. Immigrants diversify the labor market and can revitalize the local economy, both high skilled and low skilled workers essential to the community. More investment and focus is necessary to ensure that they have the same opportunities and access as the native born population. In addition to this, immigrants should not be the only ones involved in the integration process. Immigrant integration is not just an individual task, it is a community effort.

Practical Project

Local governments have been stepping up and creating offices for new immigrants and refugees to access resources available to them. They slowly but surely recognizing the benefits of having immigrant communities and have invested in welcoming programs. While these initiatives are growing throughout the country, there is a need for a more unifying/inclusive strategy. The purpose of this project is to improve upon the integration process of all immigrants, regardless of status, into the United States, thereby increasing their chances for success, improving their overall wellbeing and creating a more inclusive and peaceful community. With the help of the American Federation of Teachers department of Human rights and Educational Issues, a national labor union which focuses heavily on education, we will create and launch an online resource tool that will be available for educators and students nationwide. This resource tool will include a brief overview of the history of immigration, what immigrant integration is, what its purpose is, its importance, stories of a variety of migrants, general information on integration programs throughout the United States, and how one can become involved in advocacy, particularly youth advocacy. This general information is meant to target students, their parents and educators. For teachers it will include lesson plans that can be implemented in classrooms and guides to engage and involve parents. This online tool will be piloted first in two of Washington DC's Public School District schools. We will ask teachers to inform their student and their parents about this online tool, as well as use some of the lesson plans available. We will then send questionnaires that will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the online tool. It is believed that we can foster more awareness, empathy and active civic participation through the use of this online tool.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people, groups and/or institutions that have an interest and/or are affected by the actions and outcomes of the project. This project has many stakeholders as it is an online tool targeting both immigrant and native born audiences. In this section we will go into more detail of the players involved.

Immigrants & Refugees

The integration of immigrants and refugees to the United States is the primary driving force behind this project. As previously mentioned, immigration status creates certain barriers. The online tool being proposed is meant to provide for access without fear to vital public services for all residents, even those with precarious immigration status. Unauthorized immigrants are less likely to seek services available to them due to fear of detection, leaving them vulnerable to violence committed against them. Online tools/platforms create a safe and anonymous space for users to freely seek information relevant to their needs. Since the online tool being proposed will be piloted in the Washington D.C. public school district, the two schools chosen will be located in the Northwest quadrant of the city which has the highest foreign born population in the district. The tool will be presented to all students in the participating classrooms and not exclusively the foreign born students or children of immigrants. With this online tool immigrants and refugees will have more access to public resources and information that are available at the local and national level.

through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; and nurses and other healthcare professionals, the AFT is able to make a strong impact on communities (AFT, 2017).

Using online tools to spread their message is nothing new to the AFT. The AFT has already launched a number of successful online tools for educators and students. Two of which we will highlight and make us of in this project called *Share my Lesson* and *Teach Human Rights*. These online tools have proven to be highly desirable by its members, as it is a low cost and easily accessible form of getting information out. Founded over 100 years ago, the AFT recognizes that it must continue to evolve and reach out to members in a variety of ways and in a format they understand.

Project Manager

The project manager will be have a number of hands on responsibilities from the conceptual and developmental stage to the implementation, monitoring and following through of the project. They will be responsible for organizing and managing all other actors and resources necessary for the project. The project manager will work closely and consult with the Human Rights Department, Education Issues Department, Organizing & Field Services Department, Communications Department, and the International Affairs Department. The proposal of the project will be first discussed individually with each department, incorporating the feedback provided by them. Once a final draft of the project proposal is completed, it will be presented to the office of the President for final approval. The project manager will then take the approved

project proposal to the Education Issues Department, Organizing & Field Services Department and Communications Department to proceed with the implementation stage.

During the implementation stage the project manager will work with the administration departments at each pilot school to train their staff in how to use and present the online tool in their classrooms. The project manager will remain in direct contact with the school in order to monitor progress. After a period of 3 months the project manager will collect feedback and data from the teachers, students and the tool itself to assess the online tools effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments. This process will be repeated every 3 months for a one year period. Once a full year has been completed, the online tool will be offered to all AFT affiliated schools in the United States.

Human Rights Department

The Human Rights Department, which focuses heavily on immigrants' rights issues, will be instrumental in the mapping of integration programs around the United States. They will be most involved in the development phase of the project. Aside from mapping the integration programs, they will be able to provide various resources related to immigration (i.e. immigrant rights, legal processes, immigrant policy dissemination).

Education Issues Department

Similar to the Human Rights Department, the Education Issues Department will be largely involved in the developmental phase of the project and the later periodic assessments of the online tool. They will help the project manager in the reviewing and tracking of data to

analyze trends in education. This department also helps run and promote AFT's Share My Lesson tool, which will be utilized and featured in this project's online tool. The director of the Education Issues department will have to approve the project proposal before it is presented for final approval to the Office of the President.

Communications Department: Web Designer

The web designer, who is part of the communications department, will be responsible for the production and maintenance of the online tool. They will be working very closely with the project manager, from which they will receive all the materials that will be included in the online tool. Based on the materials presented to the web designer by the project manager, the web designer will create a prototype of the online tool that will be used in the final proposal to the office of the President. Once there is final approval of the project proposal, the web designer will go on to create the completed online tool. During the implementation phase, the web designer will continue to be consulted to make changes and improvements based on feedback collected from those using the tool.

Organizing & Field Services Department

Within the AFT they are responsible for coordinating "the delivery of AFT services and resources to 2,800 local and state affiliates (AFT, 2017)." The Organizing & Field Services Department will act as a liaison between the schools and the AFT/project manager. They will also assist in the feedback of the project proposal.

International Affairs Department

The International Affairs Department runs Teach Human Rights website, which also be utilized and featured on this project's online tool, and will therefore play a key role in the development process of the project.

President

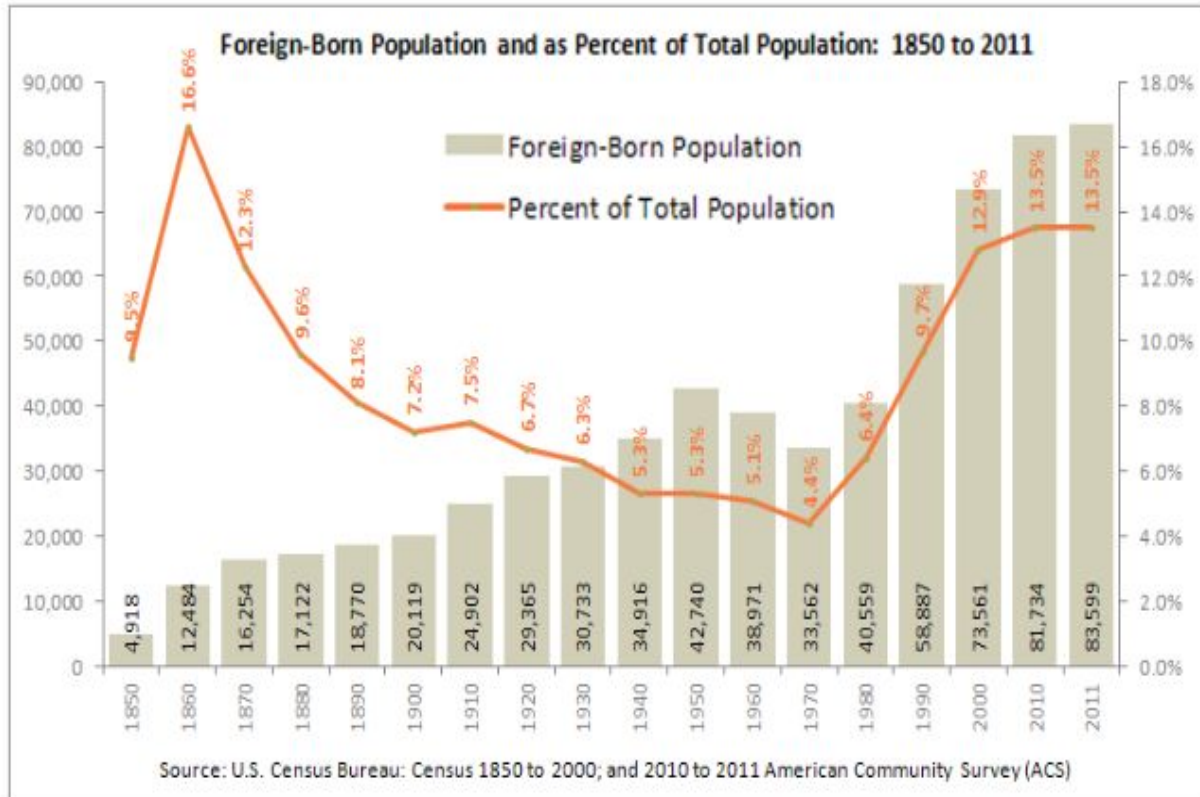
The Office of the President of AFT will be consulted for final approval of the project. They will be presented the project proposal by the project manager and the director of the Education Issues Department. After final approval from the Office of the President, the project can then begin the implementation stage. The Office of the President will receive progress notes each assessment period and issue a press release statement through the communications department.

Washington DC Public School District (DCPS)

Washington D.C. has experienced a surge in its foreign-born population since 1970. As seen in Figure 10, the foreign-born population only made up 4.4% of the total population in 1970 and then 13.5% of the total population in 2011, mostly from Central America; the largest spike between 1970 and 2000 (Azimeraw et al., 2011). Of the approximately 84,000 foreign-born, 24% are unauthorized immigrants (Azimeraw et al., 2011; PRC, 2014). This is felt in the public school system. According to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center, 4.9% of students in Washington D.C. have unauthorized immigrant parents (PRC, 2014). Within the Washington D.C. public schools, 11% of students are English language learners, 15% receive special

education services and 76% qualify for free and reduced priced meals⁹ (DCPS, 2017).

Figure 10.

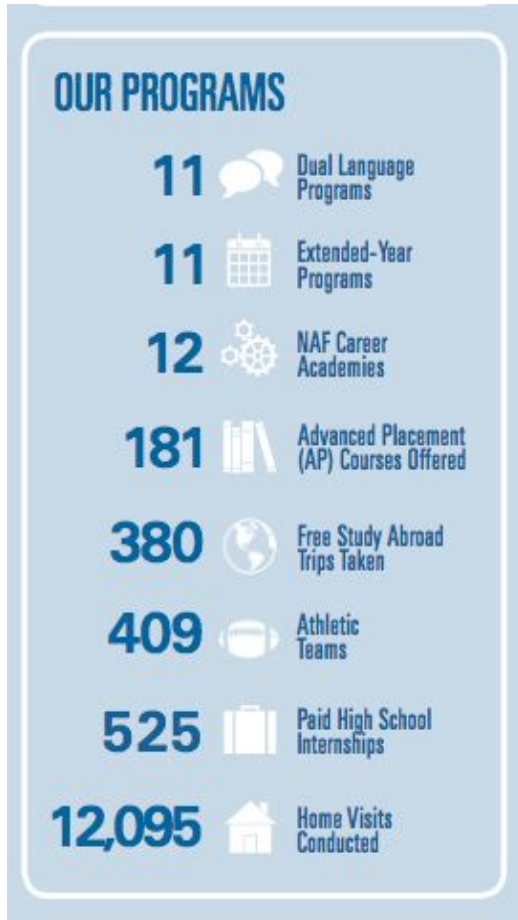


Source: District of Columbia State Data Center Fact Sheet (Azimeraw et al., 2011)

Washington D.C. public offers a large number of programs and resources to meet the needs of their students and community. These programs are meant to target the demographic needs specific to their community with a big emphasis on student and parent involvement. Due to their wide range of programs and heavy investment in the public school system, student

⁹ Program eligibility is based on the Federal Eligibility Income guidelines for reduced meals (DCPS). <https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/2017-2018%20DCPS%20FAR%20application.pdf>

enrollment, attendance and graduation rates have risen dramatically in the last couple of years.



Their official online page is offered in the 5 major languages spoken in the district - Amharic, Chinese (Mandarin), Spanish, French and Vietnamese - and offers information and resources on schools, academic programs, student life, family & community, enrollment and services. Most notably, their parent resource section includes information on immigration, parent rights and resource guides to keep parents informed and engaged in their children's education. While these resources and information are extremely useful, educators, parents and students would greatly benefit from a comprehensive online tool focused on integration.

With the size of the foreign-born population rising each year, more researches will be needed to meet the needs of the changing community. This project's online tool will highlight the resources already offered on the District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) official page. The online tool will act as a supplement to those resources and programs available to help improve current upward trends in the district's public schools. The schools chosen to pilot the online tool will be those located in ward 1 and 4 who have the highest percent of foreign-born population (Azimeraw et. al., 2011).

Administration

The superintendent of schools, who oversees all schools in the district, will be the first to be approached by the AFT's Organizing & Field Services Department and project manager for approval of the schools' participation in the project. The project manager will then approach the administration of the two pilot schools chosen with the project proposal and mockup of the online tool. Once they have reviewed the proposal and agreed to participate in the project, the project manager will continue to work with administration in both schools in each successive stage. The schools' administration department (Principal and Vice Principal) will be responsible for recruitment of teachers to introduce the online tool in their classrooms.

Teachers

Washington D.C. public schools rank third in spending per student and first in starting teacher's salaries in the country (NEA, 2013; US Census, 2017). This facilitates both student and teacher satisfaction and a quality education for students. Like most schools in the United States, however, teacher and school leader demographics in Washington D.C. public schools are not representative of their students¹⁰ (DCPS, 2017). This tool can help lessen the gap. Teachers participating in the project will be approached and chosen by administration. The project manager will help train and guide those teachers in the use of the tool and how to collect feedback from students and their parents. Teachers will also be providing feedback and be assessed on the functionality, clarity and effectiveness of the online tool.

¹⁰ According the DCPS official website, 77% of teachers are female, 53% are black, 36% are white, 7% hispanic and 4% asian. Of the students, 64% are black, 18% are hispanic, 13% are white and 4% are asian, multiracial or other (DCPS, 2017).

<https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/DCPS%20Fast%20Facts.pdf>

Students

The students will be presented with the online tool by the teachers. They will also be encouraged to share the tool with their parents/guardians as part of their assignments. The online tool is intended for all students, whether they are native, foreign-born, have immigrant parents or not. Sharing with their parents will allow for more reach and inform a wider variety of people in the community. Students will be asked to give feedback on the online tool and their participation will be assessed each assessment period.

Parents

In Washington D.C. 22.5% of the foreign-born population over the age of 25 have not completed a high school education (Azimeraw et al., 2011). Some of these are parents. Through this online tool, parents will be able to easily find programs that are available to them to improve literacy, language acquisition and information on immigration if need be. Since this is an online tool, parents with unauthorized immigration status can access such information without the fear of being detected. Parents will also be asked to give feedback on their experience using the tool and their participation will be assessed each assessment period.

Online tool Overview:

Online tools are easily accessible, manageable, and can reach a wide audience. This particular online tool is intended to be all those things. In it the user will be able to quickly navigate various topics and options with ease. Upon entering the site, the user will find a banner with the name of the online tool and the AFT logo. Directly below the banner, there will be a primary navigation bar with hyperlinks to each topic, a secondary navigation bar with hyperlinks to language options, and a search feature; all of which will appear on each page of the tool. The home page will feature a brief introduction to the tool and a shortened version of each topic. This online tool is meant to be comprehensive and simple to use; with a target audience of 12 years of age and up. Below are descriptions of the options and topics found in the navigation bars.

Language Options: English, Spanish

All of the materials in the online tool will be initially available in both English and Spanish. Certain aspects of the tool such as links for lesson plans on immigrant integration on Share My Lesson and information on the youth advocacy on TeachHumanRights.com will not be available in Spanish as they are external links. While this information may be provided in Spanish upon request, it will initially appear in its original language. Information on any language limitation will be indicated along with the external link to each site. Language options will be available on the secondary navigation bar of the main site.

Tab 1: Overview of the history of immigration

In this section, found in the primary navigation bar, there will be timeline summary of the

history of immigration in the United States, including the different forms of integration used throughout. Text used in this section will be written by the developers of the online tool using supported research. References will be provided at the bottom of the page.

Tab 2: What is Immigrant Integration?

In this section, found in the primary navigation bar, there will be more in depth information on immigrant integration. Text will include: defining integration, a brief history of integration programs in the U.S., types of immigrant integration, and challenges to integration. Text used in this section will be written by the developers of the online tool using supported research. References will be provided at the bottom of the page.

Tab 3: Purpose

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will act as the About Us page. Here users will find information on the developers of the site/online tool. Text used in this section will be derived from the About Us sections of the references original sites with original content and contributions written by the developers of the online tool. References will be provided at the bottom of the page.

Tab 4: Importance: How does it affect your life?

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will have information on why focus on integration is so important, the benefits of immigrant integration programs for the nation and local communities, as well as the role of the community in integration. Text used in this section

will be written by the developers of the online tool using supported research. References will be provided at the bottom of the page.

Tab 5: Stories of a variety of migrants

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will have individual stories from immigrants who have never received any assistance with integration, immigrants who have received assistance from integration programs, native born members of communities who have been actively involved in integration programs and native born members of communities who have had little to no exposure to immigrant communities. Text used in this section will be derived from interviews done by the developers of the online tool using resources from their affiliates (AFT).

Tab 6: Integration programs throughout the United states

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will serve as a special resource tool mapping programs and agencies that provide immigrant services through an interactive map. Clicking on each state will bring you to a new page with a list of programs and agencies in that state with descriptions of them (location, contact information, services available), and links to their sites.

Tab 7: How one can become involved in advocacy?

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will have a brief text on youth advocacy and mention and link to information on youth advocacy on the site

TeachHumanRights.com. Text used in this section will be written by the developers of the online tool.

Tab 8: Immigrant integration in the classroom

This section, found in the primary navigation bar, will have sample lesson plans on immigrant integration and link to other related lesson plans on immigrant integration on Share My Lesson. Text used in this section will be written by the developers of the online tool.

Online Tool Supplements

Sharemylesson.com

Share my Lesson is an online tool made by teachers for teachers. Created in 2012 by AFT and TES Global, a digital education company, this lesson sharing platform has over 1.1 million members (AFT, 2017). Through this teachers are able to post their lesson plans and/or download lesson plans uploaded by other teachers. Lesson plans range from early childhood education to high school and users are able to rate and see the rating of lessons, see the numbers of views each lesson has as well as the number of downloads it has had. The project manager will propose a number of sample lesson plans specific to the topic of immigration to be uploaded onto this platform so that it can be referenced in this project's online tool.

TeachHumanRights.com

Modeled after Share My Lesson, Teach Human Rights is lesson sharing site that focuses on, as the name implies, providing its users with materials for human rights education. Their "lesson

plans are intended to raise awareness in the classroom about contemporary human rights issues and how we can connect them to our past (Teach Human Rights, 2017).” Some of their lessons include material on refugees, restorative practices, youth activism, genocide, human trafficking, girls education and islamophobia. This site was created and is run by the staff of the International Affairs Department at AFT using Weebly, a website creating platform. The International Affairs Department also promotes and uploads lessons from its Teach Human Rights site on their Share My Lesson account. The project manager will work with the International Affairs Department to use the Teach Human Rights site as a resource for, as well as reference and promote it on, the project’s online tool.

Assessment of Online Tool

The effectiveness of the online tool will be measured using both qualitative and quantitative data. Feedback taken from teachers, students and parents will be done through a series of questions with both multiple choices; each weighted differently, and fill in. The weighted questions will be derived from The World Values Survey and Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Scales, both subjective wellbeing assessments (Abbott et al. 2006; WVS, 2017). Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Scale is a multidimensional model of psychological well-being with a total of 42 questions divided into 6 dimensions; autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Abbott et al. 2006). The World Values Survey, created by a network of social scientists based in Vienna, is a survey used to study and measure personal values and its impact on society (WVS, 2017). For the purpose of this project, only one question from each dimension of Ryff’s Psychological Well-Being Scale

will be selected and two from the World Values Survey. The fill in question will be created by the project manager specifically for this project.

Sample Feedback Questionnaire:

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days? Using this card on which 1 means you are “completely dissatisfied” and 10 means you are “completely satisfied” where would you put your satisfaction with your life as a whole?									
Completely dissatisfied					Completely satisfied				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Source: World Values Survey Wave 6

I 'd like to ask you how much you trust people from various groups. Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much or not at all?				
	Trust completely	Trust somewhat	Do not trust very much	Do not trust at all
Your family	1	2	3	4
Your neighborhood	1	2	3	4
People you know personally	1	2	3	4
People you meet for the first time	1	2	3	4
People of another religion	1	2	3	4
People of another nationality	1	2	3	4

Source: World Values Survey Wave 6

Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 1-6) to the following sentences.						
	Strongly Disagree			Strong Agree		
I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Source: Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWB)

Please answer each question as best you can in the space below.
1. Have you found this online tool helpful?
2. Have you had any challenges navigating through this online tool?
3. What would you change? How would you enhance the tool?

4. Do you predict that the online tool will change your perception of immigrants? Has the online changed your perception of immigrants?

A progress assessment will be done every three months, with an additional one done at the end of the pilot year. Effectiveness and success of the online tool will be determined based on variations of the quantitative and qualitative data collected. Personal notes and comments from participants will also be taken into consideration each assessment cycle. Each assessment will be done and analyzed by the project manager and reported to the AFT.

Costs

The cost of this project will be relatively low. Since all those involved in the development and production of the project are employed by the AFT, no additional staff will need to be hired. This project also aligns with the mission of the AFT, therefore it would not be considered an extra cost, but rather an extension of other ongoing community outreach programs. School participation in this project is voluntary and interest based. Transportation for the project manager to the schools in the Northwest quadrant of the district and from AFT headquarters in the Northeast quadrant will be the only foreseeable costs. Other costs may depend on the website generator used; website making generators not licensed to the AFT will present additional costs, but are a onetime payment.

Sustainability

As this project is an online tool, it will be very easily sustainable. Any changes or modifications to the online tool can be done easily and with little or no extra costs. Since it can be easily molded depending on the context in which it is being used, it has the ability to be used and expanded across the country.

Conclusion

The integration of new arrivals to the United States has always had its challenges, but has been accomplished with a relatively high degree of success, organically with little intervention by the federal government. This success has been attributed to certain conditions - a strong economy and robust labor market, high quality public education and legal protections against discrimination - that have allowed for this to happen. Unfortunately, in recent times these conditions have been compromised. After the great recession of 2008, the United States, as well as the world's economy, took a massive hit and millions of jobs were lost. While the country has come out of this period of economic decline and been slowly recovering, some of the effects are still being felt. The public education system has also experienced its share of trouble over the past few decades; problems with funding, source of funding and policy changes within the new administration have been at the root of the problem. As to antidiscrimination legislation: the demographics of people coming into to the United States has changed drastically since mid 20th century, creating a new set of challenges for new arrivals. Immigration status has also been a major challenge/barrier to integration, as unauthorized immigrants are more vulnerable to acts of discrimination and violence due to fear of detection and subsequent deportation.

In order to meet the needs of immigrants to better integrate into their communities, local governments have stepped up and created welcoming programs specifically for new arrivals. In these programs immigrants are provided with a wide range of public services and resources. Despite the enormous help these programs give, they may not reach all people they intend to help and may not be as well known. To address these issues, I am proposing to implement an inclusive online resource tool that connects these types of programs available to immigrants and refugees and provides all users of the tool with more awareness on the issue of immigration.

The online tool being proposed is meant to provide users of all backgrounds and statuses with information and resources that can have some sort of impact in their lives. For immigrants, it is a useful and anonymous resource tool where they can find relevant information on services they might not have otherwise known about, where they can inform themselves on issues affecting their community, and where they can feel cared for. Children of immigrants will have a better understanding of the struggles their parents have gone through and ways to help improve their lives. Native born users of the tool will become better informed on and aware of issues affecting both them and other members of their community they may have known little to nothing about. The purpose of this tool is to facilitate access to general information and public services and to build awareness and empathy among all users, so as to alleviate some of the challenges/barrier to integration and develop more peaceful communities. Of course this is a tall order and there are limitations to the effectiveness of the tool. First, as the tool will initially be piloted in two Washington D.C. public schools, the assessment sample will be relatively small. Second, the assessment is based on previous research from various disciplines and may need to be modified during the course of the pilot assessment. Finally, the population being assessed

initially is not representative of the general population of the United States, thus modifications will have to be made when the online it expanded. Despite all this, we predict that the online tool will be a success and will eventually be available to a wider national audience in the future.

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