**Case Study for Chapter 17: Global and International Social Work**

In 2009, Abrehem and Amira Al-Lami, along with their 8-year-old son (Jamail) and 6-year-old daughter (Sabeen), worked with the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Agency for International Development to become Iraqi refugees and move and resettle in Chicago, Illinois. As an Iraqi citizen, Abrehem had worked for the Multinational force and U.S. government in Iraq. Abrehem and his family faced persecution in Iraq as a consequence of their assistance as interpreters/translators to the U.S. government. The resettlement process took about 10 months with Abrehem’s fluency in English being very helpful in completing paperwork. As displaced refugees, the Al-Limi family received assistance with food, shelter, and health care.

In the Chicago area, the Al-Lami family lives in an apartment building inhabited by other refugees (including several Iraqi families) with support provided by area churches and international relief agencies. Abrehem and Amira have maintained limited contact with a few U.S. government officials and military subcontractors from Iraq. Outside of their apartment building and friendships acquired in Iraq, establishing new relationships and sources of social support has been challenging. Attendance at a local mosque has been helpful. However, upon learning the Al-Lamis’ country of origin, many everyday Americans show an initial resistance to relationship building. Abrehem and Amira and their children struggle with social relationships, employment, transportation, addressing everyday needs, acceptance by others, and a general sense of “fitting in.” With their social worker from a Lutheran social service agency, the Al-Lami family are exploring school-based services for their children and ways to connect with other refugee families to advocate for additional social and economic opportunities for people displaced from Iraq.

1. Are there any other countries you can think of from which a refugee may come to the United States and find others reluctant or somehow unsure how to interact with them?

2. Are there any countries of origin or nationalities which could make it difficult for you to work with a client, or perhaps a bit uncomfortable at first? Why? What do you think that means?

3. It is possible in some cities for refugees or immigrants to live among people who come from the same place, perhaps never even having to speak English to get by day to day. Do you think this is the best option for them, or should they at least somewhat learn to assimilate? Explain.