Volume 1

Metropolis eBook

Beyond 2020: Renewing Canada's Commitment to immigration

Livre numérique Metropolis

2020 et au-delà : l'heure de renouveler l'engagement canadien en immigration

Selected presentations from the 22nd Metropolis Canada Conference

Une sélection de présentations du 22e Congrès Metropolis Canada

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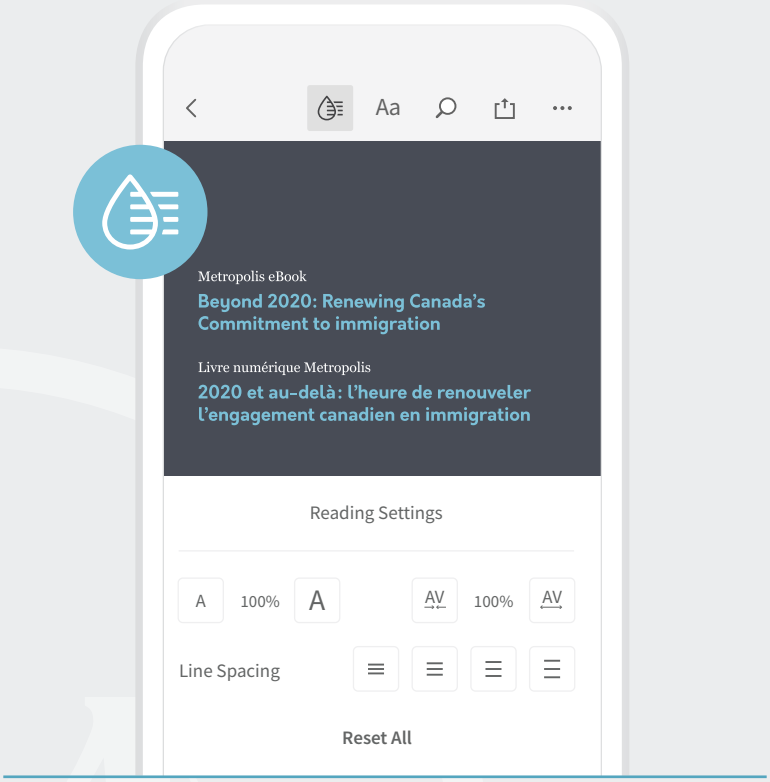

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Introduction

Innovations in Integration and Settlement Research and Practice

DR. MIRIAM TAYLOR is the Director of Partnerships and Publications at the Association for Canadian Studies and the Metropolis Institute. She is Managing Editor of Canadian Issues and Canadian Diversity.

The annual Metropolis Canada Conference, the country's largest immigration forum, brings together immigrant service providers, academics, as well as representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Creating an opportunity for deliberation on some of the most pressing issues of the day, Metropolis has a longstanding tradition of thoughtful productive conversations that play a vital role in the development of future policies. Metropolis Canada was in its 22nd edition when the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced a last-minute postponement of the March 2020 conference. Entitled, *Beyond 2020: Renewing Canada's Commitment to Immigration*, the conference aimed to examine some of the country's key immigration-related opportunities and challenges. Reviewing and renewing how Canada attracts, settles and integrates newcomers is an ongoing process, particularly in the context of the need for inclusion, diversity, human rights and a commitment to reconciliation in our society.

The 2020 edition of the conference promised to be bigger than ever, with more than 1,000 participants registered and over 100 workshops and roundtables scheduled. Along with the plenaries, these breakout sessions are one of the great attractions of the Metropolis format, allowing conference participants to form partnerships across sectors and exchange in smaller settings on cutting-edge research and innovative pilot projects, throughout the three-day event. A small selection of the scheduled presentations is being shared here in this two-volume E-book.

The articles in Volume I deal with the nuts and bolts of integration and settlement questions, drawing on the insights of research and practice in the field from a number of forward-looking studies and pilot projects. Volume II looks at the role of media and digital technologies and takes a broader national and international policy perspective.

Volume I is divided into five sections:

1_ Barriers & Solutions to Economic Integration

2_ Education & Integration: a Two-Way Street

3_ The Vital Role of Mental Health & Wellness

4_ Gender & Intersectionality

5_ Key Components of Attachment & Social Cohesion

In (1) Barriers & Solutions to Economic Integration, two articles consider how the economic integration of immigrants and refugees benefits not only the new arrivals themselves but host countries as well.

Sandra Elgersma, Lara Dyer, Jennifer L'Esperance, Sarah MacIntosh Wiseman & Dana Wagner represent a partnership of organizations looking at ways of tapping into the great potential of refugees to meet Canadian labour shortages. Called the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP), this experimental research first assessed to what extent refugees could access Canada's existing economic immigration programs and is now exploring different models of matching refugees with opportunities.

Anne Güller-Frey, Helen Seifu Wolde & Linda Manning also represent different organizations. They compare immigrant labour market integration in Germany and Canada. On the premise that managing immigration effectively is critical for the countries' economic growth as populations age and workforces shrink, the study looks at the array of barriers immigrants face when trying to access the labour market – with the recognition of academic credentials and professional skills acquired abroad being the most pressing issue identified.

In (2), Education & Integration: A Two-Way Street,, Jermeen Baddour, Dr. Kathleen Hipfner-Boucher, Redab Al Janaideh, Dr. Johanne Paradis, Dr. Alexandra Gottardo and Dr. Xi Chen, examine the language and literacy skills in English (L2) and Arabic (L1) of Syrian

refugee children and youth aged 6 to 14 years, finding that these skills are crucial for academic achievement, overall well-being and acculturation. In a second article touching on the theme, Dr. Reza Nakhaie highlights the influence of acculturation, discrimination, socio-economic and refugee statuses on truancy among recent immigrant and refugee students, ages 14 to 24. Understanding this connection is vital because of the far-reaching consequences of truancy identified, including low academic achievement, alienation, unemployment, substance abuse, and delinquency.

Section (3) examines the vital role of Mental Health & Wellness. Aamna Ashraf & Dr. Kwame McKenzie share the work of the Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project (IRMHP) team that has been researching, developing and creating a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed course, tailored to meet the unique mental health needs of Yazidis in Canada. The course aims to build the capacity of service providers through the development of both mental health and social support training courses.

Dr. Cesar Suva, Katerina Palova & Halley Silversides review a study examining the need for and the configuration of emotional wellness support in four western Canadian cities. Through surveys interviews, focus groups and a feedback workshop, the authors identified five key issues. These included the need to address acculturative and adjustment-related stress experienced during the settlement process; issues of access to community and municipal supports for both staff and clients; the provision of easier access to supports “closer to home”; the challenges of front-line staff often compelled to go beyond their scope of practice; and the benefits of consistency in approaches.

The fourth section (4), Gender & Intersectionality, looks at the determining role of gender in successful integration. Dr. Pallavi Banerjee, Dr. Annalee Coakley, Bindu Narula, Negin Saheb Javaher, Rowena Theodore & Sophia Thraya, a group of researchers and practitioners, argue that prioritizing the gender-based needs of the Yazidi community has resulted in a feminist and more effective reorientation of the resettlement services and experiences of Yazidis in Calgary.

Julie Rodier, Susanna Lui Gurr & Kim Lehrer discuss an innovative three-year venture, called the Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women (CPVMNW) Pilot Project. The project is designed to better support newcomer women identifying as visible minorities seeking to enter the Canadian labour market. The paper describes the project origins, CPVMNW models and core features, the rationale behind those features, the network of partners, and how the pilot is being evaluated.

The final section (5) looks at Key Components of Attachment & Social Cohesion. A group of academics from five Canadian universities, Dr. Faiçal Zellama, Dr. Nathalie Piquemal, Dr. Suzanne Huot, Dr. Leyla Sall, Dr. Luisa Veronis & Anne-Cécile Delaisse, consider community cohesion among Francophone minority communities (FMCs), including Canadian-born and foreign-born Francophones. The authors identify the fundamental pillars of social cohesion as the respect for ethnocultural diversity and the importance of a relationship to the other based on an ethic of reciprocity. The article concludes with some food for thought on the critical role of institutions in the realization of the social cohesion process.

The final article in this volume by Dr. Joseph Garcea analyzes the level and likely determinants of the affinity of refugee youth to the Canadian polity. The analysis reveals that refugee youth have a very strong affinity to the Canadian polity, including those with dual or multiple affinities to other polities.

The three major factors said to account for high levels of affinity are:

- Positive perceptions regarding the polity and the quality of life therein;
- A relatively positive social climate; and
- Perceptions of treatment by Canadians and social integration.

Introduction

Intégration et établissement : Innovations en matière de recherche et de pratique

LA DRE MIRIAM TAYLOR est la directrice des partenariats et des publications de l'Association d'études canadiennes et de l'Institut Metropolis. Elle est rédactrice en chef de Thèmes canadiens et de Diversité canadienne.

Le congrès annuel de Metropolis Canada, le plus grand forum consacré à l'immigration au pays, réunit des fournisseurs de services, des universitaires, ainsi que des représentants d'organisations gouvernementales et non gouvernementales et du secteur privé. Créant une opportunité de délibération sur certaines des questions les plus urgentes du jour, Metropolis a une longue tradition de conversations productives et réfléchies qui jouent un rôle vital dans le développement des politiques de demain. Metropolis Canada en était à sa 22e édition lorsque le déclenchement de la pandémie COVID-19 a nécessité un report de dernière minute du congrès de mars 2020. Intitulé *Au-delà de 2020 : renouveler l'engagement du canada en matière d'immigration*, le congrès visait à examiner certaines des principales opportunités et certains des principaux défis du pays en matière d'immigration. L'examen et le renouvellement de la manière dont le Canada attire, installe et intègre les nouveaux arrivants est un processus continu, tout particulièrement dans ce contexte où l'on a besoin d'inclusion, de diversité, de droits de l'homme et d'un engagement à la réconciliation dans notre société.

L'édition 2020 du congrès promettait d'être plus importante que jamais, avec plus de 1000 participants inscrits et plus de 100 ateliers et tables rondes prévus. Avec les séances plénières, ces séances en petits groupes sont l'un des grands attraits du modèle Metropolis, car elles permettent aux participants au congrès de former des partenariats intersectoriels et d'échanger dans des cercles restreints sur des recherches de pointe et des projets pilotes innovants, tout au long des trois jours de l'événement. Une sélection des présentations prévues est proposée dans ce livre numérique en deux volumes.

Les articles du premier volume traitent des rouages de l'intégration et de l'établissement, en s'appuyant sur de nouvelles connaissances issues de la recherche et de la pratique, tirées d'un certain nombre d'études avant-gardistes et de projets pilotes. Le volume II se penche sur le rôle des médias et des technologies numériques et adopte une perspective politique nationale et internationale plus large.

Le volume I est divisé en cinq sections :

1_ Obstacles et solutions à l'intégration économique

2_ Éducation et intégration : une voie à double sens

3_ Le rôle essentiel de la santé mentale et du bien-être

4_ Genre et intersectionnalité

5_ Composantes clés de l'attachement et de la cohésion sociale

Dans (1) Obstacles et solutions à l'intégration économique, deux articles examinent comment l'intégration économique des immigrants et des réfugiés profite non seulement aux nouveaux arrivants eux-mêmes, mais aussi aux pays d'accueil.

Sandra Elgersma, Lara Dyer, Jennifer L'Esperance, Sarah MacIntosh Wiseman & Dana Wagner forment un partenariat d'organisations qui étudient les moyens de mettre à profit le grand potentiel des réfugiés pour répondre aux pénuries de main-d'œuvre au Canada. Intitulé Projet sur la voie d'accès à la mobilité économique (PVAME), cette recherche appliquée a d'abord évalué dans quelle mesure les réfugiés pouvaient accéder aux programmes d'immigration économique existants au Canada et explore maintenant différents modèles de jumelage des réfugiés avec les opportunités.

Anne Güller-Frey, Helen Seifu Wolde & Linda Manning représentent également différentes organisations. Elles comparent l'intégration des immigrants sur le marché du travail en Allemagne et au Canada. Partant du principe qu'une gestion efficace de l'immigration est essentielle pour la croissance économique des pays, alors que les populations vieillissent et que la main-d'œuvre se réduit, l'étude examine l'ensemble des obstacles auxquels les immigrants sont confrontés lorsqu'ils tentent d'accéder au marché du travail – la reconnaissance des diplômes universitaires et des compétences professionnelles acquises à l'étranger étant la question la plus urgente identifiée.

Dans (2), Éducation et intégration : une voie à double sens, Jermeen Baddour, la Dre Kathleen Hipfner-Boucher, Redab Al Janaideh, la Dre Johanne Paradis, la Dre Alexandra Gottardo & le Dr Xi Chen, examinent les compétences linguistiques et l'alphabétisation en anglais (L2) et en arabe (L1) des enfants et des jeunes réfugiés syriens âgés de 6 à 14 ans. Ils constatent que ces compétences sont cruciales pour la réussite scolaire, le bien-être général et l'acculturation. Dans un deuxième article traitant de ce thème, le Dr Reza Nakhaie souligne l'influence de l'acculturation, de la discrimination, du statut socio-économique et du statut de réfugié sur l'absentéisme scolaire chez les élèves immigrants et réfugiés récents, âgés de 14 à 24 ans. Il est essentiel de comprendre ce lien en raison des conséquences considérables de l'absentéisme scolaire constatées, notamment les faibles résultats scolaires, l'aliénation, le chômage, la toxicomanie et la délinquance.

La section (3) examine le rôle essentiel de la santé mentale et du bien-être. Aamna Ashraf et le Dr Kwame McKenzie partagent le travail de l'équipe du Projet sur la santé mentale des immigrants et des réfugiés (PSIMR), qui a mené des recherches, développé et créé un cours culturellement sensible, adapté aux traumatismes et conçu pour répondre aux besoins uniques des Yazidis en matière de santé mentale au Canada. Le cours vise à renforcer les capacités des prestataires de services par le développement de cours de formation en matière de santé mentale et de soutien social.

Le Dr Cesar Suva, Katerina Palova et Halley Silversides examinent une étude portant sur la nécessité et la configuration du soutien au bien-être émotionnel dans quatre villes de l'Ouest canadien. À l'aide d'entretiens, de groupes de discussion et d'un atelier, les auteurs ont identifié cinq enjeux clés. Il s'agit notamment de la nécessité d'aborder le stress lié à l'adaptation et à l'acculturation subies pendant le processus d'établissement ; des questions d'accès aux soutiens communautaires et municipaux pour le personnel et les clients ; de la fourniture d'un accès plus facile aux soutiens « plus près de chez soi » ; des défis du personnel de première ligne souvent contraint d'aller au-delà de son champ d'activité ; et des avantages de la cohérence des approches.

La quatrième section (4), Genre et intersectionnalité, examine le rôle déterminant du genre dans une intégration réussie. La Dre Pallavi Banerjee, la Dre Annalee Coakley, Bindu Narula, Negin Saheb Javaher, Rowena Theodore et Sophia Thraya, un groupe de chercheurs et de praticiens, soutiennent que la priorité accordée aux besoins sexospécifiques de la communauté yazide a entraîné une réorientation féministe et plus efficace des services et des expériences de réinstallation des Yazidis à Calgary.

Julie Rodier, Susanna Lui Gurr et Kim Lehrer discutent d'un projet novateur de trois ans, intitulé Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women (CPVMNW) Pilot Project. Ce projet est conçu pour mieux soutenir les femmes nouvellement arrivées qui s'identifient comme membres d'une minorité visible et qui cherchent à entrer sur le marché du travail canadien. Le document décrit les origines du projet, les modèles et les principales caractéristiques du CPVMNW, la raison d'être de ces caractéristiques, le réseau de partenaires et la manière dont le projet pilote est évalué.

La dernière section (5) examine les composantes clés de l'attachement et de la cohésion sociale. Un groupe d'universitaires de cinq universités canadiennes, le Dr Faiçal Zellama, la Dre Nathalie Piquemal, la Dre Suzanne Huot, le Dr Leyla Sall, la Dre Luisa Veronis et Anne-Cécile Delaisse, se penchent sur la cohésion communautaire des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (CFSM), y compris les francophones nés au Canada et à l'étranger. Les auteurs identifient les piliers fondamentaux de la cohésion sociale comme étant : le respect de la diversité ethnoculturelle et l'importance d'une relation à l'autre basée sur une éthique de réciprocité. L'article se termine par une réflexion sur le rôle critique des institutions dans la réalisation du processus de cohésion sociale.

Le dernier article de ce volume, rédigé par le Dr Joseph Garcea, analyse le niveau et les déterminants probables de l'affinité des jeunes réfugiés avec le système politique canadien. L'analyse révèle que les jeunes réfugiés ont une très forte affinité avec le système politique canadien, y compris ceux qui ont des affinités doubles ou multiples avec d'autres systèmes politiques.

Les trois principaux facteurs qui expliqueraient les niveaux élevés d'affinité sont :

- les perceptions positives concernant le système politique et la qualité de vie dans ce système ;
- un climat social relativement positif ; et
- les perceptions relatives au traitement par les Canadiens et à l'intégration sociale.

Section 1

Barriers & Solutions to Economic Integration

Obstacles et solutions à l'intégration économique

Tapping the Potential of Displaced Talent: Lessons Learned

LARA DYER, Director, Regional Economic Programs and Policy, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada — **JENNIFER L'ESPERANCE**, Director of Programs, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration — **SARAH MACINTOSH WISEMAN**, CEO, Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network — **DANA WAGNER**, Canada Director, Talent Beyond Boundaries — **SANDRA ELGERSMA**, Assistant Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Officer, UNHCR.

Abstract

Employers and communities worldwide face ongoing labour and population shortages, even in the wake of COVID-19. Refugees have skills to contribute but they have not typically migrated through economic immigration programs. In affirming the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018, the global community recognized the need for innovative solutions to forced displacement, including the use of regular immigration routes.

The Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) was developed to test and improve refugee access to Canada's economic stream. Lessons from the small number of refugee arrivals to date have identified unique challenges refugees may face in accessing Canada's economic immigration programs, often linked to the circumstances of displacement. For instance, refugees may not always have the funds necessary to cover application costs or settlement funds, or the ability to provide proof of funds (for ex. a bank account).

Now the EMPP has moved into a second phase, with the objective of exploring how economic pathways could be scaled up by "levelling the playing field" so larger numbers of skilled refugees can fill specific labour market needs using existing economic immigration programs and settlement support infrastructure. As employers turn to international recruitment when suitable domestic labour cannot be found, there is a whole talent pool of refugees waiting to be discovered.

Résumé

Les employeurs et les communautés du monde entier sont confrontés à des pénuries continuelles de main-d'œuvre et de population, et ce, même dans le sillage de la COVID-19. Les réfugiés ont des compétences à apporter, mais ils n'ont généralement pas migré dans le cadre de programmes d'immigration économique. En affirmant le Pacte mondial sur les réfugiés en 2018, la communauté mondiale a reconnu la nécessité de trouver des solutions novatrices aux déplacements forcés, y compris l'utilisation de voies d'immigration régulières.

Le Projet sur la voie d'accès à la mobilité économique (PVAME) a été élaboré pour tester et améliorer l'accès des réfugiés au volet économique du Canada. Les leçons tirées du petit nombre de réfugiés arrivés à ce jour ont permis de cerner les défis uniques auxquels les réfugiés peuvent faire face afin d'accéder aux programmes d'immigration économique du Canada, souvent liés aux circonstances du déplacement. Par exemple, les réfugiés peuvent ne pas toujours avoir les fonds nécessaires pour couvrir les frais de demande ou les fonds d'établissement, ou la capacité de fournir une preuve de fonds (par exemple : un compte bancaire).

Le PVAME est maintenant entré dans une deuxième phase, dont l'objectif est d'étudier comment les filières économiques pourraient être développées en « égalisant les chances » afin qu'un plus grand nombre de réfugiés qualifiés puissent répondre à des besoins spécifiques du marché du travail en utilisant les programmes d'immigration économique et les infrastructures existantes de soutien à l'établissement. Pendant que les employeurs se tournent vers le recrutement international lorsqu'ils ne trouvent pas de main-d'œuvre nationale appropriée, il existe tout un réservoir de talents de réfugiés qui attendent d'être découverts.

"Even if this process doesn't go further, this 30-minute interview has been the highlight of my year."

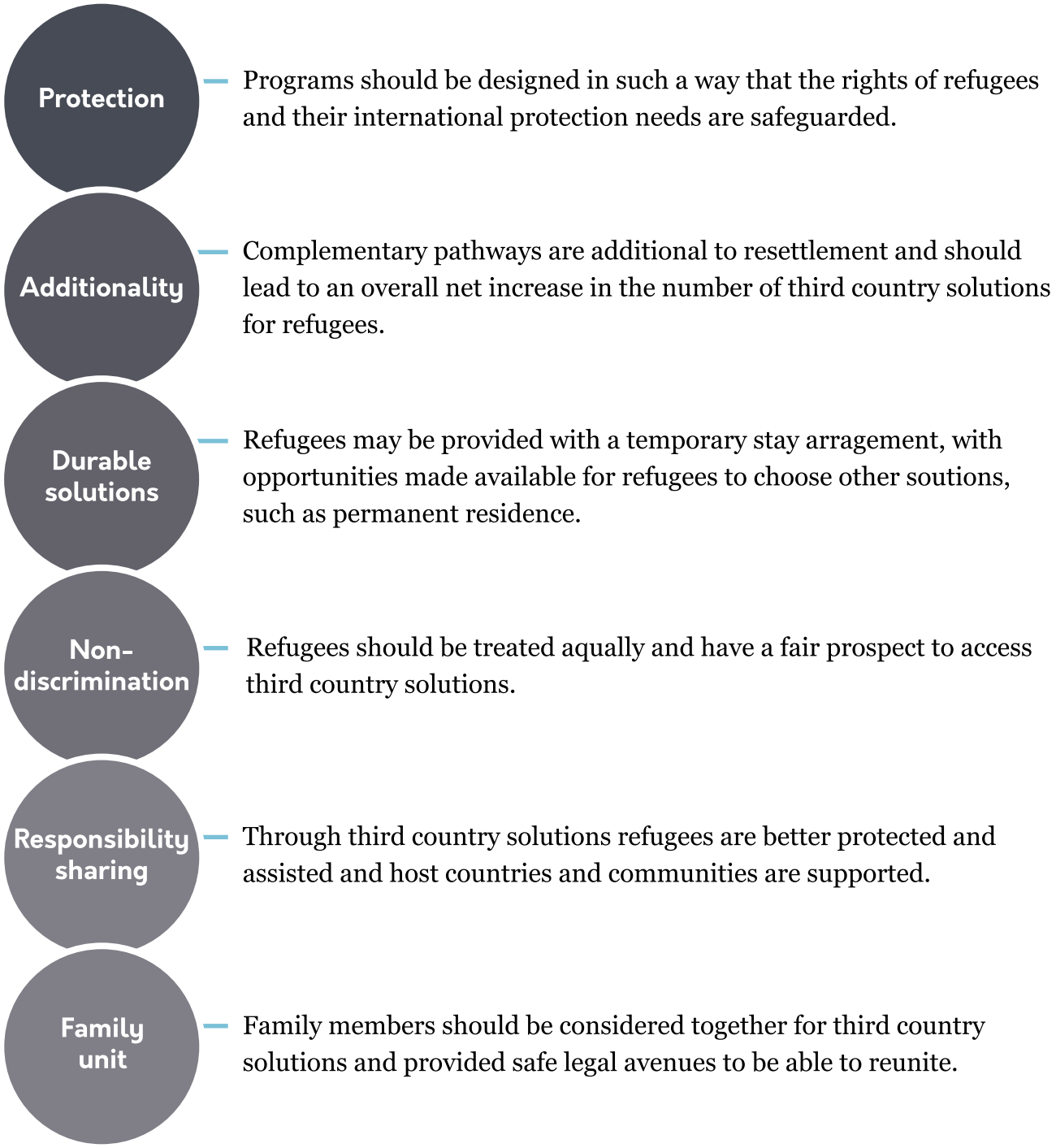
These were the words of a health care professional emerging from an interview with a long-term care facility. What made the interview so momentous was that the individual is a refugee living in Nairobi and the long-term care facility is situated in Pictou County, Nova Scotia. Not only a shot at a job offer that could lead to moving to Canada, the interview provided this individual the opportunity to talk about his professional experience and skills, rather than an assessment of his vulnerabilities as a displaced person.

Matching skilled refugees with job-backed immigration opportunities is the crux of a research project led by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), in partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries, RefugePoint, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and five participating provinces and territories: Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Yukon. Called the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP), this experimental research first assessed to what extent refugees could access Canada's existing economic immigration programs. Now different models of matching refugees with opportunities are being explored.

The Global Compact on Refugees, affirmed by the United Nations in 2018, recognizes the need for innovative responses to global displacement and promotes the use of regular immigration routes as solutions that complement protection-oriented solutions like resettlement. These routes are described as "complementary pathways" and include family reunification, education, community sponsorship and economic immigration or labour mobility. Unlike resettlement, where selection is based on vulnerability and the person not having a safe place to build a future, selection for the other pathways is broader – for example, labour mobility programs are tied to employers' needs and refugees' qualifications.

This is not to say that protection considerations are missing from complementary pathways. In fact, protection is embedded in the six principles that underpin the global community's work to expand access to complementary pathways (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Guiding Principles for Complementary Pathways



Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Project

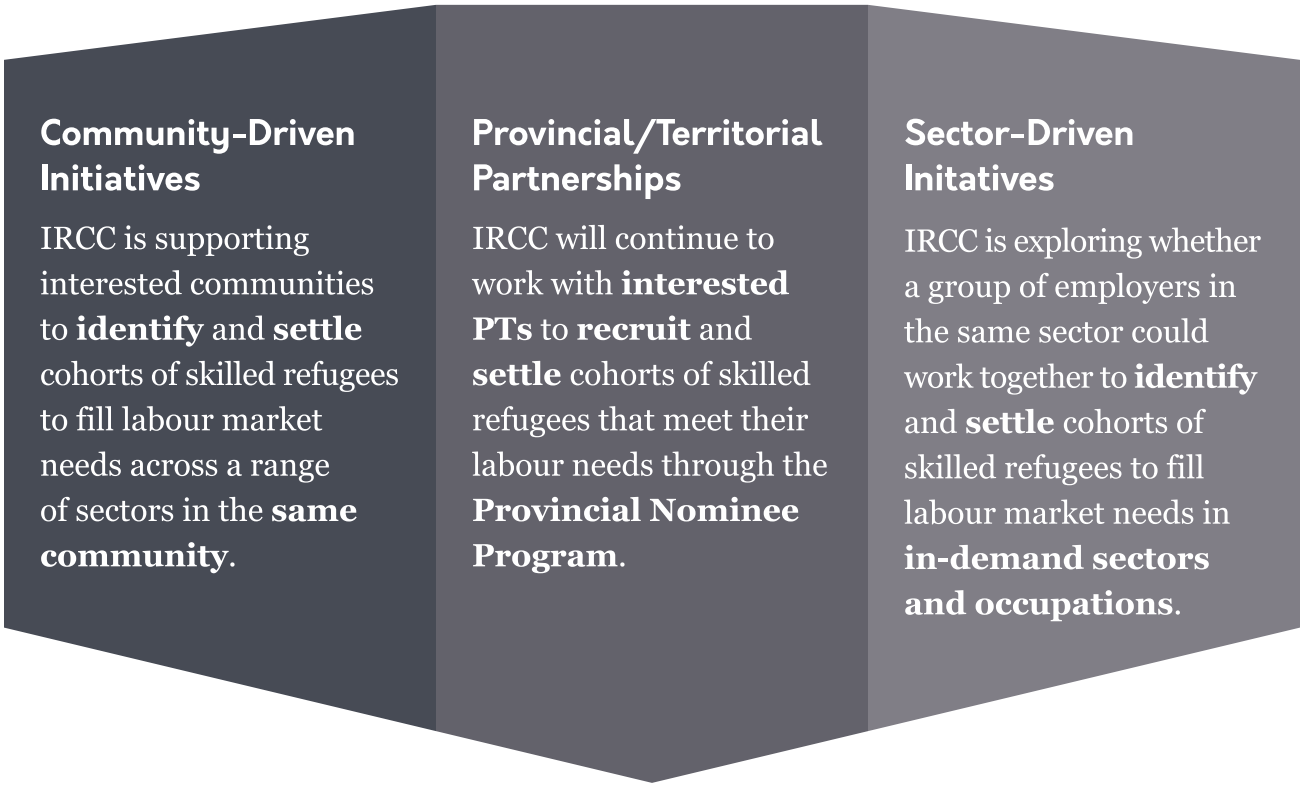
Canada is at the forefront of exploring the potential of labour mobility for skilled refugees. Economic immigration constitutes the largest portion of Canada's growing immigration program, and thus may offer substantial migration opportunities for skilled refugees.

Economic pathways are based on employers' needs and candidates' qualifications. Economic immigration criteria, such as language proficiency, education level, relevant work experience, and in-demand skills, help applicants demonstrate that they can support themselves and their dependents upon arrival in Canada. Findings from the first phase of the EMPP demonstrated that there are skilled refugees who meet the requirements of Canada's economic immigration programs, and when the playing field is levelled with some administrative and financial flexibility, they can access these programs. To date, a small number of refugee skilled workers have immigrated to Canada in a range of professions, including a software developer, cabinet maker, tool and die worker, nurses, and a chef.

Lessons to date have identified unique challenges refugees may face in accessing Canada's economic immigration programs, often linked to the circumstances of displacement. For instance, refugees may not always have the funds necessary to cover application costs or settlement funds, or the ability to provide proof of funds (for ex. a bank account). Moreover, refugees are often unable to fulfill the requirements to be eligible for temporary work permits, namely to leave Canada at the end of the period of authorized stay. In terms of program delivery, the case-by-case matching process used to connect individual candidates to employment opportunities in Canada has been resource-intensive and would be difficult to implement at a larger scale.

Now the EMPP has moved into a second phase, with the objective of exploring how complementary economic pathways could be scaled up by "levelling the playing field" so larger numbers of skilled refugees can fill specific labour market needs using existing economic immigration programs and settlement support infrastructure. This second phase has three components (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Economic Mobility Pathways Project Test Initiatives



- **What are we trying to do? Level the playing field so that more skilled refugees** can access Canada's economic pathways **autonomously**, with appropriate facilitation and settlement support.

- **How are we trying to do it?** Move on from the case-by-case, "proof of concept" approach of EMPP Phase 1, to **recruit targeted cohorts** of skills refugees that **fill specific labour needs**, starting with willing Canadian employers.

First, IRCC has funded ongoing research by Talent Beyond Boundaries to inform the department's thinking about promoting refugee autonomy in applying for economic immigration programs and about a more sustainable and scalable model for matching employer needs with skilled refugee candidates without having to rely on a case-by-case matching process.

Second, IRCC will launch test initiatives with partners, including a community-driven approach, wherein a local community identifies and settles a cohort of refugees with the skills necessary to fill specific labour market needs across a range of sectors in the same geographic community. The first community that's testing this approach is Pictou County, Nova Scotia.

IRCC and partners will also launch a sector-driven approach where employers in the same sector will be invited to work together to identify and settle cohorts of skilled refugees with the skills necessary to fill labour market needs in one of Canada's most in-demand sectors.

The findings of this research, further informed by partner and stakeholder feedback, will allow IRCC to develop a framework that levels the playing field for skilled refugees to access economic programming autonomously, with appropriate settlement and integration supports.

Case Study: Community-Driven Approach to Labour Mobility for Refugees

Within the economic class of immigration programs in Canada, there is a sub-group that aims to respond to the needs of specific geographic regions. These regional programs include the Provincial Nominee Programs, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, and the new Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot. These programs are designed to bring immigration to the local level, to meet local economic development, labour market, and demographic needs. One community-driven pilot of refugee labour mobility, based in rural Nova Scotia, is making use of these regional immigration programs.

The province of Nova Scotia makes use of two regional economic immigration programs: the Nova Scotia Nominee Program and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program. The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration has developed selection programs that are strong and responsive to local labour market needs. In that vein, the Nova Scotia Nominee Program identifies occupations in demand; and in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot, employers (who must be provincially designated) play a key role in identifying labour needs.

Pictou County is a collection of six rural communities with a total population of 43,000. With several large national employers headquartered in the region and an aging population, labour market shortages are a significant concern. Labour shortages are felt across multiple sectors (long-term care and early childhood education in particular), by employers of all sizes, and for jobs of all skills levels (for example, maintenance staff, line cooks, machinists, continuing care assistants, financial analysts, project managers and IT specialists).

Against this backdrop serendipitous events led to the formation of a new partnership to address the labour shortages and need for people to revitalize communities in part through international recruitment of skilled refugees. The Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network (PCREN) is a local economic development office with the mandate to support employers and address local challenges including labour market shortages. The PCREN works collaboratively with volunteer-led Pictou County Safe Harbour (PCSH), a community-based refugee sponsorship group with settlement expertise that has supported the settlement of 51 privately sponsored refugees. This localized, community-driven project became operational with the support of The Shapiro Foundation and two non-governmental organizations that identify skilled refugees to be matched with opportunities – Refuge Point and Talent Beyond Boundaries. The key to success is having the right partners in place.

A number of principles underpin this initiative. First, the understanding that the economic needs of employers (rather than their humanitarian inclinations) are the driver for the pilot. Refugee job candidates must therefore meet the needs of hiring employers, who evaluate candidates according to their standard competitive criteria.

Finally, participating partners understand the importance of preparing a welcoming arrival and strong integration supports to newcomers. Pictou County is a smaller community and therefore may pose unique challenges, as well as opportunities, compared to larger urban centres with dense newcomer populations and comprehensive services.

These wraparound integration supports include the following:

- Airport pick-up and transportation: the community organizes greeting and transportation from the airport in Halifax to Pictou County;
- Housing: the first employer has housing available for new recruits. A partnered approach is underway to establish a multi-family transition house with settlement supports based onsite;
- Utilities: the community is proactively working with utility companies to simplify access to services for newcomers;
- Transportation: given the lack of public transport, solutions are being developed;
- Language training: being put in place for principle applicants and family members;
- Childcare: discussions underway with employers and community partners to anticipate childcare needs of newly arrived families;
- Community, social and recreational integration: settlement partners assisting;
- Education and upgrading: plans underway for children to be enrolled in school and for adults to access upgrading;
- Employer supports and training in orientation and workplace inclusion: trusted employer partners are doing advance work with their existing employees to ensure a welcoming workplace environment awaits newcomer employees.

This combination of meeting economic needs of the community and strong settlement supports provides the "community hug" that will make the initiative successful at recruiting and retaining talented individuals.

The Pictou County partners aim to test this model with an initial target of 20 candidates, identified by RefugePoint and Talent Beyond Boundaries. Several applications have been submitted for processing. The Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network will be tracking any differences in settlement needs as a way of informing policy development and will build a roadmap for other communities based on their successes and challenges.

Talent Beyond Boundaries

While 12.7 million of the world's refugees are working age, most cannot work legally where they are. They are pushed into the informal economy and reliance on aid, and their hard-won skills atrophy. Many live with irregular status, curtailed rights, and bleak prospects for their children's futures. With few routes to safety and opportunity, many consider hiring smugglers or embark on dangerous journeys, often with tragic consequences.

Meanwhile, employers around the world report pressing talent gaps and approximately two million economic visas are issued each year in the 46 countries where the UNHCR and its partners currently resettle refugees – or countries committed to welcoming refugees and recognizing their rights. Refugees have the skills to fill international skill gaps, but the systems that govern international recruitment and skilled migration put them at a disadvantage or block them out entirely because they weren't designed for people in displacement.

Talent Beyond Boundaries is the first organization worldwide dedicated to capturing skills data so that refugees can equitably compete for global jobs and skilled visas. TBB's Talent Catalogue database has catalyzed a skills-based solution to displacement for refugees who earn jobs and move on skilled visas to companies and communities in need of talent – so far, in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. TBB has established networks of employers,

governments and refugee-serving organizations including the UNHCR all working towards this solution. We connect global employers with refugees to fill their skill gaps. We use the experience of each person moving to offer actionable solutions to government partners to expand future mobility options for refugees.

These initial efforts demonstrate the promise of labour mobility. To date, 127 people supported by TBB have secured a solution to displacement and have either travelled or are waiting for visas, and 39 have already relocated. Among these, there are 61 people in a Canadian immigration process, and 15 have relocated to Canada. This is a win-win solution for individuals who advance their careers and regain secure status and livelihoods, for their family members who move with them, and for the businesses and communities that desperately need their skills.

> *"The day I learned that I got the [job] offer … it's like someone is in a deep well, and you throw a rope to him."* -Khalaf, software engineer and former Syrian refugee hired by IRESS, UK

There remain several policy barriers that prevent refugees from accessing labour mobility at scale globally. For example, applicants to work permits typically must demonstrate ability to leave at the end of the period authorized for their stay; many skilled pathways require proof of settlement funds; and almost all pathways require a valid passport. All of these requirements are uniquely difficult for refugees to meet. When barriers such as these are broken down, refugees with career aspirations across the world living in conditions where they cannot work or rebuild can have equitable access to labour mobility opportunities to transform their lives.

Governments can address these barriers. Australia and Canada have already taken actions to open skilled immigration opportunities for refugees.

All countries stand to benefit from making their skilled visa programs accessible to qualified and talented refugees. This includes advanced economies as well as middle-income countries competing to attract global talent. Governments should work together with the private sector to ensure the right policy settings are in place to enable employers to recruit refugees with the skills and talents they need, with speed and predictability, and with in-built protections for applicants. Employers and communities around the world are crying out for skills and easily see refugee talent as an asset, not a liability. Refugees are coming forward to participate in labour mobility with renewed hope. Now is the time to harness this momentum and realize the promise of labour mobility.

TBB looks at Canada's immigration program against a backdrop of 70.8 million forcibly displaced people (41.3 million internally displaced, 25.9 million refugees, 3.5 million asylum seekers). If refugees could compete for just 1% of the total economic immigration target for 2020 of 195,800 persons, close to 2,000 would have a durable solution and be contributing their skills to Canada's future.

Moving Forward – A Global Perspective

While this small-scale experimental research from Canada is still at an early stage, it has generated useful insights and lessons learned. As states move forward in facilitating employers' access to this largely untapped talent pool and making economic immigration opportunities available to more refugees, four issues warrant further consideration: partnerships, labour mobility models, engaging employers, and equitable access. These questions will be explored globally through the soon-to-be established Task Force on Third Country Employment Opportunities.

Partnerships

Matching skilled refugees with employers' needs requires partnerships that bridge from countries of asylum to different regions. On one end of the bridge are refugee-serving

organizations that identify refugees with a particular skill set, such as UNHCR and partners in asylum countries. These include organizations like RefugePoint and partners working on "livelihoods", or economic integration of refugees into asylum country labour markets. These organizations could be connected through international labour recruitment organizations such as TBB or work with domestic labour recruitment organizations that are familiar with the locally specific labour needs. Settlement organizations that serve clients pre-and post arrival, are also essential partners in helping skilled refugees and their families to settle into life in Canada or other third countries.

Labour Mobility Models

Many skilled immigrants arrive first on a temporary basis, as workers or students, and then apply for permanent residence. Others apply directly from their country of origin and arrive as permanent residents. For refugees, the latter approach offers the benefit of security and protection associated with that status and a guarantee of a durable solution; but this also comes with the disadvantage of longer wait times, as the person cannot move and begin work on an interim basis. Can the risks (for individuals and states) of refugees arriving on temporary work permits be mitigated? As complementary pathways take hold, there will be more evidence on applications for asylum by refugee temporary residents to inform this query.

Engaging Employers

Employers who have extended job offers to skilled refugees overseas are primarily motivated by their need to find the right person for a given position. While employers may also value a diverse workforce and presenting a positive corporate image, these outcomes are secondary to recruiting the right people. In a recent survey conducted by TBB, 38 representatives from 27 businesses reported their motivations for hiring candidates through TBB's program: the most common motivations were to fill skills shortages that cannot be filled locally (63%); to fulfill corporate social responsibility and purpose goals (47%); to create a talent pipeline to meet future skills needs (44%); and to meet diversity and inclusion goals (34%).

These answers indicate a business case driving employer uptake, and a potential for scaleable demand. As such, recruiting skilled refugees needs to be a competitive choice for employers vis-à-vis other forms of international recruitment. Further, employers may need extra assistance in accessing and supporting these workers, in areas such as completing the immigration process and connecting with settlement services.

Equitable Access

In its initial pilot phase Canada's EMPP research started in two regions: Jordan/Lebanon and Kenya. Looking to the future, how can more people (in more regions) become aware of economic immigration opportunities around the world? What modes of outreach are accessible, equitable and transparent? What role can and should intermediaries play? Who should fund this work? Economic immigration globally is competitive, with more people interested in migrating for opportunities than places available. Outreach has to be encouraging, yet realistic. Finally, in some settings equitable access could mean investing in refugees' education and vocational training to help both with local integration and to improve their chances of participation in labour mobility as well. These reflections imply important funding considerations for the global community.

Conclusion

The world sees great potential in complementary pathways for refugees, including labour mobility. UNHCR and other stakeholders envision that labour mobility could provide a safe future for two million persons by the end of 2028.[1] Employers and communities worldwide face ongoing labour and population shortages, even in the wake of COVID-19. As employers turn to international recruitment when suitable domestic labour cannot be found, there is a whole talent pool of refugees waiting to be discovered that is increasingly visible and accessible.

1 UNHCR, The Three-Year Strategy (2019 – 2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways.

Immigrant Labour Market Integration in Germany and Canada

Arrival. Recognition. Employment.

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Abstract

Germany and Canada are attractive destinations for skilled immigrants. Managing immigration effectively is critical for the countries' economic growth as populations age and the workforces shrink. Immigrants bring in skills and represent an immense opportunity for the receiving country; however, immigrants face an array of barriers when trying to access the labour market. Recognition of academic credentials and professional skills acquired abroad is the single most important step in overcoming these challenges and ensuring the successful integration of immigrants into the labour market.

Here, we look at examples in two countries:

1_ Germany's Network Integration through Qualification (IQ) program and recent successes to improve employment opportunities for migrants, with a special focus on the recognition of foreign qualifications;

2_ From Canada, World Education Services (WES) shares a Canadian perspective on credential recognition and new initiatives on holistic assessment; and

3_ CultureScapes Consulting shares expertise in stakeholder engagement and cross-sector collaboration as an important element in immigrant employment success.

Résumé

L'Allemagne et le Canada sont des destinations attrayantes pour les immigrants qualifiés. Une gestion efficace de l'immigration est essentielle à la croissance économique de ces pays, qui connaissent un vieillissement de leur population et une diminution de leur main-d'œuvre. Les immigrés apportent des compétences et représentent une immense richesse pour le pays d'accueil ; toutefois, ils sont confrontés à toute une série d'obstacles lorsqu'ils tentent d'accéder au marché du travail. La reconnaissance des diplômes universitaires et des compétences professionnelles acquis à l'étranger est l'étape la plus importante pour surmonter ces défis et assurer une intégration réussie des immigrants sur le marché du travail.

Nous examinons ici des exemples dans deux pays :

1_ le programme allemand Network Integration through Qualification (IQ)) et les récents succès visant à améliorer les possibilités d'emploi des migrants, en mettant l'accent sur la reconnaissance des qualifications étrangères ;

2_ au Canada, World Education Services (WES) partage une perspective canadienne sur la reconnaissance des titres de compétences et de nouvelles initiatives en matière d'évaluation holistique ; et

3_ CultureScapes Consulting partage son expertise dans l'engagement des parties prenantes et la collaboration intersectorielle en tant qu'élément important de la réussite des immigrants dans le marché de l'emploi.

Network Integration through Qualification and New Initiatives

By Anne Gueller-Frey, Network IQ, Germany

Germany is home to around 19.3 million people with a migration background and they make up about 23.6 percent of the population. A number of factors result in unemployment being roughly twice as high among people with a migration background compared to those without one. In recent years, immigration to Germany has risen significantly from other European Union (EU) countries and from war-torn regions around the world. Many of these people hold professional qualifications and other credentials that are frequently not recognized in Germany. It is therefore essential to actively tap into all available potential, particularly among people with a migration background.

The Network Integration through Qualification (IQ) works to improve employment opportunities for people with a migration background. The central objective is to ensure that professional qualifications acquired abroad more frequently lead to employment appropriate to the level of education, regardless of residence status. Seventy-two (72) advice centres for credential recognition and job training as well as 169 projects supporting training in the context of the Recognition Act have been launched across the country. Target groups include adults with a migration background living in Germany as well as newly arrived migrants regardless of residency status. The cornerstone of Network IQ's day-to-day work is the development and implementation of advice and training provisions for migrants with qualifications acquired abroad. It is engaged in seeking structural change. With its offer of intercultural training and advice related to job centres, employment offices, municipal administrations, and small and medium-sized enterprises, the Network IQ seeks to establish a culture of openness and recognition within government and business. The Network IQ runs approximately 380 subprojects and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the European Social Fund.

Recent (2015 – 2019) noteworthy results include the following:

- 247,852 initial advisory sessions on recognition and job training to facilitate recognition of foreign professional credentials;
- Approximately 67,919 constituted initial consultations and job training counselling sessions for refugees;
- Approximately 14,581 labour administration employees, mostly in job centres, have participated in training sessions on "basic intercultural awareness" with a special focus on asylum seekers and refugees;
- Approximately 20,266 people have participated in IQ job training schemes. Of those, 9,632 persons have already achieved full equivalence or met the requirements for entering the job market at a level appropriate to their qualification;
- 14,230 employees from companies and business associations have attended training courses and advisory sessions (9,535 training courses, 4,695 advisory sessions).

Many activities have been organized to offer networking and counselling opportunities to stakeholders in the field of labour market policy, with the objective of connecting labour market integration opportunities to people with a migration background in the same region and closing supply gaps.[1]

At the present time, the Network IQ is working on recruiting projects in the healthcare sector: Pilot project "Mexican doctors" and pilot project "nursing" and "geriatric care."

1 Source: Own surveys from all funded projects of the Network IQ. In addition to participation in the course based ESF qualification measures in the context of the Recognition Act, this total number includes participations in further education courses, language courses, general job coaching and in mentoring measures that are financed exclusively by federal funding).

Conditions for recruitment: No recruitment in WHO countries, in compliance with the WHO code of conduct.

Regional Skilled Worker Networks – Immigration

New in IQ are provisions for companies and skilled workers, a further priority area since 2019. Network IQ has been supporting regional structures aimed at ensuring efficient labour market integration in relation to securing a skilled workforce. “Regional skilled worker networks immigration ‘promotes regional structures that support labour market integration for securing a skilled workforce. This sets out to establish and expand networking with participating stakeholders and to better integrate information and advice provision for companies and for skilled workers. This priority area is still under development; and initial projects have been started across the country.

The New Skilled Immigration Act in Germany Since 03/2020

Labour market integration is top priority of the policy agenda given the fast-changing economic markets, skills shortages, and international and national labour mobility. Germany has critical skills shortages and positions that cannot be filled locally. It needs migrants to build the local workforce, support entrepreneurship and contribute to local communities. The Skilled Immigration Act – in force since March 2020 – creates the framework for targeted and increased immigration of skilled workers from non-EU countries. The new law expands the possibility for qualified professionals coming to work in Germany. These are skilled workers and include university graduates and employees with qualified vocational training. Central criteria: job approval and recognition of the equivalence of the vocational qualification (no language skills requirements for job approval).

Looking for Specialists? What Opportunities Does the New Skilled Immigration Act Offer?

The Skilled Immigration Act makes it easier for migrants to enter the labour market. The qualified professional must possess an employment contract, or a specific job offer, and a qualification recognized in Germany. No priority check is undertaken by the Federal Employment Agency (BA). This means that there is no check as to whether an applicant from Germany or the EU is available for the specific job. The Federal Employment Agency will still verify the employment conditions.[2]

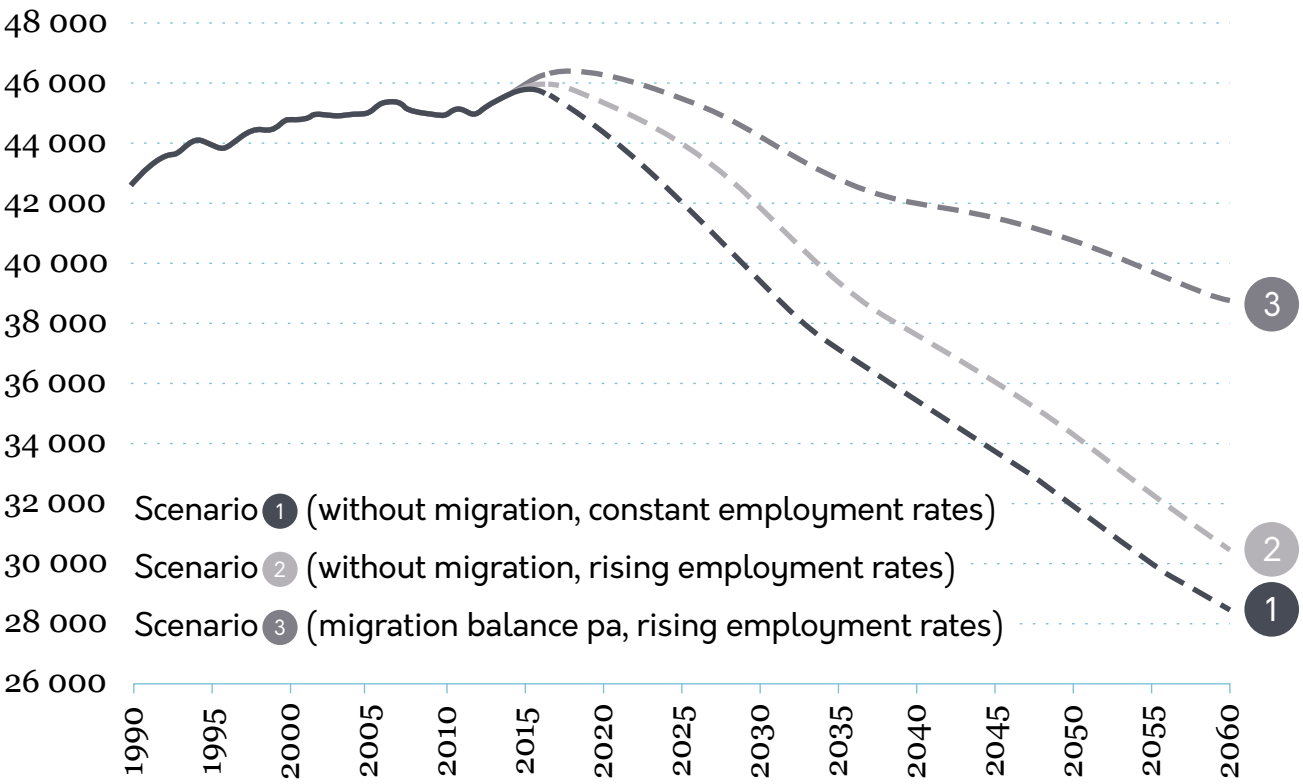
In the future, the German economy will need more skilled workers from third countries.[3]

2 More information here: www.make-it-in-Germany.com. Make it in Germany is the official website for qualified professionals which aims to provide extensive information for international qualified professionals. Make it in Germany informs people interested in migrating to Germany on how to successfully plan their move – from the preparations in their home country right through to their arrival and first steps in Germany.

3 Definition of third country: A country that is not a member of the European Union as well as a country or territory whose citizens do not enjoy the European Union right to free movement, as defined in Art. 2(5) of the Regulation (EU) 2016/399 (Schengen Borders Code). IAB Summary report 6/2017 (IAB: Research Institute of the Federal Employment Agency).

Figure 1: Employment potential till 2060

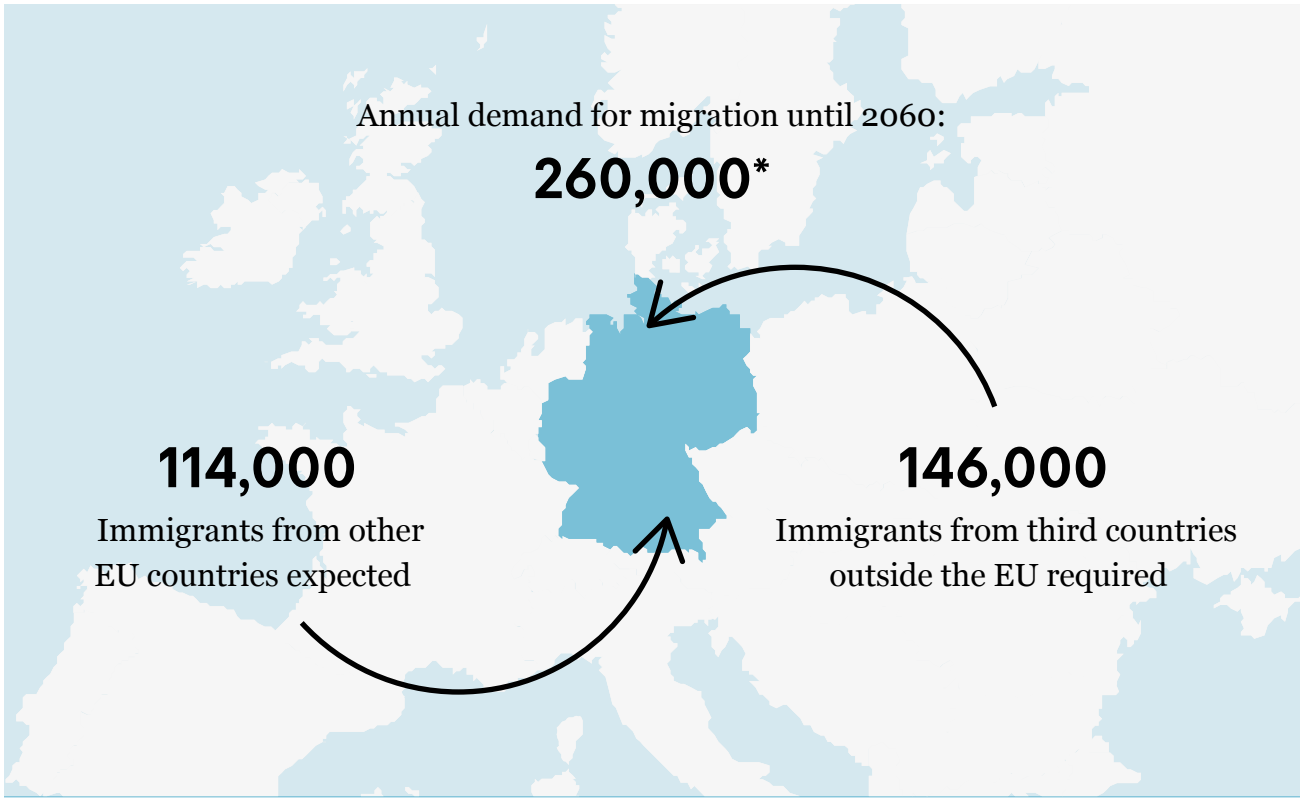
Scenarios with different assumptions, annual averages each, in 1,000 persons (Base year 2015)



Note: Scenario 3 includes an estimate for refugee immigration for 2016 and 2017. (Fuchs/Weber 2016) In addition, other net immigration includes 300,000 people in both years.

Source: Own calculation

Figure 2: German labour market requires immigration from third countries



*With a realistic increase in domestic labour force participation

Source: Fuchs, Johann; Kubis, Alexander; Schneider, Lutz (2019): *Immigration and digitalization. How much migration from third countries will the German labour market need in the future?* Bertelsmann Foundation (Editor)

Recognition of International Credentials

By Helen Seifu Wolde, World Education Services (WES), Toronto, Canada

With an aging population, Canada relies on immigration to address labour shortages, grow the economy, and drive the future. Over the past three years, Canada welcomed nearly one million immigrants, and committed itself to increasing the number of immigrants each year, as per the new immigration plan (2020 – 2022).[1] Almost 60 percent of new immigrants coming through the economic pipeline are highly skilled – more than 50 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher.[2] Despite the demonstrated need for immigrants in the labour market, a disconnect remains between immigrants' skills and employer recognition of those skills. One of the major challenges is the lack of recognition of international credentials and experience.

For immigrants, evaluation of international credentials is so often the starting point towards long-term suitable employment because it provides the translation or "proof" of one's qualifications in a way that can be easily understood. Recognition of academic credentials is the catalyst for pursuing suitable employment, further education, and licensing.

World Education Services (WES) is dedicated to helping individuals achieve their higher education and professional goals by evaluating and advocating for the recognition of international education qualifications. Over the years, WES built a robust database that contains information on more than 220 countries and jurisdictions; 48,000 educational institutions; 22,000 credentials and equivalencies; and 4,300 grading scales. Based on this in-depth

1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Supplementary Information 2019 – 2021 Immigration Levels Plan

2 2018 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration

knowledge of the international education system, WES determines the Canadian equivalency based on the level, scope and intent of the program completed. A WES credential evaluation report provides a comparison of international academic accomplishments to Canadian or U.S. equivalency using quality and rigorous evaluation procedures. WES' gold standard in the evaluation of credentials globally has gained the trust and credibility from partners, including about 2,500 institutions across the U.S. and Canada. A WES credential evaluation report opens doors to opportunity for skilled immigrants to purse higher education, employment, or gain licensure in their field of study.

Underemployment a Critical Issue

Even with strong academic credential evaluation and recognition, the underemployment of skilled immigrants remains a barrier to integration. In 2019, WES released research based on data collected in 2018 from a survey of more than 6,400 individuals who had applied to WES between 2013 and 2015 for an Educational Credential Assessment (ECA) required as part of their immigration application. Survey findings show that respondents were highly educated and experienced but were often underemployed.[3] For instance, only 47.2 percent were working in the same sector as they were pre-migration. Only 39.1 percent had jobs with duties mainly similar in type and complexity to their pre-immigration jobs. Moreover, 31.8 percent of respondents were overqualified for their jobs (as defined by Statistics Canada as having a university degree or higher and working at a job that only requires a high school degree or on-the-job training).

Furthermore, immigrants with regulated professionals were less likely to be employed in commensurate employment. On the other hand, those with education or experience in Canada were more likely to be working in commensurate employment. Over-reliance on Canadian

3 Who is Succeeding in the Canadian Labour Market? Predictors of Career Success for Skilled Immigrants. 2019. World Education Services

experience and devaluing of international experience continue to present a challenge to the integration of much-needed immigrant talent into Canada's labour market.[4]

The biggest challenge that we're seeing now that we can address practically and immediately is: how do we ensure that the skills people bring with them are recognized and trusted? How can we get them into the labour market as quickly as possible and help employers get what they're looking for?

Moving Beyond Academic Credentials

Although credential assessment is an essential component of the recognition of immigrant talent, there's more to what an internationally trained candidate can bring to an organization: skills and experience. We need to look more holistically at what an individual can contribute to address the shift in hiring practices. More employers are looking at skills-based hiring, rather than a more traditional reliance on formal credentials. The skills required are going to change significantly with the rise of technological advancements, automation, and artificial intelligence. The labour market is shifting towards "new collar" jobs, as coined by IBM executive chair, Ginni Rometty: high-demand tech jobs in the new economy that do not require a four-year degree or higher.

This enhanced idea of assessment and recognition is expressed well by Jeff Weiner, CEO of LinkedIn: "It's not skills at the exclusion of degrees. It's just expanding our perspective to go beyond degrees."[5]

4 Ibid.

5 Beyond Academic Credentials – Toward Competency-Informed Hiring. 2019. World Education Services

The Way Forward

Now, we're facing an entirely new normal in our economy due to COVID-19. The pandemic has a huge impact on the economy and populations, especially vulnerable groups including immigrants. Canada's unemployment rate has ballooned from 5.6 percent in February (prior to widespread economic impact in Canada due to the pandemic) to 13.6 percent in May 2020.[6]

Immigration will be critical to Canada's economic recovery and so the country's future depends on the ability of employers to assess, recognize, hire, and integrate immigrants. As we rebuild the economy, employers will need to look beyond the traditional model of who you know, and familiar credentials and experience. Competency-informed assessment can improve employer confidence in immigrant job candidates' skills, knowledge, experience, and judgment – irrespective of where these competencies were obtained or developed.

6 Statistics Canada

Stakeholder Engagement and Cross-Sector Collaboration

By Linda M. Manning, Ph.D., CultureScapes Consulting

In recent years, in recognition of the growing labour and skills shortages worldwide, the response was to focus on improving employment outcomes for immigrants by preparing and shaping immigrants to fit into the host country's workplace.[1] [2] These are important interventions, but they alone do not ensure successful employment outcomes such as job attainment, job retention and career advancement. Some immigrant employment initiatives consider employers as primary stakeholders, but only in terms of what improvements immigrant candidates need to make them attractive candidates.[3] The missing link is long-term mutually beneficial partnerships with employers.

Few organizations who are looking for qualified talent, sometimes urgently, have the organizational culture and structure to promote successful employment outcomes for both the newcomer and their company. Two innovative constructs to support employers since the early 2000s are the recognition of international credentials, and reskilling/upskilling for immigrant job seekers. Recognizing international credentials has been an enormous hurdle and has transformed the services of organizations like WES. Fifteen years ago, to fill an educational requirement of one or two courses required 4 – 5 years of university. Today with foreign credentials recognition and specially designed certificate and upskilling programs, gaps can

1 Drolet, J., Hamilton, L., Esses, V. & Wright, J. (2016). Geographies of (im) migration to Canada and Alberta: Improving understanding of social and economic factors driving migration patterns. Report written for the Government of Alberta.

2 McHugh, M. & Challinor, A. E. (2011). Improving Immigrants' Employment Prospects through Work-Focused Language Instruction. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

3 Newcomer Employment Integration: Peterborough, Northumberland, Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton (2018).

be closed more quickly. Employment training and supports further increase the potential attractiveness and retention of international job seekers, especially in industries experiencing well-documented labour and skills shortages. The problem is that all this effort does not eliminate the barriers for employers. They need supports and training to reduce unconscious bias that unintentionally prevents them from hiring badly needed immigrant talent.[4]

Organizational culture is a real thing. It defines organizational values, decisions, processes and practices. Most employees cannot describe these with clarity, as they are "known" without knowing. Most employers do not have the knowledge or skills to get out of their own way when it comes to hiring people who are not like them. In fact, there is evidence that hiring practices have not worked well for quite some time and it is worthwhile to consider rethinking how things are done.

Employers' Role in Successful Employment Outcomes

Employers often view hiring an immigrant as higher risk, with the usual concerns about language, knowledge and skills gaps. They worry about the cost of turnover, and rightly so. Conservatively, replacing an average employee will cost an employer about 1.5 times their annual salary. So, if an employee makes $50,000, they can expect to lose $75,000 finding, hiring and training their replacement.[5]

Turnover among migrant employees does tend to be higher than native-born workers. Unconscious bias is at work again, and migrants experience lower levels of on- and off-the-job embeddedness. Organizations may be able to retain migrant employees through mentoring, socialization, work-life balance, and community involvement initiatives designed

4 Manning, L. M. (2011, Spring). Disarming Culture Traps. Canadian Diversity. 9(1): 61 – 64.

5 Randstad Report: Reduce employee turnover and stop your best employees from quitting.

to increase both on- and off-the-job embeddedness[6], but this does not happen without a change in organizational culture.

While there is evidence of a higher rate of turnover among migrants, it is important to consider what the turnover rates are for employees in general. For example, only about one third of U.S. companies report monitoring hiring practice success; few do carefully, and only a minority track cost per hire and time to hire. Imagine if the CEO asked how an advertising campaign had gone, and the response was: "We have a good idea how long it took to roll out and what it cost, but we haven't looked to see whether we're selling more."[7]

In a recent survey by Express Employment Professionals,[8] 22% of business leaders said the average tenure at their companies was less than three years – not among immigrant employees, but among all employees. And according to a catalyst survey, over a third (38.6%) of turnover in 2018 represented employees leaving in their first year.[9]

Over 77% of voluntary turnover is preventable and relates to factors driven by corporate culture such as career development opportunities, work environment, management behaviour, job characteristics, compensations and benefits, and work-life balance.[10]

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6 Halvorson, B., Kulik, C. & Treuren, G. (2010). Retaining migrant employees: Reducing turnover using Job Embeddedness Theory. Presented at Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management, Adelaide. December.

7 Capelli, P. (2019). Your Approach to Hiring is All Wrong. Harvard Business Review.

8 Stoller, B. (2019). New Survey: Employee Turnover on the Rise.

9 Employees are at a high risk for turnover their first year, and almost half (43%) of those who left did so in the first 90 days. Retrieved from www.catalyst.org (2020).

10 Thomas F. Mahan, Danny Nelms, Christopher Ryan Bearden, and Brantley Pearce, 2019 Retention Report: Trends, Reasons & A Call to Action (Work Institute, 2019).

There are three motives (or a combination) that drive hiring immigrants:

- Corporate Social Responsibility (e.g., it's the right thing to do; community good will, etc.);
- Compliance with diversity and other regulations (e.g., there's a penalty if we don't);
- Self-interest (e.g., driven by profit, business growth and sustainability).

Cross-sectoral partnerships that incorporate all three of these into building employer engagement will have greater success in creating employment outcomes that align with economic, social, and political goals. Building those partnerships requires a recognition of organizational culture and norms; a shared purpose and desired outcomes that are measurable; evidence of attribution; and an intentional long-term relationship-building approach.

Employer (and other stakeholders) engagement is vital to successful employment outcomes for immigrants as well as organizational capacity growth, and unless the relationship focus moves from social justice and compliance to self-interest, a hire is a one-off. Experienced ISOs hire business relationship managers and create strategic outreach activities.

Building Relationships

A first step is to consider what relationships there are, and what relationships are desired depending on organizational goals.

Consider the following roles that employers might play:[11]

- Stakeholders: have something to gain from hiring immigrants and provide input when asked;

11 McLeod, D. & Hughes, M. (2005). What we know about working with employers: a synthesis of LSDA work on employer engagement, London: LSDA

- Consumers: they need qualified talent; they might be in it for the talent or for the "right thing to do" but they show up because they want or need something;
- Strategic partners: consider their relationship with the ISO as essential to their own bottom line and long-termsustainability. They participate and contribute to ISO activities – not just by showing up for events, but initiating and participating, and offering ideas and best practices.

The Employer Engagement Continuum

It may be useful to consider different stages[12] of employer engagement as a way to begin measuring the level of relationship that exists and what kind of activities might move them to the next level. The more the ISO is seen as a trustworthy resource, the more the relationship advances and employers begin, for example, to act as ambassadors for the program by recommending it to other employers and by actively supporting ISO activities.

Figure 1 : Employer Engagement Continuum

An example from a mentoring program illustrates how the relationship can develop. Outreach targeted employers in specific fields – to raise awareness. Events were organized to serve employer needs. Conversations increased (exploration). Employers became repeat mentors and participated in interviews and workshops (expansion). The agency became the go-to source for finding talent and employers became ambassadors (commitment).

12 Claycomb, C. & Frankwick, G. L. (2010). Buyers' perspectives of buyer – seller relationship development, Industrial Marketing Management 39:252 – 263

Where do you start?

Building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with employers may seem beyond the capacity of many immigrant-serving organizations. These relationships benefit all other stakeholders, and it's one of the main reasons that collaboration across sectors is so important. Working together, specializing, working toward a shared purpose, and communicating and sharing resources, will serve everyone, and especially job-seeking newcomers.

There are a number of successful models already in place in Canada. Some of the key findings are:

- Present internationally trained clients as hardworking, responsible, professional, knowledgeable, strong candidates for jobs and careers that fit their education, expertize and interests;
- Consider employers as partners – not just targets for hiring clients; and dedicate resources for relationship building. Include employer training and collaboration in your projects.
- Document and analyze metrics of desired and unexpected outcomes (i.e., evaluate)! Attribution is essential.

Every word of this document was written through the haze of the "new" (as yet unknown) normal' of COVID-19. Strong relationships already built will carry through; and many employers are looking for ways to go forward.

According to Randstad[13], at the same time that the economy has been hit hard by the pandemic, ten of the most critical sectors are surging and continue to actively hire right now: essential retail, such as grocers and pharmacies; banking and finance; telecommunications; customer service; public health and government; healthcare; manufacturing in consumer goods and health supplies; engineering and architecture; technology and IT; and news and publishing.

13 Randstad (2020). Industries that are trending during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 2

Education & Integration:
A Two-Way Street

Éducation et intégration :
une voie à double sens

A Snapshot of Progress:

The Development of English and Arabic Language and Literacy Skills of Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Canada

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Abstract

Language and literacy skills are crucial for academic achievement and overall well-being of refugee students. In particular, acquisition of the majority language (L2) and maintenance of the heritage language (L1) are key to achieving optimal acculturation outcomes. In this study, we examined the performance of Syrian refugee children and youth aged 6 to 14 years on measures of word reading, vocabulary and reading comprehension in both English and Arabic. All children were assessed at two time points approximately one year apart. Findings revealed significant improvement in students' English language and literacy skills, and a significant reduction in the gap in performance relative to monolingual English speakers. In addition, the results revealed significant gains in Arabic language and literacy skills over time. Implications of the findings are discussed as are recommendations for promoting language and literacy skills in English and Arabic among Syrian refugee children and youth.

Résumé

Les compétences linguistiques et l'alphabétisation sont essentielles à la réussite scolaire et le bien-être général des élèves réfugiés. En particulier, l'acquisition de la langue majoritaire (L2) et le maintien de la langue d'origine (L1) sont essentiels pour obtenir des résultats optimaux en matière d'acculturation. Dans cette étude, nous avons examiné les performances des enfants et des jeunes réfugiés syriens âgés de 6 à 14 ans au niveau de la lecture des mots, le vocabulaire et la compréhension de la lecture en anglais et en arabe. Tous les enfants ont été évalués à deux moments différents, à environ un an d'intervalle. Les résultats ont révélé une amélioration significative des compétences des élèves en anglais et en littératie, ainsi qu'une réduction significative de l'écart de performance par rapport aux anglophones monolingues. En outre, les résultats ont révélé des progrès significatifs quant aux compétences en langue arabe et à l'alphabétisation au fil du temps. L'article traite de la portée des résultats et présente des recommandations visant à promouvoir les compétences linguistiques et l'alphabétisation en anglais et en arabe chez les enfants et les jeunes réfugiés syriens.

"For refugees, better language learning means better integration." – Romero-Hernandez, Citizens for Public Justice, 2020

Canada is home to many immigrants and refugees seeking a better quality of life through participation in educational and economic improvement opportunities or as asylum seekers following the outbreak of war or natural disasters (Challinor, 2011; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], 2018). As immigrants and refugees acclimate in the host country, acculturation occurs as a result of cross-cultural contact. Optimal acculturation outcomes are associated with integration. Integration occurs when the acculturating individual can identify with the host culture yet maintain their heritage culture (Lindner et al., in press).

Language and literacy contribute to integration. For immigrants and refugees, acquisition of language and literacy in the majority language is key to social engagement, employment and academic success in the host country (Cummins, 2005; Lindner et al., in press; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). At the same time, maintenance of the first language (L1) among resettled populations is important to preserve cultural and faith-based ties (Turjoman, 2017). In addition, L1 language and literacy skills can serve as a foundation on which to build second language (L2) skills. This is known as cross-language transfer (Cummins, 2008). With this in mind, we monitored the Arabic and English language and literacy progress of 122 Syrian refugee children and youth between the ages of six and 14 living in Toronto, Edmonton and Waterloo over a period of one year. Our study focused on vocabulary, word reading and reading comprehension in both languages. The sample was further divided into three groups according to age (youngest, middle and oldest) to determine how age influenced refugee students' levels of proficiency.

Dual Language Development of Refugee Children and Youth

There are two distinct levels of language proficiency: basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1979; 2008). BICS refers to functional fluency, the language skills required for day-to-day social interactions whereas CALP refers to the complex language learned in the classroom. The BICS and CALP distinction is a key concept to keep in mind when examining child language competence within a refugee population. Research evidence estimates that it takes approximately two years to develop BICS but 5 – 7 years to develop academic language in a total immersion setting (Cummins, 2008).

Majority language acquisition is a challenge faced by all immigrant and refugee children. However, refugee students face additional, unique challenges that adversely influence their language learning. These challenges include reduced psychological well-being due to trauma, interrupted schooling and late L2 acquisition (Clark, 2017; Ghosh et al., 2019). Refugee children and youth often experience interrupted schooling as they flee their war-torn country and seek asylum in receiving countries. Due to limited education, refugee students often lack opportunities to acquire complex language in their L1 which may interfere with acquisition in L2 (Cummins, 2008). Limited education impacts older children in particular. Without a solid L1 base on which to build L2 academic skills, older children begin school in the host country at a disadvantage relative to their same-age L1 peers. Catch-up is more difficult for them, as the gap in knowledge and skills between these children and their classmates is larger than the gap between younger children and their classmates. In addition, the rate of language acquisition is negatively impacted by age, so older children will generally require more time to learn the L2 (Collier & Thomas, 1989; Miller et al., 2005; Paradis et al., 2019). Yet these children will face the pressure of having to acquire complex language within a limited time frame in order to meet the learning expectations of the upper grades, such as mastery of high-level content vocabulary (e.g., literary, mathematical, and scientific language) and learning strategies (Jowett, 2020; Robertson & Lafond, 2008; Stewart & Martin, 2018).

Among the most important skills children acquire in school is reading comprehension, the ability to understand text. It is critical to both academic success and general well-being (Lervåg et al., 2018). Reading comprehension is the product of two broad component skills: word reading and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Word reading is the ability to accurately identify words in print. Language comprehension is the ability to derive meanings from words in sentences. Language comprehension includes vocabulary or word knowledge. Research indicates that word reading plays an important role in L1 and L2 reading comprehension in young readers (Farrell et al., 2019; Verhoeven & Van Leeuwe, 2008). Over time, vocabulary plays a greater role in supporting reading comprehension with gains in word knowledge leading to gains in reading comprehension (Clarke et al., 2010).

Research indicates that as L2 acquisition progresses, the risk of first language attrition (FLA) arises, threatening refugees' connection to their heritage language, faith, culture, and identity (Haman et al., 2017). FLA is the gradual decline in one's L1 due to frequent use of, and exposure to, the L2 (Yagmur, 1997). Young children are more susceptible to FLA (Park, 2018). Yet Syrian refugee families are highly motivated to maintain their home language while acquiring the majority language (Lindner et al., in press). Success in doing so would strongly favour integration – the optimal acculturation outcome – yet research monitoring majority and minority language outcomes of refugees over time is lacking. Therefore, we tracked refugee children and adolescents' progress in language and literacy in English and Arabic. In addition, we assessed the impact of age on the outcomes.

The Present Study

In our study, we assessed Syrian refugee children and youth on vocabulary, word reading and reading comprehension at two time points, approximately one year apart. All measures were given in both English and Arabic. The tasks used to assess word reading ability involved the student identifying letters and words. The vocabulary tasks required students to demonstrate understanding of the meanings of words presented to them orally. The reading comprehension tasks required the children to answer comprehension questions about short passages of text they had read.

Our first goal in conducting this study was to determine whether refugee students' performance improved over time. It is important to note that about 30% of the participants in our study experienced some degree of interrupted schooling. A second goal was to investigate the influence of age on proficiency levels. Hence, we divided our sample of 122 participants into three age groups, the youngest group (42 children, aged between 6 years and 8 years, 5 months), the middle age group (50 children, aged between 8 years, 6 months and 11 years) and the oldest group (30 children, aged between 11 and 13 years, 6 months). Dividing our sample into age groups allowed us to address the third objective of our study: to assess the effect of age on the rate of improvement over time.

Statistical analyses were performed using raw and standard scores (SS) obtained from the measures. Raw scores are the total number of items the student answered correctly, so higher scores represent better performance. Standard scores, derived from raw scores, situate the student's score in relation to the scores of monolingual children of the same age. Standard scores of the English measures have a mean of 100. A standard score of 85, for example, indicates that the child performed better than only 16 percent of their monolingual English-speaking peers. While both raw and standard scores were available for the English measures, only raw scores were available for the Arabic measures.

English Language and Literacy Skills

Figure 1 depicts the raw scores of the three English measures. As shown in this figure, there were significant improvements in performance on all of the English measures over time. In other words, refugee children provided more correct responses on the English measures at the second time point than they did at the first time point. When the performance levels of the three age groups were compared, the oldest group performed better than the other two groups on the word reading and reading comprehension tasks, whereas no significant differences were observed on the vocabulary task among the three age groups. Finally, when the rates of growth across the three age groups were compared, the children in the youngest group improved on vocabulary and reading comprehension at a faster rate than the middle and oldest groups within the same time period. In contrast, the three age groups made similar gains on English word reading from Time 1 to Time 2.

The standard scores of the three English measures are displayed in Figure 2. Significant increases were observed in standard scores from Time 1 to Time 2, indicating that all students reduced the gap with their monolingual English-speaking peers. Despite the progress, refugee children remained well below the monolingual mean (below 100) across the board. Thus, the gap was reduced but not closed. Here, the comparison of the standard scores among the three age groups revealed that in general, the oldest group had lower standard scores than the middle group, which also scored lower than the youngest group. This pattern suggests that the gap with monolingual English-speaking children was the largest for the oldest group and smallest for the youngest group. When growth rates were compared across the three groups, the oldest group demonstrated a faster rate of growth on the reading comprehension measure than the other age groups within the same time period. Thus, despite their lower starting point, the oldest group demonstrated the largest potential for growth on reading comprehension. The growth rates were similar for the three age groups on word reading and vocabulary.

Figure 1: Performance (Raw Scores) of English Measures over Time by Age Groups

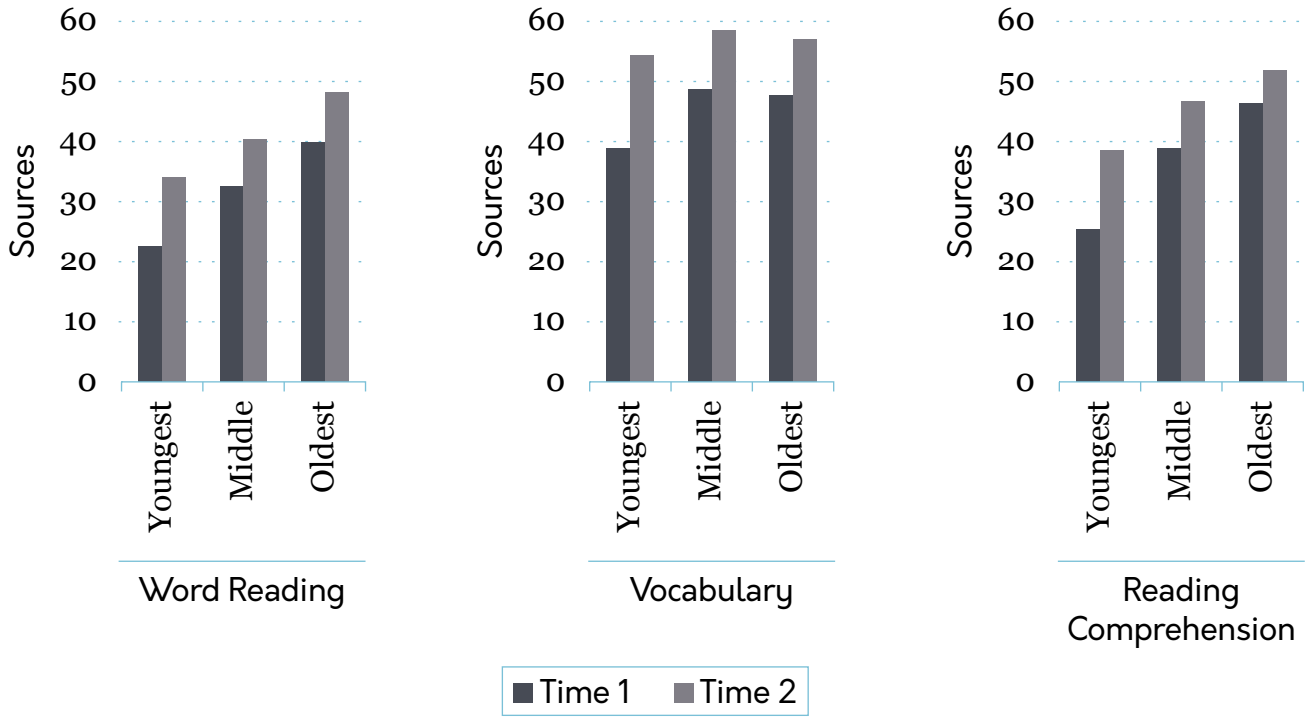
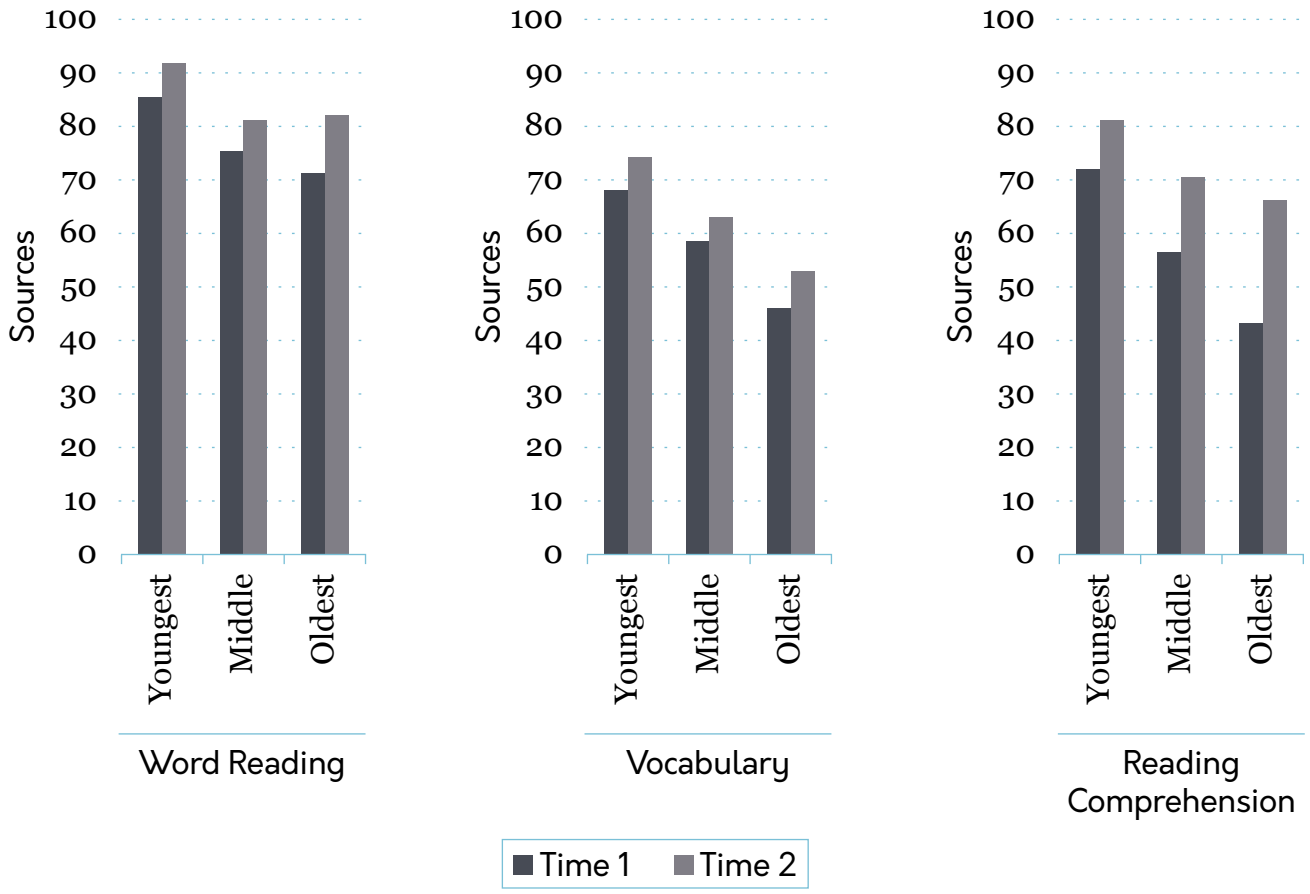


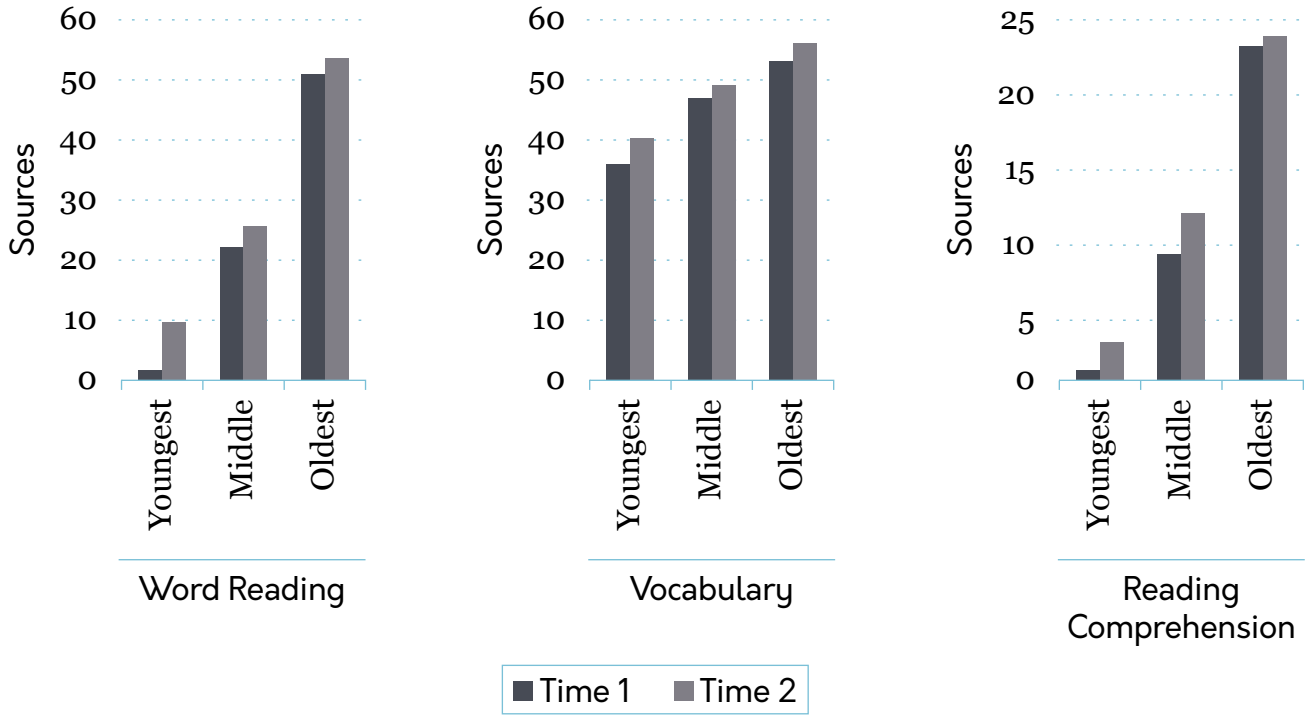
Figure 2: Performance (Standard Scores) of English Measures over Time by Age Groups



Arabic Language and Literacy Skills

The raw scores of the Arabic measures are portrayed in Figure 3. Refugee children and youth showed significant improvement in Arabic word reading, vocabulary and reading comprehension over time. In terms of age effects, the scores of the oldest group were the highest, followed by the middle group, and then the youngest group. Finally, the three age groups made similar progress from Time 1 to Time 2.

Figure 3: Performance (Raw Scores) of Arabic Measures over Time by Age Groups



Discussion

This study examined word reading, vocabulary and reading comprehension skills of Syrian refugee children and youth in both English and Arabic over time. The results provided evidence of significant gains in proficiency in both the majority language (L2) and maintenance of the heritage language (L1). Moreover, age was found to play a role in outcomes, both in terms of absolute scores and gains over time. Overall, increases in proficiency levels in both languages among all age groups suggest that Syrian refugee children in Canada might be making strides towards integration.

Our findings on the English measures revealed significant improvement in language and literacy skills, as all three age groups obtained higher raw scores over time. Importantly, all three age groups also made important gains in terms of standard scores, suggesting that they were able to reduce the gap between their levels of proficiency and those of their monolingual

English-speaking peers. These findings are encouraging as they indicate that our public schools are effective in promoting English language and literacy skills among Syrian refugee children and youth. Many participants in our study attended language and literacy support programs, such as the English as a Second Language (ESL) program and the Literacy Enrichment Academic Program in Ontario and the ESL program in Alberta (Edmonton Public School Board, 2013; Toronto District School Board, 2014). It would seem that these support programs succeed in helping this vulnerable refugee population. However, the standard scores obtained on all three English measures fell below 100, which is the average score of monolingual English speakers. Thus, while the Syrian refugee children and youth managed to reduce the gap relative to English monolinguals, they had yet to close it. This finding was expected given the limited time these children had spent in Canada.

Interestingly, when we compared the standard scores on the three English tests, we found that the students performed better on word reading than on vocabulary or reading comprehension. This pattern of results is consistent with patterns observed in previous studies involving L2 learners (August & Shanahan, 2006). Word reading skills are typically acquired after a couple of years of school instruction. Moreover, for children who have mastered word reading skills in their L1, cross-language transfer facilitates the development of the same skills in their L2 (Cummins, 2008). Vocabulary, on the other hand, requires a great deal of L2 input so it takes time to develop a level of proficiency comparable to that of an L1 speaker. Since reading comprehension requires both word reading and vocabulary, as well as higher-level skills such as reading strategies (Mckee, 2012; Nation, 2019; Ouellette, 2006), it also has a much slower trajectory for L2 learners than word reading. As such, special attention should be given to vocabulary and reading comprehension instruction in English language arts classes. Explicit, systematic instruction in these areas has been shown to benefit all students, but to be essential for children who lag behind (Graves et al., 2012; Gunderson et al.,2019).

With respect to age effects, the results on raw scores showed that overall, older children outperformed younger children on all three English measures. This means that older children could read and understand more words, and comprehend more complex text than younger

children. The pattern is reversed, however, for standard scores, with younger children performing better than children in the older groups on all measures. The standard scores indicated that older children experienced a larger gap in skills relative to their English-speaking peers than did their younger counterparts. These results are expected for several reasons. First, older children were more likely to experience interrupted schooling before they arrived in Canada so would not have acquired the foundational skills needed to support learning in the middle and upper elementary grades. Once here, they must learn the basic academic skills normally acquired in the earlier grades before progressing to the complex academic skills expected of older students. They also faced the added pressure of having less time to catch up to their English-speaking peers within the school system (Jowett, 2020; Wofford & Tibi, 2008). Due to these challenges, additional instructional support needs to be provided to older refugee children to ensure academic success and support integration.

When we compared the rate of growth across the three groups, we found that the youngest age group developed their vocabulary and reading comprehension skills at a faster rate than the two other age groups. These larger gains in raw scores can be explained by some of the same reasons outlined above. Because the youngest group was not old enough to enroll in school before arriving in Canada, they were least likely to have experienced interrupted schooling. As a result, they were more or less at the same starting point as English-speaking children in terms of years of school instruction and were better positioned than the older refugee groups to make progress. The youngest group also started learning English at an earlier age than the older groups. This early start put them in a more advantageous position in language learning (Collier & Thomas, 1989; Isphording, 2015; Miller et al., 2005; Paradis et al., 2019). This may also explain why the raw scores on the vocabulary measure were comparable in the younger and older groups. Relatedly, the skills children have to acquire in the early grades are more basic than those in higher grades. It is important to emphasize though that older refugee children also demonstrated potential to develop their language and literacy skills. For example, the oldest group made the most gains in standard scores on reading comprehension, suggesting that they were able to reduce the gap relative to their English-speaking peers over time.

The refugee children and youth demonstrated considerable progress in word reading, vocabulary and reading comprehension in Arabic, with all three age groups achieving higher levels of performance at Time 2. In terms of age effects, the oldest children performed better than the middle group, which in turn outperformed the youngest group. It is also worth noting that the three age groups grew at similar rates over time. This growth pattern is particularly impressive for the youngest group because children in this group had spent about half of their lifetime in an English-majority environment. Our findings offer clear evidence for successful heritage language maintenance. This success may be attributed to parents' strong motivation to maintain their heritage language as a way to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity (Lindner et al., forthcoming). As well, as parents settled in the host country, they gradually became aware of the programs available to support their children's L1 development. For instance, in Toronto, more students were enrolled in a heritage class and were attending an afterschool program providing Arabic language support at the time of the second assessment than they were when first assessed. The value of preserving the L1 cannot be understated from the perspective of acculturation. Integration, which is associated with positive acculturation outcomes, results when newcomers identify with the receiving culture while maintaining their heritage culture identity. Ensuring proficiency in language and literacy in both the majority and minority language is an important means to achieving this end.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, we offer several strategies and suggestions to facilitate refugees' integration through continued acquisition of L1 and L2. First, it is recommended that educators pay special attention to older children by providing extra English language support in the classroom and after school. One way to provide this support is to provide ample guided practice when presenting new material. Providing additional explanations and examples, spending more time asking questions and encouraging students to ask questions, checking for student understanding, and spending time correcting errors and providing feedback are all effective strategies that can be implemented in the classroom (Rosenshine, 2012).

Another way to enhance language skills is through small group instruction. Studies have shown that frequent small group and one-on-one reading instruction is particularly effective in promoting reading success, especially for students with limited reading skills (e.g., Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). Another approach that may support older refugee students is the provision of co-op programs in high schools that offer students workplace opportunities. Through such programs, which are currently offered in a number of high schools in Canada, refugee youth are supported in developing their L2 skills, potentially easing the school-to-work transition.

A second recommendation is to focus on the domain of vocabulary, as it is essential in developing reading comprehension skills. Effective vocabulary instruction strategies to enrich ELLs' word banks include exposing children to rich language through shared and independent reading. Another effective strategy is to provide both a definition, including synonyms and antonyms, and examples of the word in context when teaching individual words. Providing more information about words than a simple definition has proven to reinforce a word's meaning for all students (Beck et al., 2013; Graves et al., 2012). Other strategies proven to be effective are the use of visual aids to explain words (e.g., adjectives) and the use of games as tools for teaching and reviewing vocabulary (Abebe & Davidson, 2012; Uberman, 1998). Additionally, direct instruction in morphology (i.e., identifying roots, prefixes, suffixes) would be beneficial in helping students understand word formation rules in English and the relationships between complex words of the same family (e.g., friend vs. friendly vs. unfriendly). An activity that teachers can implement would involve having students build complex words using cards with prefixes, roots and suffixes (Graves et al., 2012).

Third, several strategies are proposed to promote word reading and reading comprehension skills. Direct, systematic and explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondence, known as phonics, is effective in enhancing word reading skills (National Reading Panel, 2000). One approach is phonics through spelling; to identify words, students learn to use familiar words to identify unfamiliar words in the same word family (National Institute for Literacy, 2006). With respect to reading comprehension, teachers can ask students to retell a story

they have read. Retell requires students to plan, order, identify and summarize main points, and make inferences, all of which are important comprehension strategies that allow students to achieve deeper understanding of the text (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007; Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

It is fundamental to maintain growth in the Arabic language and literacy skills of young refugees through exposure and use in multiple contexts (Holmes, 2013). These contexts include media, education, religion, the extended community, neighbours, friends and family (Abdelhadi, 2017). The family plays a vital role in the maintenance of the heritage language and research suggests the value of encouraging use of Arabic in the home in parent-child interactions (Lindner et al., in press). Parents may also encourage their children to attend religious or Arabic education classes offered in the community. Furthermore, it is important for parents to pay special attention to younger children as they are likely to have had less exposure to the L1 than their older siblings. Parents are encouraged to expose their children to media in standard Arabic, such as age-appropriate TV programming, as it is an effective tool to teach language and literacy skills (Al-Harbi, 2015). An example is Iftah Ya Simsim, which is the Arabic adaptation of Sesame Street. Iftah Ya Simsim was also created to "cultivate Arab values and culture" (Ghazal, 2013). Therefore, media is an important vehicle for the transmission of cultural heritage, as well as language (Abdelhadi, 2017).

Educators can play a role in promoting refugees' L1 maintenance by strategically embedding its use in the classroom. For example, they can provide text with dual-language print and possibly have refugee students create their own dual language glossary and dual language books (Cummins, 2001). Another approach that is effective in improving vocabulary and reading skills is the use of note cards, a fast and simple means to review and retain words (Basoglu & Akdemir, 2010). Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers encourage parents to read to their children in their home language as it will strengthen their L1 language skills (Dixon & Wu, 2014).

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Flight from School:

Why do Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth Skip School?

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Abstract

Truancy is a problem with far-reaching consequences. It results in low academic achievement, alienation, unemployment, substance abuse, and delinquency. In this paper Dr. Nakhaie highlight the influence of acculturation, discrimination, socio-economic and refugee statuses on truancy among recent immigrant and refugee students, ages 14 to 24, who attended schools in a medium-size city in Canada.

Résumé

L'absentéisme scolaire est un problème aux conséquences considérables. Il se traduit par de faibles résultats scolaires, l'aliénation, le chômage, la toxicomanie et la délinquance. Dans cet article, Dr. Nakhaie souligne l'influence de l'acculturation, de la discrimination, du statut socio-économique et du statut de réfugié sur l'absentéisme scolaire chez les élèves immigrants et réfugiés récents, âgés de 14 à 24 ans, qui ont fréquenté des écoles dans une ville de taille moyenne au Canada.

Canada is ethno-racially diverse and is perceived as a world leader in welcoming immigrants (Biles, Burstein, and Frideres 2008). In accommodating diversity, Canadian governments have reformed previous discriminatory immigration policies and concurrently institutionalized equity, multicultural, and language policies, with the intention of creating a society that is welcoming towards and provides opportunities for the success of diverse ethno-racial immigrants and refugees. Perhaps because of these more immigrant-friendly policies, by 2016, 22.3% of the Canadian population was composed of immigrants and racialized minorities (Statistics Canada 2016). Between 2008 and 2017, an average of 266,059 immigrants and refugees entered Canada each year, 160,561 of whom were economic immigrants and 71,749 were sponsored family members. Among these, 13% of the former and 17.5% of the latter were 15 to 24 years old (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada [IRCC] 2017).

Canada is also a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which obliges Canada to accept a certain quota of refugees each year. Between 2008 and 2017, on average 30,108 newcomers entered Canada per year as refugees and protected persons. Among these, 26.8% were 15 to 24 years old (IRCC 2017). Refugees' country of origin varied depending on factors such as economic stagnation, conflict, and governmental policies. For example, since 1980, Iraq has been involved in several wars and internal conflicts, resulting in large numbers of Iraqis moving to Canada. From 1980 to 2012, there were 67,263 Iraqi permanent residents in Canada, 60% of whom were refugees (IRCC 2012). Similarly, 59,875 refugees, of which 46.3% were government-assisted refugees, arrived from Syria between November 2015 and September 2018 due to civil war in Syria and the Canadian government's policy initiative related to this group (IRCC 2018b).

According to the 2016 Census, 48.8% of economic immigrants, 23.5% of sponsored immigrants, and only 17.3% of refugees have a bachelor's degree or higher. This figure is 19.4% for non-immigrants. Among the 154,495 refugees who arrived in Canada between January 2015 and March 2020, only 8.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher (IRCC 2018a). This figure is identical to that of Syrian refugees (IRCC 2018b). Once in Canada, refugee youth

also have lower educational attainment when compared to all other newcomer youth. According to the 2016 Census, among the 15 – 24 age group, 13.7% of economic immigrants, 7.7% of sponsored immigrants, and only 5.9% of refugees have a bachelor's degree or higher. This figure is 7.7% for non-immigrant youth. Although a plethora of factors account for low education in general and among newcomer refugee youth in particular, school absenteeism plays an important role. In this paper, I will focus on the role of acculturation, discrimination, paid employment, and refugee status in truancy among newcomer refugee and immigrant youth in a medium-sized city in Canada.

Acculturation and Truancy

According to Gordon (1964), acculturation involves immigrants adopting the cultural patterns of the host society. For him, this process involves acquisition of cultural standards of the middle-class cultural patterns of white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) argue that acculturation refers to the gradual acquisition of a set of appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable newcomers to live in their new intercultural milieu. These cultural skills help them to "fit in."

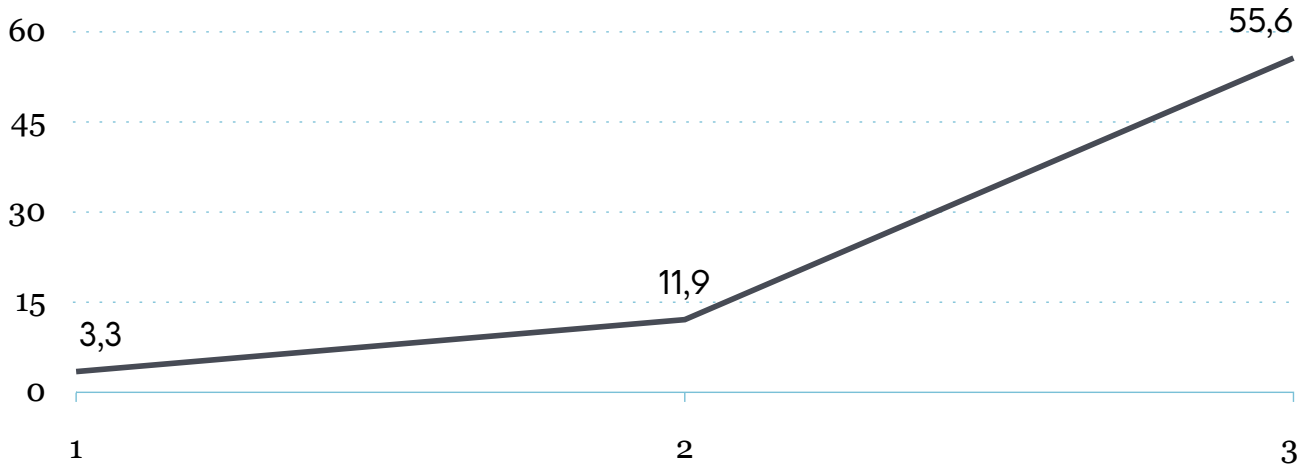
Both the assimilation (Gordon 1964) and the straight line (Warner & Srole 1945) perspectives, similar to Ward et al.'s (2001) argument, suggest that with increased length of residency, a gradual shift occurs from the ethnic cultural origin to host-cultural orientation. However, it is problematic to consider similarity with the host culture as a desirable outcome or consider immigrants as having failed if their attitudes and behaviours are not similar to that of the mainstream who are born in the receiving country. Li (2003) has argued that such an assessment is based on narrow understanding and rigid expectation because integration and/or acculturation is solely understood in terms of the convergence of immigrants with the average of the native-born Canadians. As such, assimilation and straight-line models take for granted the problematic notion of the desirability of integration and/or acculturation to the Canadian way of life. These perspectives ignore that certain attitudes and behaviours of immigrants may be more desirable and beneficial to the settlement process while those of Canadian-born individuals may be less desirable.

Although it is generally true that, after a period of adjustment, newcomers over time adapt to the host culture and become similar to native-born population in terms of attitudes and access to opportunities, some newcomers fare better and adapt more quickly than others. For example, first-generation immigrants are shown to fare better on a variety of indicators when compared to the native-born, in terms of health, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, alcohol use, and various other forms of delinquency. As new immigrants increase their residency in the host country and have higher exposure to the new environment, they tend to develop less healthy habits and become more similar to those born in the receiving country. This paradox is known as the "healthy immigrant effect" (see McDonald and Kennedy 2004). This is also consistent with the acculturation stress research showing that acculturation, both in terms of length of residency and acquisition of the cultural norms of the host, is associated with increased risky and delinquent outcomes (see Luther et al. 2011). Truancy is a risky behaviour which tends to result in low academic performance, disengagement, unemployment, marital problems, and other delinquent behaviours such as substance abuse and others.

In order to examine the potential influence of acculturation stress or the healthy immigrant hypothesis for truancy among newcomer immigrant refugee and youth, I acquired names and telephone numbers of immigrant and refugee youth attending school in Windsor, Ontario, based on the list of the newcomers attending the YMCA for access to services. In total, 148 youth who attended school at the time of the survey and were interviewed by telephone between December 2017 to March 2018 participated. I measured truancy by a self-reported question of whether or not the respondent had skipped school. They were also asked about the year they immigrated to Canada, converted to years of residency. Figure 1 displays the relationship between length of residency and truancy among the immigrant and refugee youth. It seems that in their first year in Canada, newcomer immigrant and refugee youth rarely skipped school. This is probably because they value education very highly and see it as a top priority (Stewart 2011). By the second and third years of residency, their truancy increased to just under 12% and then increased substantially to 55.6% by four or more years of residency in Canada.

The data does not tell us why exactly truancy increases with length of residency. Nevertheless, the evidence is consistent with the healthy immigrant hypothesis. The trajectory of acculturation among these youth seems to involve the interplay between the institutional structures, network relations and attitudes, and their own attitudes and actions. For them, navigating between cultures tends to be difficult. They have to find their way and learn what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Since most of their early time in the host country is spent in school, school become their most important acculturation institution. Although they may not see themselves as acculturating, but in building friendship networks, interacting with others, and participating in group activities, they do acculturate and become similar to the members of the host society. They learn a codified notion of appropriate and inappropriate attitudes and behaviours simply by interacting with others in school or through intergroup mechanisms such as rewards and punishment for appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, respectively (see Alba and Nee 2003). Accordingly, overtime, they become like their Canadian counterparts.

Figure 1: Length of Residency and Truancy, Percent



Although strictly not comparable, a comparison of results in this survey among the newcomer refugee and youth and that of the Canadian Youth Survey (2006) shows that refugee and immigrant youth are less truant (12.8%) when compared to Canadian youth in general (25.1%). Accordingly, two conclusions can be drawn:

1_ If a convergence trend continues, the rate of truancy among newcomer immigrants and refugees may increase substantially; and

2_ We need to re-evaluate the discourse on integration and acculturation as conformity with and acceptance of the prevailing values of native-born Canadians.

Using such a measuring standard of "becoming like Canadians" actually results in negative outcomes for immigrant and refugee newcomer youth.

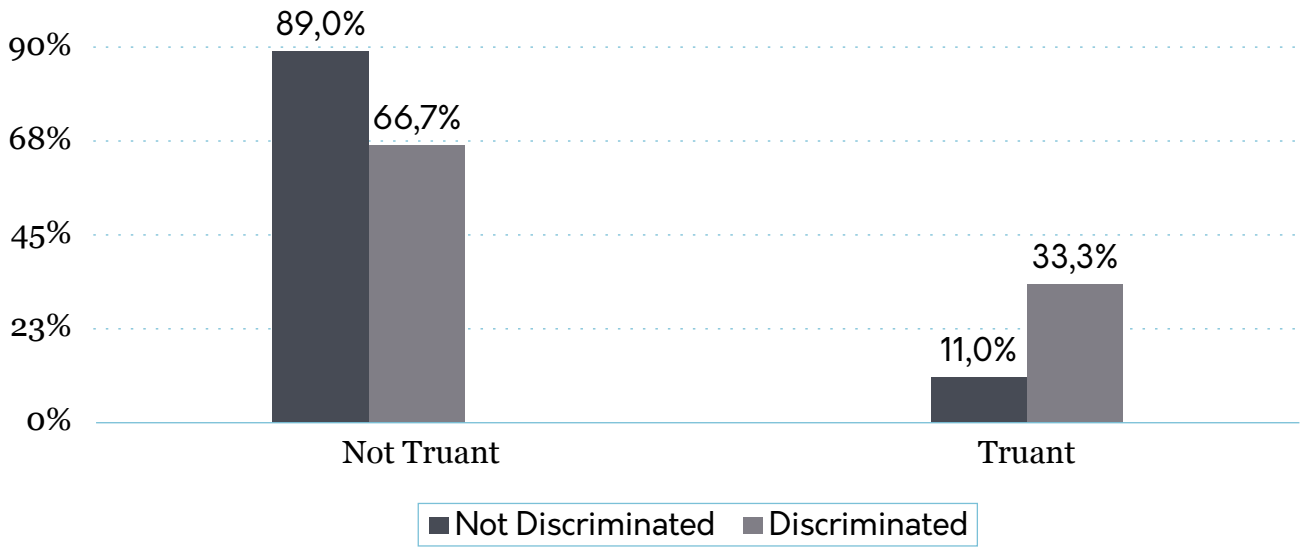
Discrimination and Truancy

Newcomers are also subject to discrimination in general and in school in particular. Studies in Canada, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, and Australia have shown that newcomer youth in schools are the subject of bullying, overt and covert forms of discrimination, and social isolation and that such experiences negatively affect newcomers' school adjustment, engagement, and academic performance (see Phan 2003; Brenick et al. 2012; Oxman-Martinez and Choi 2014; Weiner 2016). Discrimination leads to negative emotional reactions and psychological distress, producing feelings of loss, insult, indignity, and injustice, and a feeling that one is a deliberate target of discriminatory behaviours (Dion et al. 1992). Such exposures may lead to the deregulation of the body's homeostasis and the accumulation of allostatic load, the "wear and tear" of the body system (McEwen 2005; McEwen and Stellar 1993). The allostasis process is the flight/fight response that occurs when the organism experiences a challenge or a perceived danger. Accordingly, when students experience discrimination, their options are to resist and fight back by involving themselves in unacceptable school behaviours, which may result in expulsion, or to appease their attacker and submit to injustice. Alternatively, they may flee, i.e., skip school.

In this study, refugee and immigrant youth newcomers were asked if they experienced discrimination when in Canada. Those who said yes were asked if such an experience was because of their ethnicity or culture, race or skin colour, language or accent, and/or religion. They were also asked if such experiences took place in school or classes. Figure 2 shows that students who answered in the affirmative to all three questions were 22% more likely to skip school (33.3%) than their counterparts (11%).

It seems that the effect of discrimination is powerful enough that those who experience or perceive it feel they are being rejected, with the consequent emotional distress that forces them to opt for flight from the unwelcoming school environment. Such experiences denote an outsider status that is harmful to adolescents, driving them to skip school.

Figure 2: Discrimination and Truancy



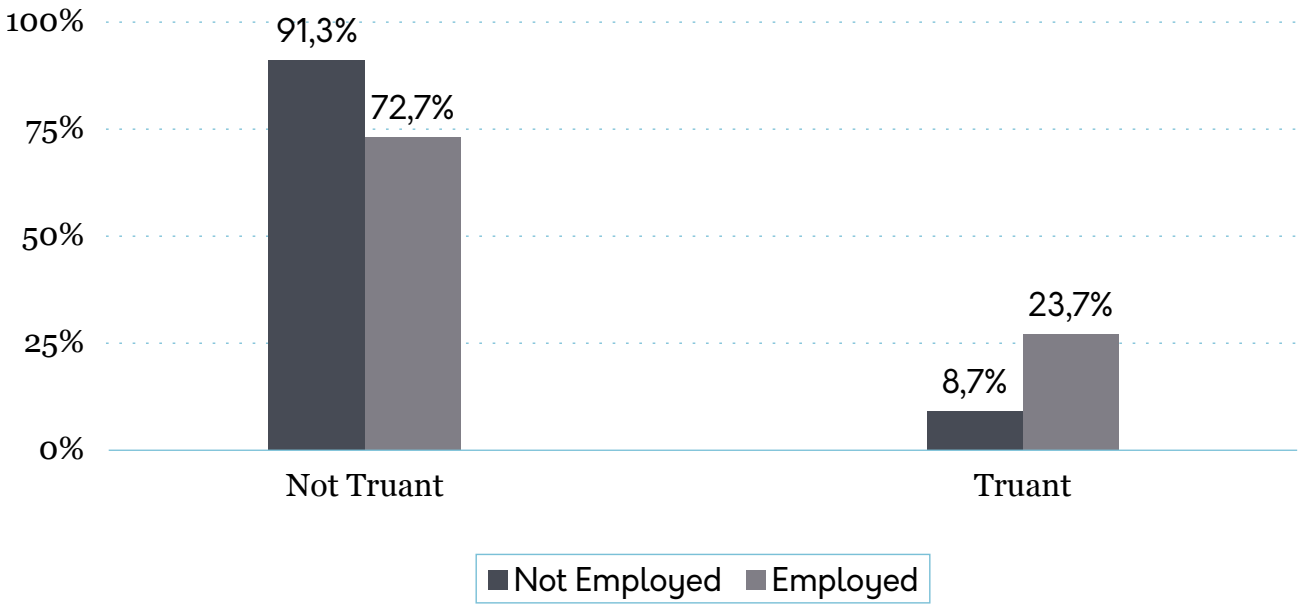
Paid Employment and Truancy

Truancy is also shown to be related to low socio-economic status. As an example, Ansaria and Purtell's (2018) study of three-to-four-year-old children in the U.S. showed that those in low-income groups missed school more than their counterparts. Paid employment by students while attending school can be used as a proxy of low socio-economic status.

Because a large number of newcomer immigrants and refugees experience underemployment and financial difficulties (Krahn 2000), their children often take on adult responsibilities. They become breadwinners when parents can't find a job (Shakya et al. 2012), which may cut into their own study time and school attendance. Figure 3 shows that students who worked were 18.6% more likely to skip school than those who did not work (27.3% versus 8.7%).

Paid employment among refugee and immigrant youth newcomers in this study does not mean that they don't value education or that they reject schooling as a route to better future employment. Understandably, because of the low socio-economic status of their parents, these youths are forced to find jobs, help with the family finances, and act as breadwinners. As such, they work to ensure their economic needs are satisfied, which limits their time availability for school attendance, at least to some extent; at the same time, they stay in school, thus leaving multiple options open for their future. These students act rationally. They are intentionally truant.

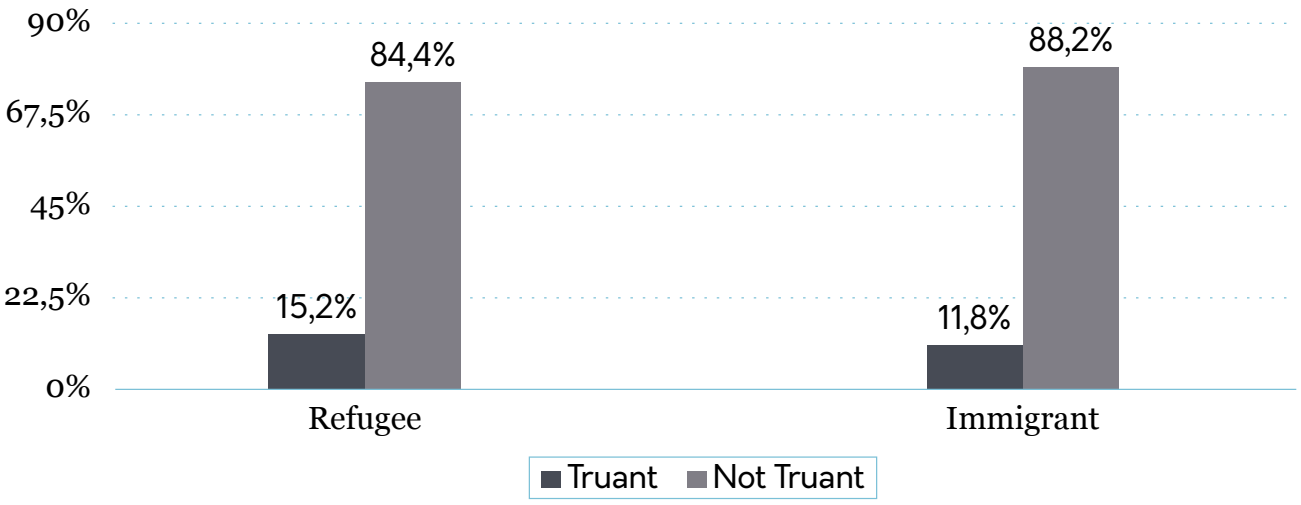
Figure 3: Paid-employment and Truancy



Refugee Status and Truancy

Another factor that may influence truancy among newcomers is their entry status: whether they are refugees or immigrants. Conventional wisdom regards refugee children as disadvantaged in and maladjusted to school when compared to native-born or immigrant children who have not experienced conflict and disintegration. This view tends to pathologize refugees, and their distress is attributed to their past traumatic experiences. Refugees' experiences of war and violence, family separation, and challenges to identity are said to produce traumatic and psychological outcomes that prevent refugee children achieving their highest potentials. This deficit perspective hypothesizes that refugee youth will not do as well as immigrants or native-born members of the receiving society (see Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, and Solheim 2004; Pain, Kanagaratnam, and Payne 2014). However, traumatic experiences can also be used as an explanation for refugees' adaptive skills, hope, and resiliency, which would enable them to deal effectively with stress and pressure, particularly if they draw on the strength of family and community (see Simich and Andermann 2014; Suarez-Orozco, Carhill, and Chuang 2011). Figure 4 does not support the deficit perspective. There is little difference in truancy between immigrants and refugee youth newcomers.[1]

Figure 4. Entry Status and Truancy



1 Further analysis did not show significant differences in truancy by age, gender, and parents' education levels. Furthermore, multivariate analyses pointed to the significance and independent effects of length residency, discrimination, and employment.

Conclusion

Acculturation, experience of discrimination, and paid employment are important predictors of truancy within this sample of newcomer refugee and immigrant youth. The acculturation perspective tends to view attitudes and behaviours of the host society as the gold standard to which newcomers should aspire and achieve. In contrast, the healthy immigrant hypothesis suggests that newcomers are doing better in several domains than the native-born Canadians and that using native-Canadians as standard to which immigrants and refugees need to aspire is problematic.

The findings also suggest that those immigrant and refugee students who experienced or perceived discrimination may have felt marginalized and like outsiders, which in turn resulted in them skipping school. Such experiences are barriers that increase the difficulty of achieving their educational goals (Beiser, Puente-Duran, and Hou 2015). Another barrier that newcomer youth experience is due to the low socio-economic status of their parents, which forces youth to find a job, help with the family finances, and act as a breadwinner. This type of employment-related truancy cannot be prevented unless the more fundamental problems of poverty, financial needs, and security among newcomers are addressed.

Refugee students may also experience barriers when compared to the economic immigrants because some of the former have experienced trauma due to war, ethnic cleansing, death of their parents, etc. However, this study did not find a significant difference in truancy between refugees and non-refugee newcomers. This may point to the resilience of refugees. Given their experiences of trauma and hardship, refugees tend to develop coping strategies that effectively meet the challenge of adapting to and thriving in the new environment. Despite facing adversities, they tend to rebound successfully, develop the capability to struggle over time, and establish positive outlooks and hope for a better future (Carlson, Cacciatore, and Klimek 2012). They take advantage of opportunities, social support, and religious faith, develop the personality trait of hardiness, and become more committed, competent, and well adjusted. They attend school, persevere, and work hard to become successful (Werner 1997; MacNevin 2012).

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Section 3

The Vital Role of Mental Health & Wellness

Le rôle essentiel de la santé mentale et du bien-être

Building the Capacity of Service Providers to Support the Mental Health of Yazidi Refugees

Online training curriculum development

AAMNA ASHRAF is the Manager of Health Equity at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). She is an experienced professional in the areas of program and policy implementation, stakeholder development and partnerships. Aamna holds a Master's Degree in Education (Counselling Psychology) and has worked in the not-for-profit sector for over 20 years. As an advocate for health equity, Aamna leads the award-winning Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project and serves as one of Ontario's Health Equity Impact Assessment Champions. She previously worked as a Senior Program Advisor in refugee re-settlement with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Previously she was the Director of the Peel Newcomer Strategy – the Local Immigration Partnership for Peel region. Aamna has also worked at United Way Peel and York as well as leading service development for diverse populations at Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto. — **DR. KWAME MCKENZIE** is the CEO of Wellesley Institute and is an international expert on the social causes of mental illness, suicide and the development of effective, equitable health systems. Kwame is also Director of Health Equity at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), and Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. As a policy advisor, clinician and academic with over 200 papers and five books, Kwame has worked across a broad spectrum to improve population health and health services for over two decades. He is currently a member of the National Advisory Council on Poverty and previously was an advisor to Ontario's basic income pilot project. He sits on the board of United Way Toronto and the Ontario Hospitals Association. In addition to his academic, policy and clinical work, Kwame is a columnist for the Guardian, Times-online and Toronto Star and a past BBC Radio presenter.

Abstract

This paper will share how the Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project (IRMHP) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) will contribute towards building the capacity of service providers to support the mental health of Yazidi Refugees. The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project is a nationally funded project providing free, accredited, evidence-based online training, tools and resources. It is designed to enhance settlement, social and health sector professionals' knowledge, skills and networks for working with immigrants and refugees. This paper describes the steps IRMHP team is taking to research, develop and create a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed course, tailored to meet the unique mental health needs of Yazidis in Canada. The course will build the capacity of service providers through the development of two mental health and social support training courses:

1_ To support settlement and social service providers; and

2_ To support health care service providers.

Résumé

Ce document explique comment l'Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project (IRMHP) du Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale (CAMH) contribuera à renforcer la capacité des prestataires de services à soutenir la santé mentale des réfugiés yazidis. Ce projet portant sur la santé mentale des immigrants et des réfugiés est un projet financé au niveau national qui propose des formations, des outils et des ressources en ligne gratuits, accrédités et fondés sur des preuves. Il est conçu pour améliorer les connaissances, les compétences et les réseaux des professionnels du secteur de l'établissement, du secteur social et de la santé pour travailler avec les immigrants et les réfugiés. Ce document décrit les mesures prises par l'équipe du projet pour rechercher, développer et créer un cours adapté à la culture et aux traumatismes, conçu pour répondre aux besoins uniques des Yazidis en matière de santé mentale au Canada. Le cours renforcera les capacités des prestataires de services grâce à l'élaboration de deux cours de formation sur la santé mentale et le soutien social :

1_ Pour soutenir les fournisseurs de services d'établissement et de services sociaux ; et

2_ Pour soutenir les fournisseurs de services de soins de santé.

Introduction

The Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project (IRMHP) was developed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH) Office of Health Equity, with funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and in collaboration with over 50 partners and subject matter experts across Canada. It is an evidence-based, capacity-building initiative, designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of settlement, social and health service providers to appropriately respond to the unique mental health needs of immigrants and refugees, and to foster inter-sector and inter-professional collaboration.

The project provides five different avenues to enhance knowledge, develop skills, and build networks. They include online courses, webinars, monthly e-newsletters, a community of practice, and a toolkit. Project activities have facilitated learning, enhanced cross-sectoral partnerships, and offered an opportunity to exchange information to settlement, social, and health service providers.

The content within the course is interactive and grounded in evidence-based research. It considers intersectionality, recognizes the importance of migration and integration, and that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be used when working with immigrants and refugees.

Recently, the IRMHP Team received requests from service providers across the country on how best to support the mental health of Yazidi refugees settling in Canada. More specifically, this included requests to develop a course that could provide support to community agencies, settlement workers and health care providers working with this population.

This paper will share the steps IRMHP team is taking to research, develop and create a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed course, tailored to meet the unique mental health needs of Yazidis in Canada. The course will build the capacity of service providers through the development of two mental health and social support training courses:

1_ To support settlement and social service providers; and

2_ To support health care service providers.

The team will conduct a needs assessment to understand the unique experiences, needs and expectations of Yazidi refugees living in Canada and to understand the learning needs of providers working with this population. Data collection methods including a literature review, key informant interviews, and focus groups will also be used. A brief background on Yazidi refugees is also provided to set the context and to acknowledge the need for CAMH research ethics protocols (REB) when working with vulnerable populations.

Background: Yazidi Refugees

It is estimated that there have been approximately 74 genocides against the Yazidi over the last 800 years (Kizilhan, 2016 as cited in Kizilhan, 2017). Yazidis have experienced numerous massacres and enforced Islamization since the invasion of 647 A.D. by Arabs of the Near and Middle East (Kizilhan, 2017). More recently, after the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the withdrawal of the United States military forces, along with civil conflict in Syria and the creation of the Islamic State (the Daesh), the Yazidi population has experienced a more recent genocide (IRCC, 2017b).

In 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant (ISIS/ISIL), known as Daesh in Arabic, began to systematically eradicate the Yazidi population in Northern Iraq (IRCC, 2017b) and many Yazidi women and girls were subject to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Human Rights Council [HRC], 2016; IRCC, 2017b; Kizilhan, 2017). Yazidi who were able to flee such persecution and oppression primarily ended up in Europe, and also the United States, Canada and Australia (Kizilhan, 2017).

In November 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration developed a status report on the resettlement of Yazidi women and children in Canada. It recommended that IRCC build the capacity of service providers to support the

mental health needs of Yazidi women and children. It also mentioned that since 2016, more than 1,000 Yazidis have resettled in London, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, and other communities such as Montreal, Moose Jaw, Ottawa, Sherbrooke, and Windsor. However, the exact number of Yazidi living in Canada is unknown as IRCC does not track refugees by their race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation (IRCC, 2017a). Estimates suggest that there are now about 1,500 (IRCC, 2017a) but some sources cite around 5,000 (Kizilhan, 2017).

Course Development

Ethical Considerations

Considering the scope of this work, the experiences of Yazidi refugees and the course development, the IRMHP team will be conducting a full research study. This includes submission to the CAMH Research Ethics Board (REB) for approval before embarking on any research activities to ensure that the work completed will be ethical and will minimize risk to any study participants. The CAMH REB reviews the processes used, and oversees the study to ensure that the highest ethical and scientific standards are met.

Needs Assessment

Hypothesis

Settlement workers and health care practitioners have limited knowledge and understanding on how to work with the Yazidi population and how to address their vicarious trauma from working with the Yazidi population.

Objectives

1. Identify best practices when working with Yazidi women and children. Best practices will be essential to understanding what should be done when working with the Yazidi population – in terms of treating patients and practising self-care;

2_ Learn what skills settlement workers and health care practitioners have, what skills and knowledge they need, and how best to provide training so that settlement workers and health care providers can better serve their Yazidi clients and prevent vicarious trauma.

Methods

The needs assessment will take place over three phases and will employ both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

- **Phase 1** will establish promising practices when working with the Yazidi population. It will consist of a literature review, key informant interviews, focus groups and a working group session with subject matter experts (SMEs);
- **Phase 2** will identify what skills and knowledge our target audience has and needs. Phase 2 data will be collected using a survey and in-depth interviews. Phase 2 will use the promising practices identified in Phase 1 as a measurement for how well equipped settlement workers and health care providers are for working with the Yazidi population;
- **Phase 3** will summarize the needs assessment findings into a report.

Sample/Target Audience

The needs assessment will be conducted with SMEs and frontline settlement, social, and health service providers working with this population in five cities where the Yazidis have settled: Lethbridge, Calgary, London, Toronto and Winnipeg. Key informant interviews will also include international individuals and organizations working with this group of refugees. Organizations that address SGBV and children's mental health will also be consulted.

Data Collection

Literature Review

A literature review will be conducted to identify promising practices when working with Yazidi women and children. The literature review will support Objective 1 of the needs assessment.

Variations of spelling for the terms "Yazidi [such as [Yezidi, "Yazid", "Ezidi" will be used for the literature scan along with the term "Kurmanji' – a spoken dialect of Kurdish language used by the majority of the Yazidi community. We will employ both forward and backward tracking techniques and articles written in either English or French will be included.

The literature scan and the subsequent analysis of the available material will be conducted with three principal questions in mind:

- What makes Yazidis unique among the larger refugee population in the world and in Canada? – *Background;*
- What are the mental health needs of Yazidi refugee populations (especially in Canada) and what are their risk and protective factors? – *Sexual and gender-based violence and mental health;*
- What are the programs, practices, and measures working to improve the mental health of Yazidi refugees in Canada and around the world? What are some of the factors facilitating their integration as newcomers? What are the needs of service providers supporting this population? – *Promising practices.*

The scan will use the following online databases: Medline, EMBASE, PsycINFO, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), The Cochrane Library, Index Islamicus, and ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews will provide information on best practices when working with Yazidi women and children. The key informant interviews will support Objective 1 of the needs assessment. The interviews will be conducted with individuals both in Canada and internationally who have worked, written, or conducted research with Yazidi populations in various capacities. The interviews will be used to learn from these experts about Yazidi refugees, what works, what doesn't work and what providers need to know. The interviews will be semi-structured and conducted via video conferencing technology. The questions will help to provide greater context around what practices other providers are trying, the experiences of Yazidi refugees and how others may have adapted their services to support the integration and mental health of Yazidi refugees.

Focus Groups

The team plans to host focus groups with Yazidi women living in four communities, Toronto (ON), London (ON), Winnipeg (MB) and Calgary (AB). The focus groups will take place in collaboration with community partners and will be conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Kurmanji by trained professional interpreters. The focus groups will provide the team an opportunity to have a conversation with Yazidi refugees and to learn about their experiences in Canada. Such conversations will give voice to and provide case examples to draw on for the course content. It will enrich the details of the course to provide context for Canadian providers that can help to improve the interactions and support that Yazidi refugees get from providers in Canada.

Working Groups

Data collected through the literature review, focus groups and key informant interviews will be analyzed and summarized into themes, needed skills, and promising practices, during a half-day working group with SMEs. The working group will support Objective 1 of our needs assessment.

The needs assessment and curriculum development are guided by a planning committee comprised of SMEs from both the health and settlement sectors. This panel of experts with experience delivering health and social services to Yazidis or other highly traumatized populations, will meet at various points during data collection and use the information gathered to create the focus and content of the curriculum. Members of the committee include psychiatrists, psychologist, social worker and a family physician.

Subject Matter Experts :

- Dr. Kwame McKenzie, Psychiatrist, CAMH and Director of CAMH Office of Health Equity
- Dr. Annalee Coakley, Medical Director Calgary's Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic
- Dr. Lisa Andermann, Cross-cultural Psychiatrist, Mt Sinai Hospital and Assistant Professor, University of Toronto
- Dr. Ghayda Hassan, Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Clinical Psychology at Université du Québec à Montréal
- Jennifer Sandu, Registered Social Worker, Capacity Building Specialist, London Cross-Cultural Learner Centre

Online Surveys

Based on the skills and promising practices developed in Phase 1, an online survey will be created to determine how much settlement workers and health professionals already know and are employing the techniques identified in the themes, skills and promising practices in Phase 1. The surveys will help to identify topic areas, skills and tools that the settlement workers and health professionals need more information on for their work in supporting Yazidi refugees in Canada. The online survey will also be used to better understand:

- The level of vicarious trauma experienced by those working with Yazidi women and children
- Attitudes and perspectives about Yazidi women and children
- Barriers encountered when working with the Yazidi women and children
- Level of confidence around working with Yazidi women and children
- Knowledge around working with Yazidi women and children.

The online survey will be used to gain consensus of the important themes, skills and promising practices that settlement and health care providers in Canada need to learn more about in support of Objective 2 of our needs assessment. Data collected in the online survey will also serve as baseline data that can later be compared to cohorts who participated in developed trainings.

In-Depth Interviews

A selection of responders to the online surveys will be contacted for an in-depth interview. In-depth interviews will be conducted to gain an understanding of why settlement workers and health care practitioners are choosing the paths of care identified in the online survey.

Conclusion

As we move forward, the 2020 – 2025 IRMHP will continue its existing activities such as the online training courses; the community of practice; monthly webinars; monthly e-newsletter; and a toolkit of resources.

Through multiple methods of data collection, including speaking with Yazidis and working with the panel of SMEs, it is our hope to develop an additional evidence-based curriculum on how to support the mental health of Yazidis that will build the capacity of service providers to support their successful integration.

For more information on the project please go to the Project Website.

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Taking Action: Agency Reaction to the Refugees and Newcomers Emotional Wellness

(ReNEW) Research Study

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of a study conducted by the authors examining the need for and the configuration of emotional wellness support at four western Canadian cities. Through surveys interviews, focus groups and a feedback workshop with settlement agency staff, five key issues were identified:

1_ Clients concerns centred largely on acculturative and adjustment-related stress experienced during the settlement process;

2_ There are ongoing issues of access to community and municipal supports for both staff and clients;

3_ The operating environment of settlement agencies imposes structural constraints on offering supports “closer to home” where clients have easier access;

4_ Front-line staff is often compelled to act beyond their scope of practice when client needs are more immediate; and

5_ LINC providers could benefit from greater consistency in approaches. Given the operational context and limitations imposed by the scope of their core services, a viable avenue for better emotional wellness supports is to embed, through capacity building, better informed approaches within current workplace practices of front-line staff, such as lesson planning, classroom management and client engagement.

Résumé

Cet article donne un aperçu d'une étude menée par les auteurs sur la nécessité et la configuration d'un soutien au bien-être émotionnel dans quatre villes de l'Ouest canadien. Au moyen d'entrevues par sondage, de groupes de discussion et d'un atelier de rétroaction avec le personnel des agences d'établissement, cinq problèmes clés ont été identifiés :

1_ Les préoccupations des clients étaient principalement centrées sur le stress lié à l'acculturation et à l'adaptation vécu pendant le processus d'établissement ;

2_ Il y'a des problèmes permanents d'accès aux soutiens communautaires et municipaux pour le personnel et les clients ;

3_ L'environnement opérationnel des agences d'établissement impose des contraintes structurelles pour offrir des soutiens « plus près de chez eux » là où les clients ont un accès plus facile ;

4_ Le personnel de première ligne est souvent obligé d'agir au-delà de leur champ de pratique lorsque les besoins des clients sont plus immédiats ; et

5_ Les fournisseurs de CLIC pourraient bénéficier d'une plus grande cohérence dans les approches. Compte tenu du contexte opérationnel et des limites imposées par la portée de leurs services de base, une solution viable pour de meilleurs soutiens au bien-être émotionnel consiste à intégrer, par le renforcement des capacités, des approches mieux informées dans les pratiques actuelles du personnel de première ligne en milieu de travail, telles que la planification des cours, la gestion des salles de classe et l'engagement des clients.

Introduction

The Refugees and Newcomers Emotional Wellness (ReNEW): Partnership for Best Practice aimed to examine practices supporting mental health and emotional wellness in four Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funded service provider organizations in the Prairie region of Canada. The project was an IRCC-funded research initiative under the Service Delivery Improvements stream and is jointly conducted by The Immigrant Education Society's (TIES) Research and Program Development Department and the University of Calgary's Faculty of Nursing. There were two distinct phases to this project, beginning with a broad data-gathering and process review stage, followed by the implementation of a pilot program that would encompass best practices in emotional wellness services for newcomers to Canada. This article considers the reactions and feedback of agencies to the first phase of the project.

Upon completion of the on-site data gathering conducted by the ReNEW research team in the spring and summer of 2019, key findings were circulated to senior organizational staff at the participant organizations. This was through a written summary, conference call discussions, and an in-person workshop in Calgary in late January 2020. The workshop, featuring managers from all four of the participant sites, sought to glean reactions to the data findings compiled to date, and articulate practical and preferred new approaches to addressing the mental and emotional wellness issues of newcomers in their cities. This process conveyed the key reactions agencies expressed to the ReNEW project's results to that point, as well as to broader challenges concerning emotional wellness. support measures for newcomers. While the first section of the paper will provide a general overview of the related services currently available and the participant sites, the second section describes and contextualizes their reactions to the project's initial results, and how this evolved into potential new directions for intervention.

The reaction of LINC providers to the first results of the study have reflected precepts supported in literature about newcomer mental health, and reinforces a case for program-

embedded emotional wellness intervention. The sites recognized that newcomer emotional wellness has often not been made a priority, and is often overlooked, by funders, and is inconsistently addressed in settlement programming. Moreover, it is not directly addressed in the LINC curriculum, which focuses on language study. It was generally felt that a new approach to emotional wellness support embedded in programming was novel and pragmatic, addressing the needs of staff and clients, while fitting within current constraints imposed by funders.

Emotional Wellness

The inclusion of an individual's mental state in consideration of their overall health has a tradition dating to the early twentieth century (Hattie et al., 2004:354). In 1958, the WHO defined wellness to include aspects such as the mental and social well-being of a person, and not just the state of being disease free (Hattie et al., 2004:354). Early proponents of the wellness movement added to this the ability for individuals to maximize their own potential (Hattie et al., 2004:355). Since the mid-twentieth century, *wellness* has come to mean having positive psychological functions for mental health (Mandersheid et al., 2010). Wellness and well-being are now used (interchangeably) in contexts that encompass mental, physical and emotional health and aspects such as satisfaction and happiness (McMahon et al., 2010). These factors interact in different ways, according to their varied levels of importance to the individual (Kiefer, 2008). This dimension of wellness, which the authors have used to encompass *emotional* wellness or well-being refers to the degree to which one feels positive and enthusiastic about oneself and life (Mandersheid et al., 2010), and an overall set of positive *feelings* perceived and experienced (Keyes & Magya, 2003). The ReNEW study investigated emotional wellness as it is experienced by immigrants settling in Canada, and the supports provided. The emotional wellness needs that are being addressed in this study are those that can surround thinking about ethnicity, identity, identification, and ethnic identification, as well as emotional reactions to the overall settlement experience. Most settlement contexts do not focus interventions on diagnosable conditions, communicable diseases, or other

maladies, physical illnesses, or psychiatric mental disorders. While these areas are generally included in the study whenever services offered encompassed them, the focus of the needs and services provided focused on the broader concept of emotional wellness.

The Agency Context: Participant Sites and the Context for Implementation

ReNEW was originally a small settlement support program for newcomers and refugees administered by The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) in Calgary. The results of this program demonstrated that the need for services in this area went beyond its capacity at the time. Approximately 20 – 30 clients per month were provided with support in addressing various settlement needs. The ReNEW coordinator assisted clients with their settlement-related worries[1] and provided referrals to external health and social services. This program, funded originally for one year, led to the larger-scale research project that examined the overall need for support around settlement, the emotional wellness issues that required those supports, and the approaches currently implemented by settlement agencies.

Research Site Selection Criteria

During the first year of the research project, the following selection criteria were determined for potential research sites:

1_ It offers the Language Instructions for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program;

2_ The site is located in a major city in the prairies;

3_ The site has a large client population to ensure enough potential participants for

1 This most often involved assistance with processes such as applying for low-income housing, food bank access, and facilitation for access to volunteers, interpreters and accompaniment to community services.

data collection;

4_ The sites should be newcomer-focused settlement non-profits with similar organizational structures, as LINC programs embedded in community colleges and institutions offering other nonimmigrant oriented adult learning presented too many additional contextual variables. A final criterion

5_ Was for the site to offer a range of settlement assistance services to newcomers related to those addressing their emotional wellness. The team was, however, prepared to observe sites that did not offer any formal or official settlement support, as the immigrant-serving agencies often find a way to support their clients in satisfying their basic needs even if they do not have a formal settlement support in place (Simich et al., 2005).

The four settlement agencies selected based on the criteria above were: TIES[2] located in Calgary, Alberta; Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)[3] located in Edmonton, Alberta; Saskatoon Open Door Society (SODS)[4] located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Seven Oaks Immigrant Services[5] located in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Diversity of Services

There is no established standard approach to emotional wellness support at settlement service providers in Canada. Each immigrant-serving organization builds its programming based on factors such as available funding, operational environment, and other locally defined needs. In the first stage of the project, we documented the emotional wellness services of each participant site and found that there was considerable diversity. To detail one example, TIES'

2 The Immigrant Education Society, Programs.

3 Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Programs & Services.

4 Saskatoon Open Door Society, Programs for Adults.

5 Seven Oaks Immigrant Services programs.

emotional support program employed one settlement counsellor who was augmented by approximately ten volunteers. When a more complex situation needed attention, the client would be referred to appropriate external services and professionals, such as the psychiatric department of a nearby hospital or to Calgary's Distress Centre. EMCN had a more complex approach by offering a suite of emotional wellness and mental health support. EMCN possesses an embedded Centre for Survivors of Torture and Trauma offering therapies on site. EMCN employs professional counsellors, psychologists, social and case workers to provide these services to their clients. Similarly, SODS also staffs professional psychologists, counsellors and social workers on site. Through their REACH program, its staff cooperated with medical doctors to establish a two-way understanding of newcomer experiences. Similar to TIES, Seven Oaks in Winnipeg was compelled to develop emotional wellness support in a limited funding environment. This organization provided space for self-facilitated women and men's support groups based on self-empowerment and fun-oriented activities. Seven Oaks, however, ensured that their administrative staff had a social work background, ready to refer clients to external institutions when necessary. With the diversity of services that immigrant-serving organizations in the Prairies offered to assist newcomers in their settlement process, it is apparent that newcomers to Canada have varied experiences based on their location.

Discussions with LINC managers and front-line staff in the four research sites also found key similarities. In most cases, the receptionists, instructors and coordinators were often the first point of contact for a client in need, having developed a relationship of trust with them through their daily encounters. Front-line workers are seen as knowledgeable and trustworthy, owing to their greater familiarity and daily interaction with clients. This positioned them as primary options clients would turn to in addressing their anxieties and daily frustrations. This was further borne out in the subsequent interviews and surveys of the study. Front-line staff at all agencies felt they had a good knowledge of in-house support services and referral processes.

Results from Surveys, Interviews and Focus Groups

The environmental scan of the four sites was followed by an in-depth data gathering plan that involved more than 800 multilingual surveys with clients and instructors, 13 focus groups with front-line staff and managers, and 14 interviews. The results of this next stage of the research process identified five findings:

1_ Clients were primarily experiencing acculturative and adjustment-related stress;

2_ There are issues of access to supports for both staff and clients;

3_ The operating environment imposes structural constraints and pressures;

4_ Front-line staff is often compelled to act beyond their scope of practice; and

5_ While still accounting for a diversity of circumstances, support across the participant LINC providers could benefit from greater consistency.

These findings were presented to managers from the participant sites in a workshop in Calgary on January 31, 2020.

Reactions from Agency Staff

Acculturative stress

The range of stressors immigrants experience in a new country has often been referred to as acculturative stress (Ruiz, 2011, p. 161). This combined with the overall disruptive experience of change can compound to result in more serious mental health conditions such as depression (Finlayson & Harper, 2016, p. 239). Front-line staff at study sites are often approached for concerns involving typical settlement challenges, such as navigating government agencies processes, accessing benefits and community services, and dealing with frustrations with the new but alien environment. While staff can often interpret some client behaviours as clinical issues such as depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), it has been revealed

through referral processes that the vast majority of cases are not, and relate more to acculturative, and adjustment-related stress.

Issues of Access

While the notion that newcomers need more mental health support than non-newcomers may not be established fact (Ingleby, 2011, p. 232), it is established that they are less likely to use such services (Simich & Beiser, 2011, p. 328). Instead, the barriers to service centre on access issues and the configuration of services being offered. Newcomer use of health services increases only with the length of time they have resided in the host country (Ingleby, 2011, p. 236). This suggests that the lower average use of these services by newcomers is better explained by the issue of access, and not by the absence of initial need. All participant sites acknowledged that mental health and emotional wellness services are currently too "siloed" within their cities. Their clients must go through a complex referral process to obtain help for their issues and have to wait, travel, find addresses, and share personal information with strangers. They are often daunted by this process and may abandon the effort to obtain support. Newcomer clients are thus faced with what has been criticized as being a "one size fits all" system where users are expected to adjust, rather than services adapting to them (Ingleby, 2011, p. 233). As some authors have expressed, "Discrimination does not only occur when people who have the same needs are treated differently – it also happens when people with different needs are treated identically" (Ingleby, 2011, pp. 233 – 234). In the case of newcomer clients at settlement provider sites, the far proximity to services created by a complex and overly specialized system can be a key barrier to access. Staff at those sites largely agreed that having the capacity to better support, address and identify client issues as seen by front-line workers was an important area that can facilitate client access to external services. Ensuring newcomers have access to a mental health and emotional wellness support system may require a qualitative change in service delivery.

Structural Pressures and Constraints

The stress related to arriving and settling into a new community can be exacerbated by state-sponsored "acculturation" programming such as that offered through LINC. The perception that failing to make the prescribed cultural adaptations (such as progress in English language study and the adoption of workplace-related "soft skills") can make the individual feel less deserving of status in the host society, creating an added layer of stress (Cheetham, 2016, p. 234). While the pressures of succeeding in settlement programming have added to the clients' adjustment-related stress, agencies are constrained by agreements with funders about where they can and cannot intervene.

Perhaps the most determinative of structural issues imposing limits on what participant sites can do, involve restrictions on what can or cannot be funded. Agencies' largest funders – the federal ones such as IRCC – are reluctant to pay for mental health programming, as this is often considered to be under provincial jurisdiction (such as services counselling and therapy). It can as such be considered as falling outside the "core activities" that agencies should be involved in. Alternative methods of creating support that still fit within a definition of "core activities," therefore, were deemed as necessary by staff respondents. Despite emotional wellness issues being outside this scope, agency staff indicate observing, daily, the need for some form of emotional if not mental wellness support for their clients.

Going Beyond the LINC Instructor's Scope of Practice

The participation of an intermediary or a third person in the delivery of mental health support to newcomers has in recent years become an increasingly accepted, if not necessary, practice (Qureshi et al., 2011, p. 245). Often a familiar individual, understood as a source of knowledge and credibility, is approached to address issues and concerns that contribute to a newcomer's stress. This individual is important because they play a key role in the initial identification of problems and the obtaining of help. The most significant obstacles in accessing emotional and mental wellness help for newcomers have been found to be at this early stage of the process (Ingleby, 2011, p. 236). In the case of clients at the participant sites, the key intermediary is

almost invariably their LINC instructor. Instructors are the students' main source of information, guidance and trust.

Instructors faced with this situation, however, have often felt out of their depth in helping clients in areas relating more to settlement, social or health care. Frequently, front-line staff are pushed into settlement or social worker roles, and therefore fall outside of their scope of practice. These situations test their abilities and knowledge well beyond their training, which was primarily in ESL teaching and language education. Instructors are understandably ill-equipped to respond appropriately to issues of trauma and situations where a high level of sensitivity is required. The usual advice from management (and funders) often entails addressing such issues through referrals to counselling, health care, or social sector professionals. While this is indeed reasonable advice, the reality is that the client in turn is compelled to undergo navigating a complex, unfamiliar and seemingly labyrinthine referral system (Simich & Beiser, 2011, p. 328), that in the LINC participants sites, can result in the abandonment of the effort to gain assistance. While more serious cases should be addressed through this external referral process, having to push minor issues creating anxiety and stress in clients through a referral process can conversely, leave such issues unresolved, or worse, exacerbate the situation.

Even though instructors, as well as their managers, reported that they understand the limits of their scope of practice and that they should refer students to appropriate specialized services, the demands of their daily experience with their clients, and the appeals to their own humanity, can compel them to "go above and beyond". Clients would frequently prefer to come back to the front-line staff for help, despite the emphasis on referrals, compelling the employee to find ways to address and provide for the requested assistance. Teaching staff are often drawn to handle these cases as they manifest in the form of everyday frustrations of managing the classroom environment. Front-line workers at all four LINC department sites felt they lacked the knowledge and training to handle such requests for help.

Consistency in Approach to Embedded Emotional Wellness Support

The variability found in approaches to the support of emotional and mental wellness amongst newcomer clients might suggest a conscious alignment to emphasizing local responsiveness and "client-centred care." However, this is also reflective of inconsistent funding, planning, and effort. As such, staff at participant sites expressed a desire for greater consistency and sharing with regard to approaches and resources. Staff in general possess an overall belief in the value of the referral process. However, there is also a common desire for a greater capacity amongst front-line staff in becoming familiar with key emotional and mental wellness resources in the community, their functions, and contact information. This started a dialogue with the research team around a community centred and responsive emotional wellness support approach embedded into the curriculum and teaching practice.

Working closely with communities is not a new idea and is the central precept in the "community mental health approach" (Ingleby, 2011, p. 239). Addressing the acculturative and adjustment-related stress experienced by newcomers in LINC-funded settlement agencies must be responsive to the unique situations and behaviours manifested in each unique location. Particularly important is the understanding that significant obstacles to obtaining mental and emotional wellness support for newcomer clients are faced at the stage of identifying problems and obtaining support for them (Ingleby, 2011, p. 236).

These challenges and data from more than 750 surveys with clients, 60 surveys with instructors, 13 focus groups with front-line staff and managers (separately) and 14 interviews, suggest that intervention building the capacity of front-line staff, can offer a viable approach. A focus on embedding practices that can alleviate adjustment-related stress within the classroom is necessary and practicable considering the operational context. This acknowledges the actual role of instructors as a key person of trust whom clients are likely to turn to, to alleviate stress and anxiety stemming from their settlement experience. Indeed, for individuals struggling with acculturation, there are advantages to addressing these in classroom groups (Turner & Bhugra, 2011, p. 278). These embedded practices can involve better-informed methods

of planning lessons, creating artefacts, and managing the classroom. Integrating these new approaches and practices in current workplace processes such as lesson planning and classroom management can create new support without adding additional layers of programming and staff.

Augmenting the role of the instructor adds to access and addressing the structural pressures and constraints, and the natural behaviours of clients in approaching them for assistance in alleviating acculturative and adjustment-related stress. Support for mental and emotional wellness is largely seen as having to be sustainable, responsive to the individual's culture and values, and involve their participation determining care (Ingleby, 2011, p. 233). There is indeed more to access than simply entitlement to care. An individual-centred approach is not just consistent with democratic values, but also pragmatic in '…using resources as effectively as possible…' (Ingleby, 2011, p. 233). Such an instructor-centred approach, which factors in client behaviour and institutional contexts as they have evolved in response to realities on the ground, is a reflection of this notion, and summarizes the reaction of participant agencies to the preliminary results of the ReNEW project.

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Section 4

Gender & Intersectionality

Genre et intersectionnalité

Gender and the Resettlement of Yazidis in Calgary:

A Deep Dive in the Resettlement, Health, Carework and Education Processes[1]

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Abstract

Feminist scholars of refugee and immigration studies have shown gender to be the organizing principle for resettlement experiences of newcomers. This chapter, co-authored by researchers and practitioners, focuses on how gendered needs of the Yazidi refugee families in Calgary shaped their resettlement services and experiences. Based on keen observations by staff at the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and the physicians and healthcare providers at the Mosaic Refugee Clinic in Calgary, combined with in-depth interviews conducted by University of Calgary researchers with nearly all Yazidi families in Calgary (45 families that include 241 family members) we focus on four key aspects:

1_ Restructuring of the resettlement program by CCIS to meet the needs of Yazidi women and men, but mainly women;

2_ Readjusting healthcare services by gender at the refugee clinic;

3_ Care provisions in the families of the Yazidis that was fulfilled by women (internal and external to the families) care providers; and

4_ Gendered and un-gendered educational outcomes for the children in Yazidi families. We argue that centering gender-based needs of the Yazidi community in the resettlement services has resulted in a feminist reorientation of the resettlement services and experiences of the Yazidis in Calgary.

Résumé

Les universitaires féministes des études sur les réfugiés et l'immigration ont montré que le genre est le principe organisateur des expériences de réinstallation des nouveaux arrivants. Ce chapitre, co-écrit par des chercheurs et des praticiens, met l'accent sur la façon dont les besoins sexospécifiques des familles de réfugiés yazidis à Calgary ont influencé leurs services et leurs expériences de réinstallation. Sur la base d'observations approfondies du personnel de la Calgary Catholic Immigration Society et des médecins et prestataires de soins de santé de la Mosaic Refugee Clinic de Calgary, combinées à des entretiens approfondis menés par des chercheurs de l'Université de Calgary auprès de presque toutes les familles yazidies de Calgary (45 familles, dont 241 membres de la famille), nous nous concentrons sur quatre aspects clés :

1_ La restructuration du programme de réinstallation par la CCIS pour répondre aux besoins des femmes et des hommes yazidis, mais surtout des femmes ;

2_ Le réajustement des services de santé par genre à la clinique pour réfugiés ;

3_ Des dispositions de prise en charge dans les familles des Yazidis qui étaient assurées par des prestataires de soins féminins (au sein des familles et à l'extérieur) ; et

4_ Les résultats scolaires des enfants des familles yazidies, selon le genre ou non. Nous soutenons que la prise en compte des besoins sexospécifiques de la communauté yazidi dans les services de réinstallation a entraîné une réorientation féministe des services de réinstallation et des expériences des Yazidis à Calgary.

Introduction

Despite strides made in feminist scholarship since the 1980s in studies of migration, gender remains under-accounted as the central analytical framework (Nwyan 2010). When gender analysis does make its way into migration studies, scholars often forget that gender is not the singular realm of women – it is a spectrum that includes men as well (Banerjee 2019 Hondagneu-Sotelo and Cranford 2006). This is especially true in studies that are centered on refugees. Gender in refugee studies becomes a trope for studying the victimization of women and children often lumped together. And yet, research shows that the resettlement process of refugees, especially at the level of Non-Governmental Organizations, is structured by the disparate social, cultural and health needs of men and women (Cheung & Phillimore 2017; Koyama 2014; Nawyn 2010; Saheb Javaher 2020; Wilkinson et al. 2019). The differential needs of women and men in a refugee community are often dictated by the circumstance of their "refugeeness" and the contexts of their transition into a new country. The Yazidi refugees who were resettled in Canada since 2016 are no different, though the recency of the trauma experienced by the community prior to migration has created specific gendered needs among Yazidi refugees.

The Yazidis are an ethno-religious minority – a non-Muslim minority in a Muslim-majority region – who have lived primarily in Sinjar in Northern Iraq and in Syria, Turkey, Iran, and were recently forced to migrate to Australia, Canada, and Germany, primarily to flee the genocide that began in 2014 perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Daesh (its Arabic acronym). The Yazidis were left deeply scarred by the genocide, in which most of the men were killed, women and girls were tortured, raped, and taken captive, young boys were turned into child soldiers, and children were separated from parents. Since 2016, the Canadian government has accepted approximately 1,400 ISIS victims, most of whom are Yazidi[2] (MacLean 2019; Wilkinson et al. 2019). Many of those who came to Canada were

2 According to the Canadian House of Commons (2018) official report on Yazidis, the number of resettled ISIS victims is 1,200, and this is consistent with most available news articles; however, from more recent media and personal sources we know that the number today is approximately 1,400.

single-parent mothers with children. The families were resettled in four cities in Canada, including Calgary, the site of focus in this chapter. The local resettlement agency, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), specializing in resettlement and integration services, was in charge of resettling about 265 Yazidi refugees (53 family units) in Calgary under the Survivors of Daesh program.

This article focuses on how various parts of the Yazidi resettlement process required reorienting services for the community as per their gendered needs – needs that were expressed by members of the community themselves. We focus on four key aspects:

1_ Restructuring of the resettlement program by CCIS to meet the needs of Yazidi women and men;

2_ Readjusting healthcare needs according to gender at the main refugee clinic in Calgary;

3_ The description of care provisions in the Yazidi families, as shaped by women care providers; and

4_ Gendered and un-gendered educational outcomes for the children in Yazidi families.

It should be noted that the account of resettlement and health services are based respectively on experiences of CCIS staff/managers and doctors at the clinic. The description of care provisions and educational outcomes and an overall gender analysis of the resettlement as observed in the community is based on in-depth interviews conducted by University of Calgary researchers as part of a SSHRC funded research, with nearly all Yazidi families in Calgary (45 families that include 241 members). In the following four sections, we illustrate how the gendered needs of the community reshaped the resettlement services and outcomes among Yazidis in Calgary.

CCIS Reorientation of Settlement Services and Gender

The specific gender needs of Yazidi women and men differ vastly. This was apparent to our CCIS team prior to their arrival in Calgary. Due to a variety of factors relating to the ethno-religious orientation of this population, some prevailing gender norms, and the differences in gender experiences during the genocide (particularly for those who had been in captivity), CCIS had to tailor its services to meet the unique needs of each gender.

The team created a three-year plan for the Yazidis, staggering the overall settlement by a year in comparison to other groups of refugees who had arrived in the past. Accommodating gender-specific needs was part of that equation and required creativity and flexibility in redesigning service delivery, a delivery that was continually improved with new learnings. Women clients, specifically those who had been in captivity, or who were in Canada as single women or single mothers, were assigned women caseworkers, some of whom spoke their native language, Kurmanji. Yazidi women developed trust and rapport with these caseworkers and connected with them quickly, building overall confidence in the organization as a whole. CCIS requested of the Refugee Health Clinic in Calgary (called Mosaic) that, wherever possible, Yazidi men and women be matched with family doctors of the same gender. The community members were also vocal in expressing their needs, and the women also requested a particular Kurmanji-speaking caseworker from CCIS to serve as an interpreter at almost all their medical appointments. As she was Yazidi herself, the presence of this caseworker instilled trust and provided comfort during doctor and specialist visits. Short-term crisis counselling with female therapists and interpreters was also offered, which helped the Yazidi women to work through initial trauma. Those who required longer-term therapy were also connected with therapists of the same gender.

In relation to housing, CCIS moved away from the usual practice of spreading clients across the city and instead housed the Yazidis in three neighbourhoods in Calgary. This was guided by the needs of the single women and mothers whose families lacked a support system and had no male member of the household. Placing these women within a larger Yazidi community

facilitated support from other members of the community, particularly men who had taken on leadership roles on a voluntary basis to assist single women and mothers in the community.

In the early stages of resettlement, caseworkers also did community home visits, rotating among various homes to perform group check-ins and follow-ups. This made it easier for women and men to communicate their specific needs on a regular basis without having to travel to the CCIS office.

CCIS also restructured LINC (English language) classes to meet the needs of the women, who did not feel safe travelling downtown alone for school (without male members of the community). The clients also requested Yazidi-only LINC classes as the women were uncomfortable being in an enclosed space with outsiders, particularly Muslim Arabs (whom they identified with their oppressors). Yazidi-only classes were arranged for their first semester to allow for Yazidi women to travel to the CCIS downtown office in large groups for LINC. Yazidi women who struggled with English acquisition were also connected to in-home literacy supports via the Can Learn Society.

In addition, recreational activities were also tailored by gender. Wellness Sessions were started at the beginning of their resettlement and continued for almost two years. These sessions were tailored specifically for Yazidi women who were struggling with anxiety, depression and isolation due to their experiences of trauma from the genocide. It included breathing exercises, emotion regulation and later expanded to yoga and dance to incorporate physical health. A soccer team was created for the male Yazidi youth, whose games also served as a social activity for the older men who came out as spectators to lend support. It was more of a challenge to organize programs for Yazidi girls, who were less vocal in their desire for recreation, though CCIS continued offering focus groups and various weekly activities including sports, dance and craft.

When the organization started monthly educational orientations for the community as a whole, we learned from the first session that the women were less open and vocal in their participation when the men were present. Men and women were then separated into separate sessions in these orientations. A significant increase in vocal participation from the women in the community was noticed in women-only orientations.

In 2019, the Government of Alberta leased a large piece of land to CCIS for five years which CCIS directed toward clients with trauma as a way of creating an opportunity for healing by connecting with nature. The land was named "Land of Dreams" and has since been an integral piece in addressing the mental health needs of the Yazidi community. Working on this vast piece of land, in the individual plots assigned to community members, has resulted in a significant improvement in the mental and physical health of community members. Farming activities remind the Yazidis of their homeland in Iraq as they lived in an agricultural setting. Working on the farm resulted in a reduction of psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES) among women who suffered from PTSD. Working on the land for many hours a few times a week also served as a social activity for many of the Yazidi women, who built a strong camaraderie while out onsite, reminiscing about happy memories of their homeland.

Employment is still proving to be a challenge due to language barriers and family responsibilities within the community, which CCIS continues to work on. Although some men and the younger women have managed to secure seasonal part-time jobs, many of the older women have been unable to do so due to a lack of English acquisition, lack of childcare as well as strongly ingrained beliefs of not being able to be breadwinners. CCIS's current goal with the women is to focus on their employability and to build up feelings of confidence and competence in the skills that they already possess.

Research on refugee resettlement has sporadically focused on how gender plays a role in resettlement services. Most research has focused either on gendered labour or victimhood among refugee women (Nawyn 2010) but, very few researchers have explored the gendered needs of refugee groups within the framework of the resettlement program as a whole.

The firsthand experiences of CCIS staff who helped resettle Yazidi families, recounted here, provides a deeper insight into the resettlement process. It shows that when refugee-serving NGOs are open to learning with those they serve, listening to the voices and needs of women and men as distinct groups with differential needs, the resettlement process becomes a grass-roots and feminist project instead of remaining a paternalistic and top-down service.

Working Around Issues of Gender at the Refugee Clinic

When one of our co-authors, Dr. Coakley encountered her first Yazidi family in March 2017, she thought she was prepared to welcome them into her practice at the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic. The day before, she had attended a briefing on the history of the Yazidi community, provided by CCIS, the clinic's immigrant-serving agency partner. Among other things, Dr. Coakley had learned that the Yazidis had endured 70 genocides, including a very recent one. She quickly learned that despite her briefing, she was ill prepared to care for this population of highly traumatized women and children through her medical practice.

The first Yazidi family that came into Dr. Coakley's office for their initial health assessment broke down in tears while recounting their story of trauma and loss. They were speaking in Kurmanji (the language of the Yazidis), desperate to communicate what had happened to them and their community. The mother and grandmother sat in her small examination room, gesticulating with their hands while tearfully telling their story as their young children cowered behind their mother, unsure of what would happen to them in this strange clinic. When Dr. Coakley tried to secure a Kurmanji interpreter through Language Line, the telephone-based interpretive service, she was told that there were no Kurmanji interpreters available.

It quickly became clear after these experiences that a considerable change in processes and practice was essential at the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic if healthcare providers hoped to serve the Yazidi community. Over the next few months, the Clinic updated and altered its processes to help the newest arrivals feel safe and welcome while addressing their physical

and mental health challenges. There were five ways Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic responded to the communities' needs.

First, the Refugee Clinic found Kurmanji interpreters for the Yazidi through Language Line and immigrant-serving agencies. Initially, the Yazidi women would not trust any Kurmanji interpreter provided by Language Line. Many Yazidi women would trust only their Yazidi Kurmanji-speaking resettlement worker at the resettlement agency, CCIS. Even though the worker was not a trained interpreter, a compromise was agreed upon to use the resettlement worker as an interpreter so that the Yazidi women would feel safe during their health appointments. Over time, as they felt more secure in Canada, they accepted the interpreters provided by Language Line.

Second, because of their extensive sexual trauma and torture during their years in captivity with Daesh, most of the Yazidi women did not feel safe with male providers. Therefore, the Clinic decided to book their appointments only with women health providers. In addition, the Clinic recruited a female psychologist to join the Clinic since the existing psychologist was an Arab man, whom the Yazidi women perceived as threatening since their oppressors were Arab men.

Third, because the mental health of the Yazidi refugees was compromised by the numerous challenges to resettlement, the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic, in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), facilitated a series of workshops, called "Thriving Yazidi Futures". These workshops brought together immigrant-serving agencies, mental health providers, representatives from the board of education, community associations, faith-based groups, the City of Calgary, and most importantly, representatives from the Yazidi community. The goal of the workshops was to empower the Yazidi women and their community to identify their needs and to generate solutions for those needs. Another goal of the workshops was to enhance the capacity of Calgary's social agencies and education system to address the Yazidi community's needs over the medium and long term in order to optimize their settlement outcomes.

Fourth, because of the need for many of the women to be reunited with their families, the providers at the Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic helped them write advocacy letters to the federal government requesting family reunification. By helping the Yazidi women advocate for themselves, trust and rapport was established which then enabled the providers to offer mental health services.

In the same ways that CCIS readjusted programming to accommodate the gendered needs of the Yazidis, the Mosaic Refugee Clinic also recognized the context and culture-based health needs of the Yazidis, particularly Yazidi women, and continues to change its programs to serve the community better. The clinic has partnered with CMHA to restructure mental health services for Yazidis and Yazidi women. The steps taken by Mosaic and CCIS, recognizing that their existing services fell short, have contributed to creating a more inclusive and feminist service orientation. They have also amplified the voices and needs of the Yazidi women emerging in their resettled lives from a history of extreme oppression.

Research by the authors at the University of Calgary, considered in this next section, illustrates the importance of recognizing gender as a key aspect of Yazidi resettlement experiences in Calgary.

Women as Bearers of Care in Yazidi Resettlement

Several studies touch on the importance of resources and needs that are beyond refugees' basic needs – housing, employment, health services, language which are social, personal, and emotional in nature (Beiser 2006; Bergeron and Potter 2006; Danso 2002; McKeary and Newbold 2010; Simich et al. 2003; Simich et al. 2010). The extant literature refers to such resources as social/personal support and/or as social resources. For newcomers, the definition of social support generally revolves around the receiving of some form of assistance that eases the resettlement process (Stewart et al. 2008:140; Agrawal and Zeitouny 2017; Banerjee, Chacko and Piya 2020).

These include support or help received from professional and non-professional networks and individuals that offer assistance by providing information, guidance and advice, emotional support, advocacy, and more (Danso 2002; Simich et al. 2005; Bergeron and Potter 2006:76; Miraftab 2000).

The portrayed reliance of refugees in Canada on social and personal support during their resettlement process highlights the significance of caregiving and care provision in the success of refugee resettlement in the country. For refugees, building and maintaining social and personal networks are necessary acts of survival because they enable them to navigate financial challenges as well as emotional and mental ones. Research has shown that these caregiving resources and networks are often maintained and sustained by women both within and outside of the refugee community in question, at least for the Yazidi community in Calgary (Lamba and Krahn 2003; Spitzer 2006:49 – 51; Saheb Javaher 2020). Research by Saheb Javaher focused on the care that is provided and received by Yazidi refugee women, women CCIS staff assigned to the Yazidi resettlement services, and women Family Host[3] volunteers.

In the resettlement of Yazidi refugee families in Calgary, women take on caregiving roles as:

- Maternal figures at home within Yazidi refugee families;
- Canadian Family Host volunteers as family and friends to Yazidi refugee community; and
- Staff working at the resettlement agency.

3 The Host program, formally called "Community Connections for Newcomers" (CCNC) program at CCIS however in conversations with CCIS staff and Yazidi refugee families, they are referred to as Family Hosts which is the term I will use. The program was established by Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (IRCC), then called Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in 1984, is a volunteer-based program where each newcomer family is "matched" with a Canadian "Host" family in order to enhance the newcomers' resettlement and integration experience (Wang and Truelove 2003:578; Government of Canada 2010; Lutaba 2017).

For this analysis, we focus specifically on data from women actors partly because women are overrepresented in the data: the Yazidi refugee family population in Calgary consists predominantly of women and girls. In the entire Yazidi refugee population in Calgary and in this study, there are 72 adult Yazidi women compared to 52 adult males, and 91 girls below the age of 18 compared to 60 male counterparts. Women are also overrepresented among CCIS staff members who work closely with Yazidi refugee families (out of the 11 interviewees, seven are women including the resettlement centre's manager and four are male – at least an additional five women in CCIS staff roles have been identified as key agents in the resettlement of Yazidi refugees but weren't interviewed). The same over-representation of women is found among Yazidi Family Host volunteers – 83 percent of Family Host volunteers are women. The over-representation of women among staff and volunteers is by design, as discussed earlier.

The presence of women in this study in caregiving roles also reifies the gendered nature of caregiving, often associated with being a woman/mother – as seen in the relationships between the women in various roles involved in this study. For instance, women in the homes were maternal figures to each other, CCIS staff took on the role of older sisters and Family Host volunteers often assumed grandmotherly roles.

The Yazidi refugee maternal figures worked tirelessly to compensate for the vacuum in care created by the absence of familial figures such as fathers, siblings, and grandparents in the household, to help the families adapt to life in Calgary. Whether it was creating happy moments for their families or managing multiple medical appointments where there were language and transportation limitations, Yazidi refugee mothers/sisters offered themselves as resources while also seeking out external resources. They often tried to work around their lingering trust issues stemming from past trauma and actively reach out to CCIS staff and Family Hosts for help, important resources for managing their resettlement process.

CCIS staff who have been working with the community closely, regardless of gender and position, have generally gone beyond their job descriptions and have used the same

approach in their personal interactions and service provision to the Yazidi community. However, there were nuances to the extent of going "beyond." The women staff at CCIS who were assigned to the Yazidi community effectively became extended caregivers. Our research found that the gaps in funding or programming for the resettlement of Yazidi refugees in Calgary were filled by the efforts of these women who took their roles beyond their job descriptions. The additional care necessary for the resettlement of Yazidis as a community suffering from intense trauma were taken on by the women volunteers who acted as Family Hosts. They became grandmothers, aunts and friends to the families. Yazidi families we interviewed who had close relationships with the Family Host described them as part of their Canadian families who made their transition to Canada easier.

These efforts in care provision – women filling the gaps in institutional resettlement resources, including Yazidi refugee women helping their families, or staff and Family Hosts assisting their clients – have made the resettlement of Yazidi refugees possible in Calgary, Canada. Given the importance of this type of work done by women, which largely remains invisible in resettlement work, we call for a closer look into the nuances of social and personal caregiving shouldered by women, because it is essential work in the realm of resettlement processes.

Gender and the Educational Experiences of School-Aged Yazidi Refugee Children

Beyond the care provision, the resettlement study of Yazidis in Calgary also explored the educational experiences of resettled school-aged Yazidi refugee youth (14 years and older), specifically the gendered differences in parental and self-expectations with regards to educational goals. Most of the Yazidi refugee population has received no formal schooling in their home country due to the lack of adequate educational infrastructure in Yazidi villages in Iraq, as Yazidi areas were the last in the country to receive new schools due to the geopolitics of the region (Maisel, 2008, p. 5). The majority of our research participants were living in these

areas before the genocide. As a result, education was largely denied to many children in such communities for generations.

Education is an essential tool for integration and socialization (Yixian & Huizhen, 1987). The literature on the educational experiences of refugee populations is very limited as there is little "empirical and theoretical work on the topic" (Pinson & Arnot, 2007, p. 399). Our study is one of a handful exploring issues of education, resettlement and gender. The central question we focused on was, "Is there a gendered difference in parental and self-expectations with regards to the educational goals of school-aged Yazidi refugee children?"

We found that regardless of the gender of their children, all parents wanted their children to continue their education. There was no mention of gendered goals for their children, which is particularly interesting given the defined gendered expectations espoused by many of our participants within families. The parents stated that they wanted their children to have better futures, but with no specification as to what careers they wanted for their children. Two of the mothers stated that they had not thought about this before; this is important to note as many families did not have strong explicit future goals, as their minds were focused on the safety and reunification of their family members. This may change as the families progress in the resettlement process, and families are reunited. One mother had the following response:

> *"We wish for our children to graduate and do some programs at the university so they can get jobs… [and] help sponsor our son who is still in Iraq."*

For this mother, the goal of education for children was so they could help their families still in Iraq as opposed to any explicit gendered goals.

In terms of career aspirations of the youth, there were no apparent gendered differences. This was particularly interesting as the previous generations of Yazidi people customarily

upheld traditional gender roles. When asked about career aspirations, young boys and girls cited occupations that were diverse in nature and did not conform to gendered roles.

For example, several young girls aspired to become police officers, doctors and one cited wanting to become the Prime Minister of Canada. The boys cited wanting to become painters and physical education teachers. Evidently, daughters did not aspire to be like their mothers, which is an interesting finding given that there was not the same form of interdependence rooted in career goals between the generations, as cited in the academic literature on this topic (Wagner, 2013). It should be noted that the Yazidi "cultural and religious practices do not restrict women from acquiring an education and playing an active role in both financial and family decisions" (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2017, p. 10). The analysis indicates that in terms of the school-aged youth's educational-attainment goals, as a whole, the participants wanted to pursue post-secondary education regardless of gender. All but one young man cited desiring to attend post-secondary education.

Overall, educational aspirations and outcomes of Yazidi youth and parents were not highly gendered, which is different than most other immigrant and refugee groups as well as white Canadian families. This is a crucial finding that requires further inquiry as resettlement efforts should ensure that educational expectations among Yazidis remain de-gendered given the unequal outcomes of gendered aspirations for the life chances of girls and women (Fuller 2009).

Conclusion

A larger finding from the study in Calgary on Yazidi resettlement indicates that women in women-only and women-headed households are integrating at a faster rate than women in families with men as heads of households. This differential integration is to a certain extent a function of the resilience of Yazidi women. However, the efforts of CCIS and Mosaic in incorporating the needs and requirements of the Yazidi in their service programming cannot be underestimated. Both organizations restructured their programming to listen to the voices of women in the community.

This sends a message to the community and the women that they are valued and that their voices are important in the resettlement process. The nurturing work that CCIS staff, the Mosaic doctors and volunteers extended to the community, particularly the single mothers and women, also creates a sense of care-laden empowerment.

The women took on tasks that they never thought they were capable of. This reorientation of resettlement as women-focused may also explain the fact that we did not see gendered aspirations among the Yazidi youth and parents. Centring the gender-based needs of the Yazidi community in the resettlement services has resulted in a resettlement program that is feminist and inclusive. It is important to recognize this and value the invisible work being done by so many women in the efforts to successfully resettle Yazidis in Calgary.

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The Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot Project

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Established in 1991 as a non-profit research organization with a mission to raise the standards of evidence in social policy and programs, SRDC is a full-service research and evaluation firm that designs and manages projects of many sizes and types across Canada, including program evaluations that involve formative, summative, implementation, impact and cost-benefit analyses; strategic program reviews; and policy analyses. To date, we have conducted more than 300 projects across a wide range of sectors, including education and training, employment, youth development, and health and well-being. SRDC is currently involved in leading and/or evaluating numerous projects focused on workforce development, essential skills training, demand-led approaches, and innovative solutions to support populations with significant and/or multiple barriers to employment.

Abstract

The Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women (CPVMNW) Pilot Project is an exciting, innovative three-year pilot project designed to better support newcomer women who identify as visible minorities in entering the Canadian labour market. This paper describes the project origins, CPVMNW models and core features, the rationale behind those features, network of partners, and how the pilot is being evaluated.

Résumé

Le projet pilote Cheminements de carrières pour les nouvelles arrivantes appartenant à une minorité visible (CCNAAMV) est un projet pilote passionnant et novateur qui existe depuis trois ans, conçu pour mieux aider les femmes nouvellement arrivées qui s'identifient comme membres d'une minorité visible à entrer sur le marché du travail canadien. Cet article décrit les origines du projet, les modèles et les caractéristiques de base du CCNAAMV, la raison d'être de ces caractéristiques, le réseau de partenaires et la façon dont le projet pilote est évalué.

Introduction

The Career Pathways for Visible Minority Newcomer Women (CPVMNW) Pilot Project is a pan-Canadian research project comprised of 11 employment services interventions for newcomer women who identify as visible minority which are being implemented by eight service partners.[1] The goal of this research project is to test four models of employment services to learn what works to support newcomer women who identify as visible minority in finding good quality employment.

The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) has been commissioned by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to design and carry out the pilot as well as to conduct its evaluation. The evidence and valuable learning from the pilot project will help inform a wider implementation of approaches that are found to be efficient in supporting better employment outcomes for newcomer women who identify as visible minority. Moreover, it will support IRCC in building a culture of evidence-based decision-making that will strengthen settlement and integration services and improve outcomes for newcomer women and their families.

Context

The Government of Canada's Budget of 2018 stated that employment is key to the successful integration of newcomers to Canada, supporting their financial independence and allowing them to make social connections and build and retain job skills. The Government recognizes that newcomer women who identify as visible minority[2] face significant barriers to finding

1 The eight service partners are: ACCES Employment (GTA), Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (Halifax), MOSAIC (Vancouver), Opportunities for Employment (Winnipeg), la Société économique de l'Ontario (Sudbury, Toronto, Ottawa), Achēv (GTA), World Skills Employment Centre (Ottawa), and YWCA Metro Vancouver.

2 The term "visible minority" is used in the Employment Equity Act. The aim of the Act is to achieve workplace equality and to correct employment disadvantages for four designated groups: Aboriginal peoples, Members of Visible Minorities, Peoples with Disabilities and Women. Visible minority persons are defined in the Employment Equity Act as being non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

and keeping good jobs, including language challenges, lack of Canadian work experience, lack of professional and social networks, and gender- and race-based discrimination. Some women also deal with precarious or low-income employment, lack of accessible childcare, and limited or interrupted education in their home country. To help reduce these barriers to employment, in 2018-19 the Government announced a $31.8 million investment in support of a three-year pilot to provide enhanced programming to help newcomer women who identify as visible minority secure employment.

Who are newcomer women who identify as visible minority in Canada?

Newcomer women constitute a growing part of Canadian society. It is estimated that by 2031, 27.4 per cent of the Canadian female population will be immigrants. Most newcomers identify as visible minorities – in 2016, 56 per cent of all female immigrants and 85 per cent of recent female immigrants identified as a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2016).[3] The population of women immigrants who identify as visible minorities has been increasing. Indeed, the proportion of recent female immigrants belonging to a visible minority group was 55 per cent in 1981, 71 per cent in 1991 and 79 per cent in 2011 (Hudon, 2016).

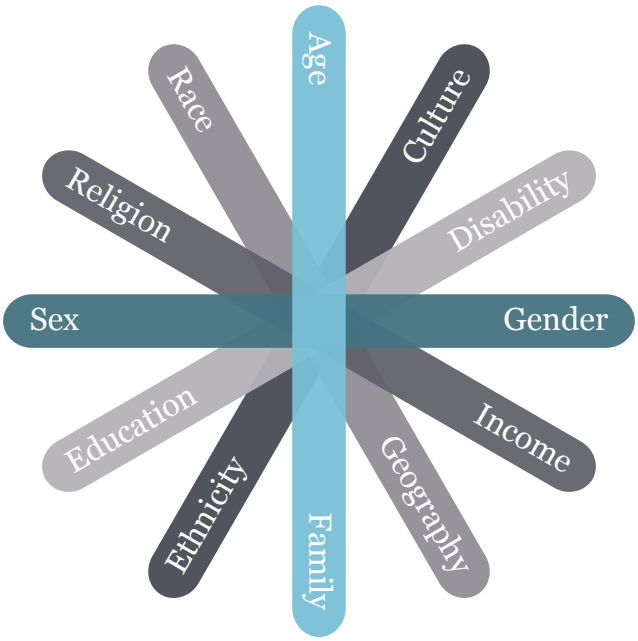
The majority of newcomer women who identify as visible minority live in large urban centres. However, there are differences in the largest visible minority groups across census metropolitan areas and municipalities. Immigrant women tend to be highly educated (27.7 per cent have a university degree or higher), and most are admitted under the economic class (54.1 per cent) followed by the family class (34.3 per cent).

Newcomers to Canada come from many countries. The visible minority population in Canada is mainly persons from the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

3 Recent immigrants (also known as newcomers or recent arrivals) are landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given survey year or census year.

In addition to their ethnic background, newcomer women who identify as visible minority are quite diverse. Indeed, each woman plays a variety of roles in her life and identifies with multiple factors. Each of these factors – several are presented in Figure 1 – affects individual experiences. Each unique combination of characteristics influences the way a newcomer woman who identifies as a visible minority integrates into the labour market, determines the barriers she may face and the way she experiences them.

Figure 1: Intersectionality of factors affecting a newcomer woman's experiences



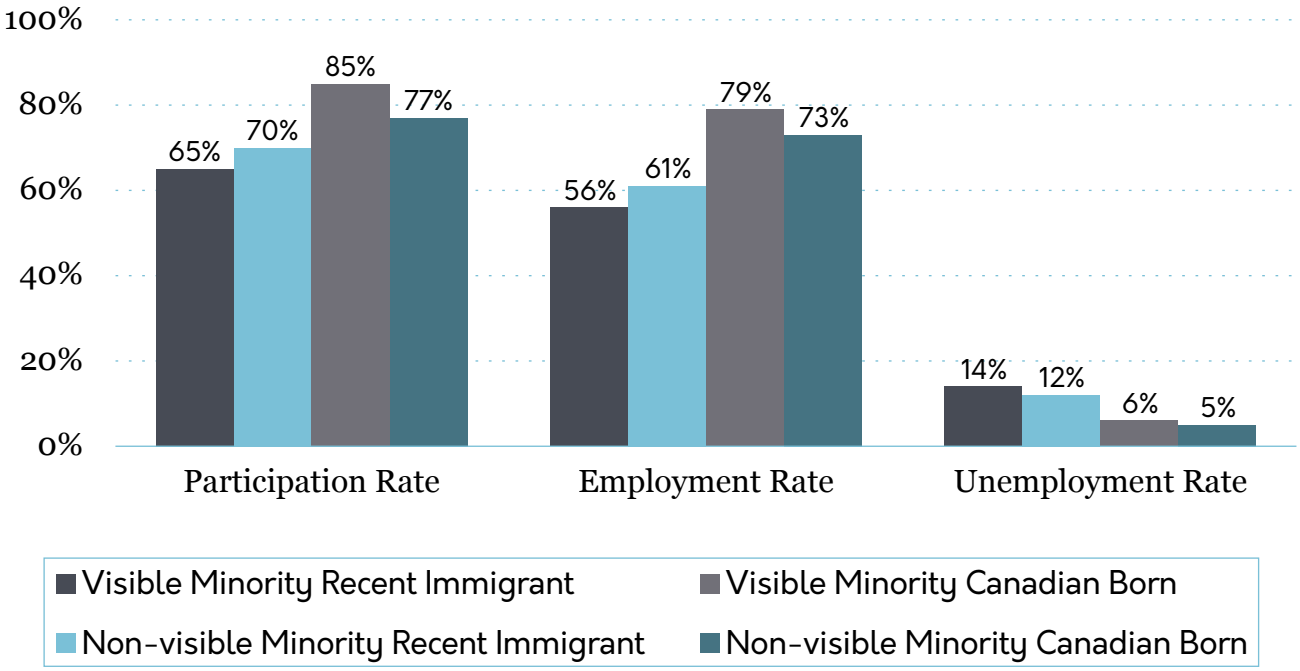
What is the problem being addressed?

Canada has one of the highest inflows of newcomers per capita, and projections show that immigration will continue to be a major contributor to future demographic and labour force growth. Indeed, in the next decade, newcomers will account for the entire net increase in the labour force. However, immigrants, and particularly women who identify as visible minority, are struggling to gain entry into the labour market.

In fact, newcomer women who identify as visible minority have lower labour force participation rates than non-visible minority Canadian-born women: 77.2 per cent (non-visible minority Canadian-born women) vs. 65 per cent (visible minority recent immigrant women) for the core group of 25 – 64 years old. They also have a lower employment rate than Canadian-born women (73.2 per cent vs. 55.9 per cent for the core group of 25 – 64 years old) (Statistics Canada, 2016). Figure 1 illustrates these and other labour market statistics by the immigration status and visible minority status for women of the core group of 25 – 64 years old. It shows recent newcomer women who identify as a visible minority have the lowest labour market participation rate, lowest employment rate and highest unemployment rate among the four groups of women included in the chart.

In addition to lower labour market participation for immigrant women, the gap in the employment incomes between immigrants and Canadians is well documented and increasing (Aydemir & Skuterud, 2004; Frenette & Morissette, 2005; Picot & Sweetman, 2005).

Figure 2: Labour market participation for women (25 – 64 years old) in Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 98-400-X2016286.

Employed immigrant women earn less; they have a median income of $3,558 less a year than Canadian-born women. Moreover, it takes immigrant women longer to integrate into the labour force than immigrant men.

What barriers are newcomer women who identify as visible minority facing in integrating into the labour market?

There is general agreement in the literature on settlement that economic integration is a key step for newcomers trying to integrate socially and culturally and contribute to their communities. For many, the transition into their profession or employment is often the most difficult part of settlement.

The intersection of characteristics and other factors of newcomer women who identify as visible minority makes their integration into society and into the labour market particularly challenging:

- Newcomer women who identify as visible minority face barriers that many newcomers encounter: poor pre-migration knowledge about the Canadian labour market, lack of recognition of foreign credentials, insufficient language proficiency, lack of Canadian work experience, need to understand Canadian culture and "Canadian way" of doing things, lack of social networks and employer reluctance to hire. These barriers are well documented in the literature.[4]
- Newcomer women who identify as visible minority may experience discrimination due to their visible minority, gender and newcomer statuses.

4 Nabavi, M., Rodier, J., and Legault, L. 2015. Alberta Delivery of Settlement and Integration Services: Final Report, SRDC.

- Women are often the primary childcare providers, thus there are additional barriers such as unavailability of affordable daycare, lack of a support network and cultural gender norms[5] that make it difficult for newcomer women to enter the labour market.

- Cultural intelligence[6] and psychological and social aspects[7] are barriers that are less discussed in the literature, but they also present considerable barriers for newcomer women entering into the labour force and maintaining employment.

What models are we testing as part of the CPVMNW Pilot Project?

The CPVMNW Pilot Project is testing four program models to better support newcomer women who identify as visible minority in entering the Canadian labour market. The interventions were developed after a thorough analysis and consideration of findings from a previous literature review, environmental scan, discussions with newcomer women who identify as visible minority and 11 consultations across Canada with immigrant serving organizations, women's associations, employment service providers, employer councils and other key stakeholders.

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5 The cultural gender norms do not strongly persist through generations. Pessin and Arpino (2018) analyzed the attitudes towards women working among first- and second-generation immigrants from multiple origin countries living in different countries. They show that first generation immigrants hold views that are more aligned with the source country ideology, while second-generation immigrants have stronger positive association with the gender ideology in the destination country. While there may be some selection into coming to a country with more liberal gender norms, newcomers are still more likely to hold origin country beliefs and views about women working (Pessin & Arpino, 2018).

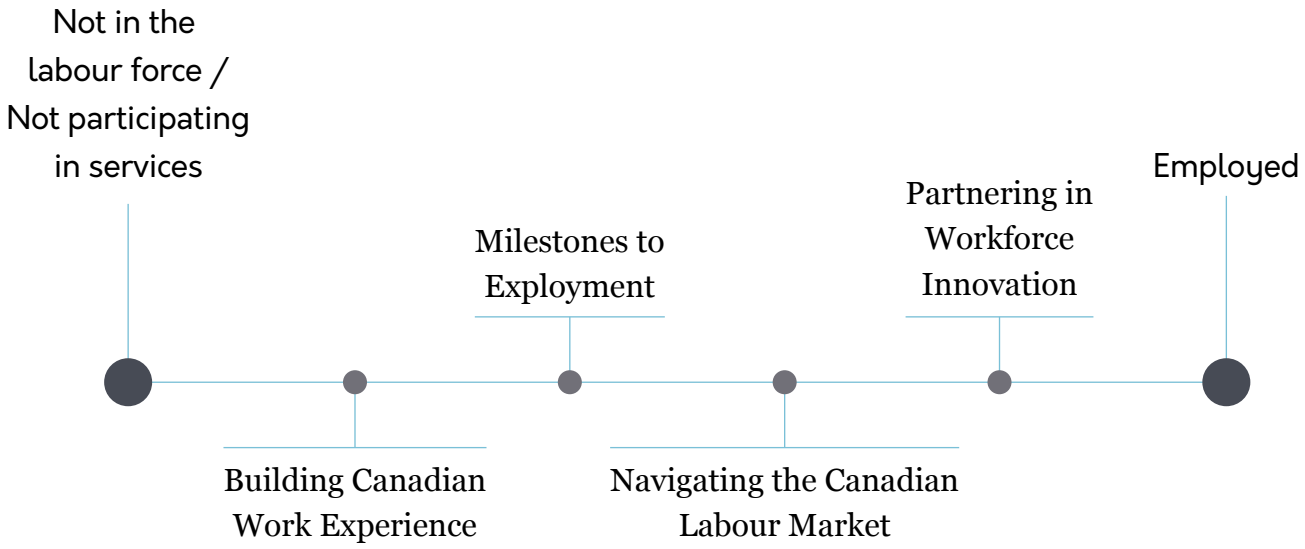
6 The concept of cultural intelligence or the "CQ" construct was developed by Earley and Ang in 2003, and is defined as "a person's capability to perform and manage effectively in an intercultural environment." Cultural intelligence is crucial for the effective integration of recent immigrants into the host society and the workplace. Newcomers with higher CQ can adjust better and create better networks in organizations. Other employees in an organization should also be encouraged to be open-minded and accepting of various work styles and points of view (Malik et al., 2013).

7 Examples include: Fortin (2005) found that women's participation rates in the labour market may be hindered by an inner conflict, the so-called mother's guilt, when family values clash with society's egalitarian view.

They aim to address one or more of the major barriers that newcomer women who identify as visible minority face in their search for employment, as well as job retention.

Collectively, the models address the continuum of distance that separates people from the labour market. Each model targets a specific population of newcomer women based on how distant they are from employment and is designed to address barriers to help these specific populations get closer and/or into the labour market.

Figure 3: Tested models on the distance from the labour market continuum



Model 1: Milestones to Employment

The Milestones to Employment model takes a demand-led approach on preparing newcomer women who identify as visible minority for jobs in high-growth industries and sectors. The model provides learning pathways to employment for a large employer or a sector based on the achievement of multiple intermediate steps, or milestones, leading to the desired employment outcomes. Its aim is to facilitate the transition to a work placement with the ultimate goal of continued employment and advancement.

By aligning training with the newcomer women's needs while also preparing them to meet the needs of employers in specific sectors, it is making sure that the job placements are beneficial for both employers and job seekers.

Target population

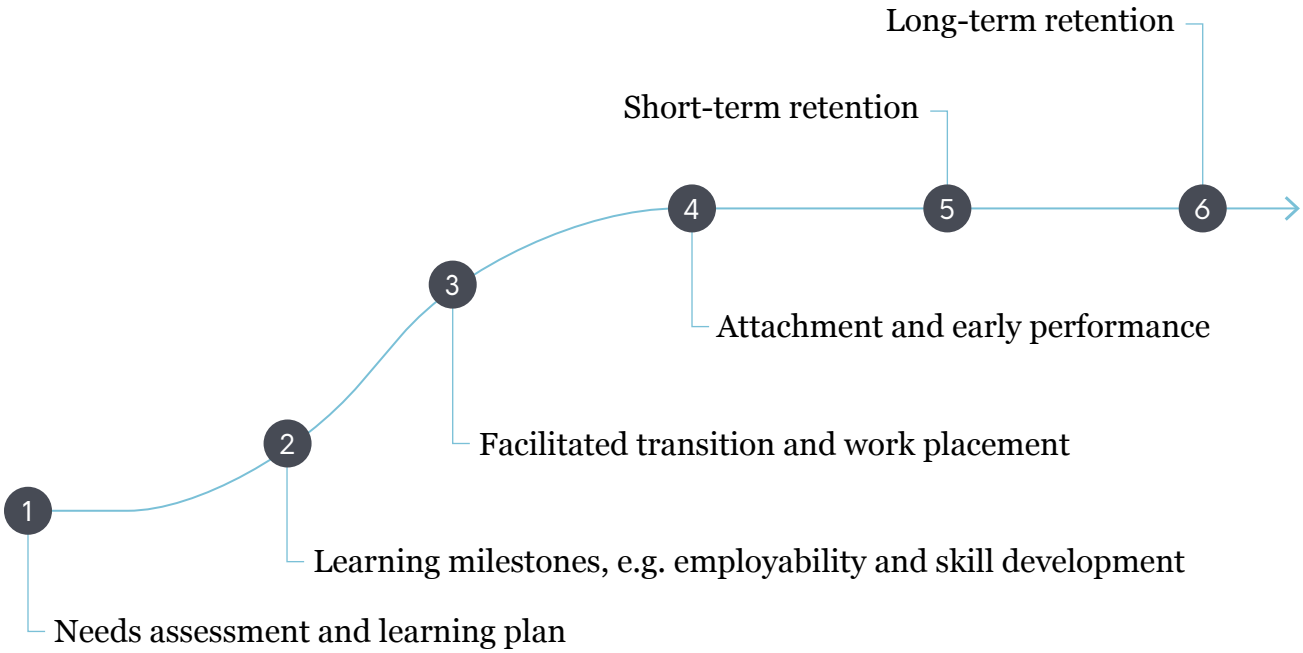
This model targets newcomer women job seekers who identify as visible minority who do not have multiple barriers that would prevent them from participating in employment services, but who are otherwise relatively distant from the labour market (e.g., those with little or no Canadian work experience, individuals with lower education credentials or skills or working in precarious, part-time or "survival" jobs).

Key features

The model consists of three main components:

- A classroom-based training component (milestones #1 – 2 in Figure 4), which builds an "on-ramp" for job seekers to prepare them for a work placement – this component may take one month or longer, depending on learners' distances from the labour market;
- A work placement offered by a large employer/sector (milestone #3 in Figure 4), with variable duration depending on the nature of the job; and
- A job attachment and retention component (milestones #4 – 6 in Figure 4), in which post-training supports are offered to learners as they transition to the workplace – job retention such as job coaching to be provided for 3 to 12 months to monitor the employment relationship and to provide support if needed.

Figure 4: Milestones to Employment – an example



Service partners

This model is currently being tested by Achēv , Opportunities for Employment, and MOSAIC.

Model 2: Navigating the Canadian Labour Market

The Navigating the Canadian Labour Market model offers newcomer women who identify as visible minority support in the development of a clear career plan based on a thorough assessment of their skills and provides them opportunities to connect with potential employers. This model applies the essential skills framework developed by the Government of Canada.

Once participants have developed a structured skills portfolio and put together a career plan, they are offered access to essential skills training if skills upgrading is found necessary. The model also provides opportunities for connections with employers to help improve participants' career adaptability and work around some of the challenges they face in entering the Canadian labour market.

Contacts with employers provide participating women with an opportunity to learn about local labour market and workplace needs and to tap into the informal and hidden job market.

Target population

This model is suitable for newcomers who are ready or almost ready to work in Canada (i.e., women with postsecondary education[8] and an adequate level of fluency in English or French).

Key features

The model consists of three main components (see Figure 5).

1. **The first component is in-class workshops for portfolio building and career development** to help newcomer women develop career pathways and action plans that best fit their skills and needs. The objective is to provide a supportive environment where participants can:

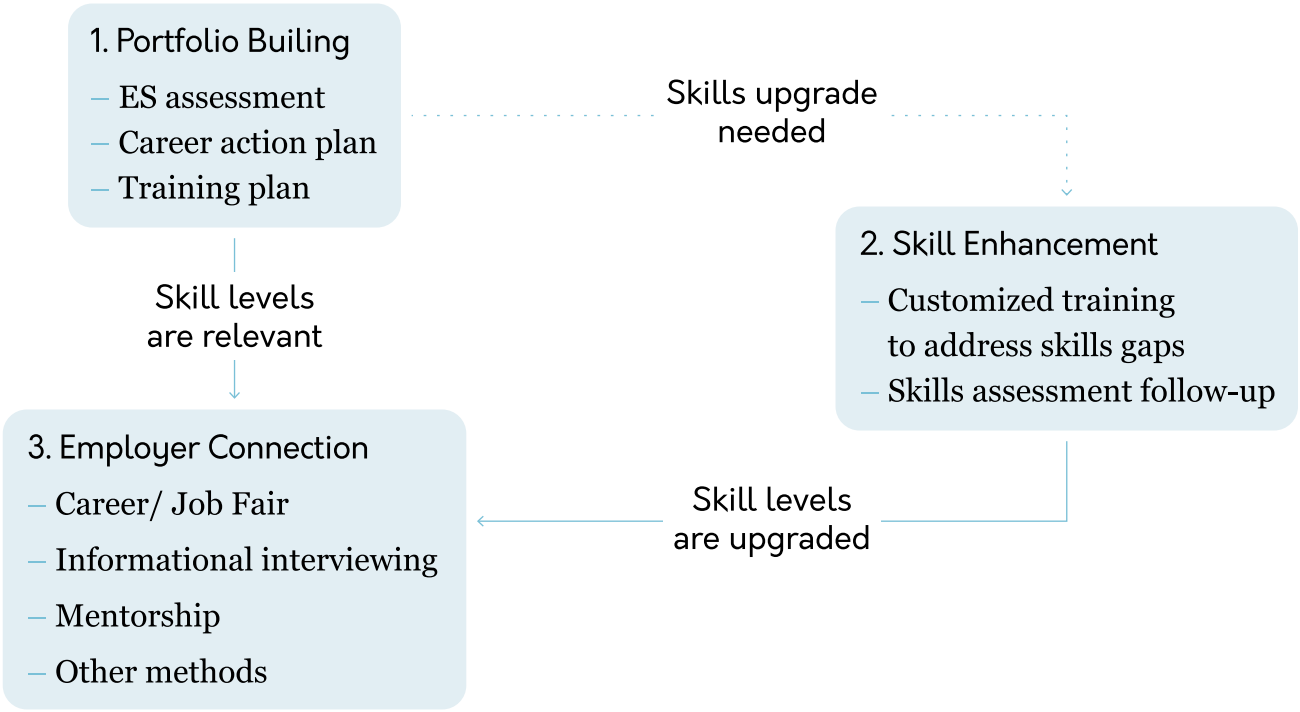
- Identify and document their technical skills and essential skills;
- Identify skill requirements related to potential targeted occupations with reference to the Government of Canada's "Essential skills profiles by occupation";
- Build a realistic career action plan based on the match between assessed skill levels and required occupational skill levels; and
- Learn how to present their portfolio using the language of Canadian employers to communicate and engage with them effectively.

8 This criterion is based on the positive results achieved by university-educated immigrant women in a similar pilot called The Foundation Workplace Skills Program.

2. **The second component is an essential skills enhancement training program.** Ideally, the identified career pathways and action plan would require no further essential skills training for participants. For participants who do not need the training, they would move directly to the third component. But for those who could benefit from some upgrading of their essential skills, they would have the option to receive such training. Although the duration and length of the training will depend on the services offered by the training providers and the chosen career and needs of the participants, it is expected that a suitable career pathway should not require lengthy nor substantial skills upgrading. Thus, this component is intended to take between 2 and 10 weeks, depending on the learner's needs.

3. **The third component of the model provides ways for participants to connect with employers.** The objective is to build participants' professional networks and relationships with employers in their targeted sector to further their career goals. It introduces participants to effective ways to reach employers.

Figure 5: Key components of the Navigating the Canadian Labour Market model



Service partners

This model is currently being piloted by ISANS, ACCES Employment, Achēv, World Skills Employment Centre, and YWCA Metro Vancouver.

Model 3: Partnering in Workforce Innovation

Brief description

This model proposes a demand-driven approach using recruitment specialists who work directly with employers/sectors with significant workforce needs to match them with newcomer women who identify as visible minority who have the skills, career interest and abilities to perform the job. They act as the interface between employers and women's and immigrant-serving organizations to recruit suitable candidates.

Target population

The model is targeted to newcomer women who identify as visible minority who are closer to the labour market and ready to be employed regardless of their education level, as the required skills will depend on the nature of the available jobs.

Key features

The key component in the model is a recruitment specialist (RS) who organizes the recruitment process on behalf of employers and interfaces with employment service providers, settlement service organizations and community agencies to source and identify suitable candidates. The RS is employed by the service partner in CPVMNW. The model operates through a four-stage recruitment process (Figure 6):

- Assessment. The RS engages with employers to assess the requirements of the job, as well as the workplace environment. The RS develops the recruitment process with the employer and circulates the opportunity to the service partner network for a candidate search.
- Recruitment. The RS pre-screens all referrals and interviews selected referrals first. Suitable candidates are referred to employers. Employers provide feedback to the RS, who in turn communicates back to the referring agencies and candidates.
- Employment. The hiring decision is communicated by the employer to the RS. The RS advises the candidate and referring agency contact. The employer issues the selected candidate an employment offer. Eligible supports are provided by the service agency and/or employer (e.g., workplace orientation, training, transportation, etc.).
- Post-placement support. The RS follows up with the employer, agency and employee in the first month of employment to check preliminary progress and any opportunities for continued support and development are identified and communicated back to the agency. The RS conducts another check-in after the second month.

Figure 6: Key features of the Partnering in Workforce Innovation model

Service partners

This model is currently being tested by World Skills Employment Centre and la Société économique de l'Ontario.

Model 4: Building Canadian Work Experience

The Building Canadian Work Experience model is designed to create paid short-term jobs to assist unemployed newcomer refugee women gain meaningful work experience with organizations. The intent of the model is to offer "on-the-job" language practice and experience in a Canadian workplace. Specifically, this model consists of a short employment readiness training and a 3-month work placement.

The approach is aimed at enhancing the participant's employability readiness, skills, workplace culture knowledge and network by providing a Canadian work experience opportunity. This is especially valuable if the newcomer women have been unemployed for a long time or have never worked in Canada.

Target Population

The intervention is designed for newcomer refugee women who are receiving social assistance benefits. This is a group fairly distant from the labour market; many only have secondary education or less.

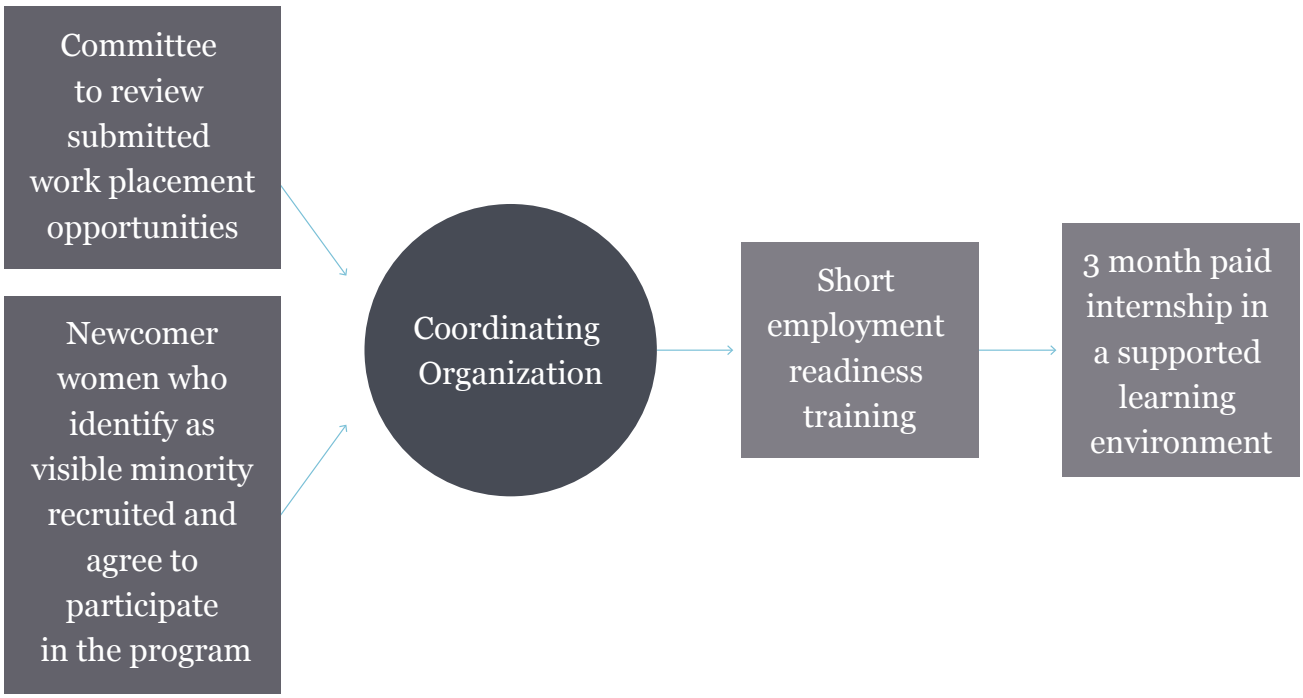
Key features

This model consists of four key components (see Figure 7):

- A short employment readiness training for participating women before their internships to help prepare them for the placement and to enhance their essential skills.
- A 3-month paid internship that can be part-time or full-time (30 or more hours per week). Approved organizations will receive funding to pay the salaries and benefits of participants in these short-term work placements.

- An organization responsible for coordinating and managing intake and referrals of participants, including assessing the needs and abilities of the referrals and aligning the women with the right work placement opportunities. It also provides support to the women and organizations during the placement period, as well as help with the transition afterwards to other programs or services as needed.
- A committee reviews submitted work placement opportunities to ensure that they meet project requirements and their plan to provide a "meaningful" work experience and build skills. Meaningful is defined by the project partners.

Figure 7: Key components in Building Canadian Work Experience



Service partners

This model is currently being tested by YWCA Metro Vancouver.

Evaluation

SRDC designed a case study approach and a statistical analysis of intervention impacts to evaluate the CPVMNW. A case study approach will be used to assess the design and implementation of the pilot projects by each service provider in terms of delivery, alignment with VMNW's needs and other employment and integration programs, program scalability, and stakeholder outcomes. To assess the efficacy of an intervention (by a service provider or across different service providers of the same model), a statistical assessment of intervention impacts on stakeholder outcomes will be conducted, where possible. A cost-benefit analysis of the interventions is also planned. The evaluation will be guided by a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens, which ensures diversity and inclusion are part of the evaluation process.

The implementation and evaluation of CPVMNW is currently underway. An early implementation report is planned for early 2021. For additional information, contact Susanna Lui Gurr at sgurr@srdc.org.

Section 5

Key Components of Attachment & Social Cohesion

Composantes clés de l'attachement et de la cohésion sociale

Cohésion sociale et diversité : perspectives des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire[1]

1 Nous tenons à remercier notre bailleur de fonds – la Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada – pour le financement de cette étude. Nous sommes tout particulièrement reconnaissantes à tous les représentants d'organismes porte-parole et à tous les participants aux groupes de discussion pour leur temps et contribution généreuse à ce projet. Enfin, nos assistantes de recherche nous ont soutenus lors des différentes étapes de l'étude : Francine Busungu, Sabrina Laaouidi, Atieh Yekta, Natasha Damiano et Mélodie Honen-Delmar.

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Résumé

Dans cet article, nous examinons les perspectives des francophones nés au Canada et à l'étranger sur le concept de cohésion communautaire appliqué aux communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (CFSM). Pour ce faire, nous avons mené neuf groupes de discussion avec un total de 67 participants sur quatre provinces canadiennes (Manitoba, Colombie-Britannique, Nouveau-Brunswick, et Ontario). Notre analyse thématique repose sur les facteurs qui soutiennent, ou le cas échéant entravent, la participation sociale et la cohésion communautaire. Les aspects spécifiques suivants ont fait l'objet d'une analyse critique : sentiment d'appartenance et communautarisme, langue et identité, relation à l'autre/hôte, inclusion et désethnicisation. L'analyse de nos données suggère que le respect de la diversité ethnoculturelle et l'importance d'une relation à l'autre fondée sur une éthique de réciprocité restent considérés comme les piliers fondamentaux de la cohésion sociale. L'article conclut avec des pistes de réflexion sur l'importance de relations fondées sur des principes de réciprocité et d'égalité des chances, ainsi que sur le rôle critique des institutions dans l'achèvement du projet de la cohésion sociale.

Abstract

This article examines the perspectives of Canadian-born and foreign-born Francophones about the concept of community cohesion as applied to Francophone minority communities (FMCs). To this end, we conducted nine focus groups with a total of 67 participants in four Canadian provinces (Manitoba, British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Ontario). Our thematic analysis is based on the factors that support, or where applicable, hinder social participation and community cohesion. The following specific aspects were critically analyzed: sense of belonging and community, language and identity, relationship to other/host, inclusion, and de-ethnicization. The analysis of our data suggests that respect for ethnocultural diversity and the importance of a relationship to the other based on an ethic of reciprocity continue to be seen as fundamental pillars of social cohesion. The article concludes with some food for thought on the importance of relationships based on principles of reciprocity and equal opportunity, as well as on the critical role of institutions in the realization of the social cohesion process.

La cohésion sociale est un facteur important en matière d'inclusion, de participation et d'opportunités parce qu'elle reflète des valeurs de solidarité, d'appartenance et d'entente interculturelle (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne et Solomos, 2007 ; Lymperopoulou, 2019 ; Mamatis, Sanford, Ansara, et Roche, 2019). Elle prend une valeur d'autant plus significative lorsque l'on considère que la diversité sociale, culturelle et linguistique du Canada comprend des enjeux particulièrement importants dans le cadre des communautés francophones en situation minoritaire (CFSM) (Fourot, 2016 ; Huot, Veronis, Sall, Piquemal, et Zellama, 2020). Dans ce qui suit, nous exposons les résultats d'une étude dont l'objectif était d'examiner les perspectives des francophones nés au Canada et à l'étranger sur le concept de cohésion communautaire appliqué aux CFSM. Pour ce faire, nous avons mené neuf groupes de discussion avec un total de 67 participants sur quatre provinces canadiennes (Manitoba, Colombie-Britannique, Nouveau-Brunswick, et Ontario). Nous offrons ici une synthèse de nos résultats.

Premier cas : cohésion communautaire, diversité culturelle et enjeux identitaires au Manitoba

Le Manitoba abrite des communautés culturellement et linguistiquement diversifiées. Bien que le français n'apparaisse pas parmi les 10 langues les plus parlées dans la province, elle demeure la langue maternelle de 3,4 % de la population et la langue officielle de 3,2 % de la population. Winnipeg accueille une communauté vibrante de nouveaux arrivants qui représentent le quart de la population urbaine. Parmi l'ensemble des immigrants d'expression française, 57 % proviennent d'Afrique, 28 % proviennent d'Europe, 9 % viennent d'Asie et 7 % viennent des Amériques (Commissariat aux langues officielles, Infographie, 2018).

18 participants ont participé à trois groupes de discussion, dont 10 hommes, 6 femmes, et 2 dont le genre n'a pas été précisé. Trois participants sont nés au Manitoba, cinq participants sont nés ailleurs au Canada (Québec [4] et Nouveau-Brunswick [1]) et dix participants sont nés à l'étranger (Sénégal [2], Cameroun [1], Côte d'Ivoire [1], Algérie [1], France [2], Mali [1], Maroc [1], Belgique [1]). 72 % d'entre eux étaient mariés et 28 % se sont déclarés célibataires sans enfant. 12 % de nos participants possédaient un Baccalauréat et 88 % une Maîtrise ou un Doctorat.

L'analyse du sentiment d'appartenance à la communauté fait ressortir des facteurs de soutien et des facteurs de risque. Les facteurs qui renforcent le sentiment d'appartenance sont d'ordre économique, linguistique et socioculturel. La perception d'un projet migratoire faisable dans le cadre d'une économie considérée comme stable constitue un facteur attrayant pour les participants. De plus, la présence du Français, comme par exemple dans les écoles franco-manitobaines, constitue, elle aussi, une motivation importante : « Le français était dans notre décision et il a toujours été question de mettre les enfants dans les écoles de la DSFM. Pas question de les mettre en immersion. » La perception du Manitoba comme une terre d'accueil semble constituer un dénominateur commun dans le sentiment d'appartenance, ainsi que la forte présence de communautés ethnoculturelles. Les facteurs qui entravent le sentiment d'appartenance à la communauté sont liés à la discrimination et à l'instrumentalisation de l'immigration :

> *Si on sent toujours bienvenus ? Ça dépend, en tant qu'immigrant, dans le milieu professionnel, il faut pousser pour être dans le débat pour avoir une place, là tu ne te sens pas bienvenu, alors même s'il y a des invitations formelles des fois, tu as le sentiment d'être une représentation plus qu'autre chose parce qu'on veut que tu sois là. On veut colorer le débat.*

Parallèlement aux facteurs qui entravent le sentiment d'appartenance, il existe un certain nombre de barrières à la participation sociale et à la cohésion communautaire. En particulier, la relation interculturelle est perçue comme manquant de réciprocité surtout lorsqu'il s'agit du rapport hôte autre : « Nous tous immigrants, on laisse quelque chose à la porte avant de rentrer. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'il y a toujours des résistances au changement, il y a des résistances à la nouveauté. Il faut se battre pour être accepté ». Ce sentiment est ressenti de façon plus exacerbée par les immigrants qui ont des marqueurs identitaires minoritaires.

Par ailleurs, des facteurs linguistiques et sociohistoriques viennent amplifier les discontinuités culturelles, dans la mesure où une certaine fragilité linguistique accompagnée d'un repli sur soi encore palpable se mêle à des sentiments ambivalents par rapport à la langue ; alors que pour certains, le français est un symbole de fierté et de résilience, pour d'autres il est une marque de souffrance : « Le français c'est du colonisateur pour moi. Elle n'est pas forcément valorisante pour moi ».

Les participants s'accordent sur le fait que la cohésion sociale n'est pas une utopie, mais un projet en cours de concrétisation, qui représente l'affaire de tous : institutions, communautés et individus. À ce titre, le respect de la diversité ethnoculturelle et l'importance d'une relation à l'autre fondée sur une éthique de réciprocité restent considérés comme les piliers fondamentaux de la cohésion sociale dans un Manitoba diversifié. Concrètement, des efforts sont à faire de part et d'autre pour comprendre le contexte historique de la francophonie manitobaine tout en élargissant ce même concept pour englober la richesse francophone à l'échelle mondiale :

> *L'éducation, la sensibilisation, la promotion, l'identité, on a parlé de l'identité, intégrer ce que c'est l'histoire francophone manitobaine, mais intégrer aussi d'autres éléments de la francophonie représentatifs de toutes les couches qui sont en train de se bâtir. On ne pourra plus parler que de l'histoire métisse ou Louis Riel, on va devoir parler de tout le monde, de Senghor, d'Aimer Césaire, de la négritude, de la colonisation, de l'affranchissement, de l'Afrique.*

La faisabilité de la cohésion sociale dépend du bon vouloir de chacun, mais les participants considèrent que les institutions (lois, règles, politiques publiques, organismes, familles, valeurs, cultures, etc.) jouent le rôle de dynamo dans l'achèvement du projet de la cohésion sociale.

Deuxième cas : l'impact des défis géographiques sur la cohésion communautaire dans le Grand Vancouver

Les résultats obtenus dans le Grand Vancouver sont basés sur deux groupes de discussion. Dix femmes et cinq hommes ont participé. Cinq participants sont nés au Canada et dix sont nés à l'étranger (Île Maurice [2], Belgique [1], Côte d'Ivoire [1], France [2], Guinée [1], Iran [1], Kenya [1], Rwanda [1]). Les trois quarts des participants avaient un diplôme universitaire et 40 % avaient des enfants.

Les participants ont défini la cohésion communautaire autour de notions telles que la solidarité, la représentation de la diversité et la défense des droits liés à la langue. Selon eux, il s'agit « de se rassembler, tout ce qui est en commun quand on est francophone, étant donné qu'on est en minorité surtout, qui est très important. »

Les participants ont mentionné différents espaces phares selon eux pour la communauté (entre autres, les écoles, mais aussi certains réseaux sociaux et espaces virtuels). L'accès et le sentiment d'appartenance à ces espaces semblent inégaux et évolutifs, mais les participants apprécient de prendre part aux évènements de la CFSM et leur engagement tend à avoir un effet « boule de neige » : plus ils participent, plus ils sont au courant des prochains évènements et ont du plaisir à y venir, car ils connaissent de plus en plus de monde :

> *« Au début, j'évitais les francophones donc j'allais pas au (…) théâtre en français, que maintenant j'adore, j'adore, mais au début non, j'évitais tout ça (…) et avec le temps je pense que je me suis mis petit à petit à chercher des – je sais pas si c'est culturellement j'avais besoin de personnes qui ont grandi en France ou au Québec (…) oui, je sais pas, il y a quelque chose vraiment qui me manquait. »*

Le manque d'espace adéquat, la centralisation des activités et la distance géographique ont été mentionnés comme des barrières importantes. De plus, le coût de la vie à Vancouver pose un défi important à l'installation et la rétention des nouveaux arrivants dans la région. À l'intérieur de la CFSM, des participants ont mentionné certaines formes de discrimination, comme le jugement des différents accents et le racisme. Au-delà de la CFSM, plusieurs sentaient que la communauté francophone manque de visibilité et de reconnaissance dans la région, notamment en comparaison avec d'autres communautés dominantes numériquement.

> *« Je pense que c'est le fait que les gens viennent ici et restent pas nécessairement pour des années et des années. Donc ça bouge tellement que moi les gens que je connaissais, il y a sept ans quand je suis arrivée, qui parlaient français, sont pas nécessairement ici encore, pour des raisons qui sont pas nécessairement reliées à la francophonie. »*

Les recommandations proposées par les participants concernaient l'accès à des espaces, l'accueil et le soutien des immigrants. De manière générale, la communauté doit adopter une approche proactive pour attirer et rassembler les différents membres de la communauté ainsi qu'accueillir les immigrants francophones, encourager leur participation et répondre à leurs besoins :

> *« Deux choses : ce que j'ai pu constater, la première chose c'est que oui on parle toujours de Vancouver (…) puis ce serait bien (…) de décentraliser un petit peu (…) puis l'autre chose, moi je pense que (…) c'est l'immigration qui va faire que la francophonie va survivre en Colombie-Britannique, dans l'Ouest canadien, il faut les supporter le plus, il faut être créatif (…) il faut s'assurer que quand ils arrivent ici, il y a ce qu'il faut pour fonctionner puis vivre en français, continuer à vivre en français. »*

D'une part l'accès à des espaces physiques, polyvalents et dynamiques doit être facilité, en créant un centre communautaire dans les villes aux alentours de Vancouver ou en louant différents espaces à travers la région (pour éviter la centralisation des activités et permettre un roulement dans la distance entre les membres de la communauté et les activités organisées). D'autre part, pour susciter un sentiment d'appartenance, les espaces doivent être sans jugement et permettre les rencontres. Si les espaces propres aux pays d'origine sont importants, les participants souhaitent aussi avoir des espaces permettant la mixité et l'affirmation de la langue française dans la diversité.

Troisième cas : francophonies fragmentées ou francophonie unie dans une Acadie qui se diversifie

Au début des années 2000, L'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick est devenue une communauté d'accueil par le droit[2] et par un argumentaire démographique militant (nécessité de maintenir un équilibre démographique entre francophones et anglophones de la province). Toutefois, en suivant le continuum promotion-accueil-intégration et participation civique des nouveaux arrivants à leur CFSM défini par le gouvernement fédéral (Fourot, 2016), l'Acadie ne s'est jamais posé la question de sa cohésion sociale dans le cadre de la diversité ethnoculturelle.

2 Nous référons le lecteur aux deux lois suivantes : **1-** La *Loi sur l'immigration et la protection des réfugiés* entrée en vigueur le 28 juin 2002 reconnaît le rôle que joue l'immigration chez les communautés francophones et acadiennes, comme en témoignent les dispositions suivantes : « 3. (1) En matière d'immigration, la présente loi a pour objet : [...] b) d'enrichir et de renforcer le tissu social et culturel du Canada dans le respect de son caractère fédéral, bilingue et multiculturel ; b1) de favoriser le développement des collectivités de langues officielles minoritaires au Canada ; (3) L'interprétation et la mise en œuvre de la présente loi doit avoir pour effet : [...] e) de soutenir l'engagement du gouvernement du Canada à favoriser l'épanouissement des minorités francophones et anglophones du Canada : [...] ». **2-** La première stipule clairement qu'« en vertu de la loi, Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada et les autres institutions fédérales œuvrant dans le secteur de l'immigration sont tenus de prendre des mesures positives afin que les communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire (CLOSM) puissent, entre autres choses, bénéficier de l'immigration ».

Or, une telle préoccupation est fondamentale dans cette francophonie minoritaire du 21e siècle qui peine à assurer sa transition d'une nation ethnique vers une nation-contrat inclusive de la diversité (Thériault, 1995). Ayant jusqu'ici bâti sa cohésion sociale dans le cadre du catholicisme, de la blanchitude et de sa propre manière de pratiquer le français, comment l'Acadie peut-elle abandonner sa cohésion sociale basée sur le principe de l'homogénéité ethnique pour mettre en œuvre un nouveau modèle de cohésion sociale inclusif ? Ne pouvant pas abandonner son ancien modèle de cohésion, elle semble se contenter d'un accueil symbolique des immigrants entraînant une fragmentation de la francophonie locale.

L'accueil symbolique des immigrants se manifeste par la contradiction entre un discours ouvert à l'immigration et une fermeture des secteurs du marché du travail en français, soit l'éducation (aux niveaux primaire et secondaire) et la santé ainsi que par la quasi-nécessité de maîtriser l'anglais pour assurer son intégration économique.

Le secteur de l'éducation qui est l'instance de reproduction principale de la communauté acadienne recrute de plus en plus des élèves issus de l'immigration. Toutefois, le corps enseignant et administratif demeure très homogène à cause d'une préférence ethnique au recrutement d'enseignants acadiens. Annabelle, originaire d'Europe, et qui a choisi de vivre en Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick pour des raisons de qualité de vie et de sécurité, est titulaire d'un diplôme en enseignement obtenu en Belgique. Malgré ses compétences, elle s'est fait dire lors d'une entrevue d'embauche dans une école de la région du Grand Moncton : « Vous êtes compétente, madame, mais comment allez-vous enseigner la culture acadienne à nos enfants ? ». Choquée par cette remarque inappropriée, elle s'est tournée vers le district anglophone sud où elle a réussi à obtenir un emploi pour enseigner l'immersion en français.

Dans le domaine de la santé, les discriminations envers les étudiants internationaux racialisés semblent exister durant les stages. Ces discriminations se poursuivraient après leur recrutement engendrant un milieu de travail toxique au sein duquel leurs compétences sont constamment remises en cause. Aussi beaucoup de nouveaux infirmiers originaires d'Afrique subsaharienne adoptent l'une ou l'autre des stratégies suivantes : revoir à la

baisse leurs ambitions en se contentant d'une formation d'auxiliaire infirmier au Collège communautaire perçu comme un milieu d'apprentissage plus inclusif de la diversité ou se faire embaucher dans un milieu de travail moins discriminatoire et moins stressant comme un foyer de soins pour personnes âgées.

Pour beaucoup d'immigrants francophones, l'accueil symbolique se manifeste aussi par la quasi-impossibilité de travailler en français. Pourtant, ils ont été sélectionnés dans le but de contribuer à la vitalité de l'Acadie et à l'élargissement de la francophonie locale. Comment les nouveaux arrivants peuvent-ils développer un sentiment d'appartenance à leur communauté d'accueil s'ils travaillent et interagissent plus avec l'anglophonie dominante ?

L'accueil symbolique des immigrants engendre logiquement des conséquences sérieuses au niveau de la cohésion sociale dans une Acadie diversifiée. Les immigrants ont une perception ethnique des institutions acadiennes qui pour eux ne travaillent pas pour les nouveaux arrivants.

> *« Toutes les institutions en tant que telles, que ça soit l'école […] les institutions comme l'université, la SANB, que ce soit SNA que ça soit le CCNB. Je dirai qu'il y a beaucoup de travail à faire parce que c'est encore des institutions qui travaillent pour l'intérêt des Acadiens en tant que tel, mais pas pour les Néocanadiens ou la Nouvelle Acadie. C'est encore l'Acadie ancienne où la représentation internationale n'est pas nécessairement très impliquée. »*

Confrontés à une marginalisation et souvent une exclusion du marché du travail et des institutions francophones, les immigrants semblent développer un entre-soi voire des francophonies parallèles à la francophonie locale : « […] on dirait que c'est une tranche napolitaine, cette francophonie. Il y a des couches de différentes francophonies et finalement on ne mélange jamais les produits ensemble. »

Devenue une communauté d'accueil tout en ne réussissant pas à se transformer en nation-contrat inclusif, l'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick semble évoluer vers une francophonie unie au niveau du discours, mais constituée de couches communautaires juxtaposées. En tant que communauté minoritaire dans un Canada multiculturaliste, il lui faudra certainement définir un nouveau projet de société dans le cadre de la diversité ethnoculturelle ainsi qu'un nouveau modèle de cohésion sociale. Pour ce faire, elle devra inventer sa voie puisque les modèles de cohésion sociale mis en place dans le cadre d'États-nations souverains seront forcément inadéquats à son contexte sociétal.

Quatrième cas : échanges sur la cohésion communautaire dans un contexte de diversité parmi les francophones d'Ottawa

Pour comprendre la question de la cohésion communautaire à Ottawa, il est important de décrire le contexte particulier de cette ville. Ottawa constitue la plus grande communauté francophone en situation minoritaire au pays, représentant 17,7 % de la population (Statistique Canada 2017). Étant la capitale nationale du Canada, Ottawa joue également un rôle politique et symbolique important pour la francophonie canadienne puisqu'elle compte avec la présence du gouvernement fédéral et de nombreuses institutions représentant les intérêts francophones au plan national. De plus, la communauté francophone ottavienne est privilégiée de par sa situation géographique à la frontière avec le Québec qui offre un accès aisé à un milieu majoritairement francophone (Gilbert, Veronis, Brosseau, et Ray, 2014). Enfin, bien que la ville ne soit pas officiellement bilingue, le gouvernement municipal d'Ottawa promeut le bilinguisme en offrant une partie des services locaux en français.

18 participants ont assisté à deux groupes de discussion, dont 10 femmes et 8 hommes. Un seul participant était né au Canada et les 17 autres provenaient de diverses régions du monde : Afrique du Nord (2), Afrique subsaharienne (10), Amérique du Nord (2) et Europe (3). Parmi eux, 9 participants étaient des jeunes issus de l'immigration et 7 autres avaient des enfants. Tous les participants étaient éduqués, ayant au moins quelques années d'études postsecondaires.

Selon les participants d'Ottawa, la cohésion communautaire comporte trois éléments clés. Dans un premier temps, il s'agit d'encourager l'ouverture et l'inclusion de tous les francophones par un partage des différentes cultures. Deuxièmement, la solidarité est essentielle pour assurer l'avenir de la communauté francophone. Enfin, il faut encourager une participation active dans la communauté francophone ainsi que l'accès à des opportunités économiques.

Les participants ont remarqué que l'offre de services aux nouveaux arrivants francophones s'était améliorée depuis leur arrivée. Selon eux, l'intégration est facilitée par la participation dans des organismes et des associations francophones et des espaces tels que les écoles et les institutions postsecondaires, ainsi que par le soutien des membres francophones établis. Plusieurs avaient obtenu un emploi dans des institutions francophones et ont affirmé que leur intégration dans la communauté francophone s'est faite principalement par leur milieu de travail. Ainsi, ils ont insisté sur l'importance des réseaux francophones pour faciliter l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants, et en particulier en ce qui a trait à l'emploi. En effet, de nombreux participants ont parlé des difficultés qu'affrontent les immigrants francophones sur le marché du travail et donc du besoin de rendre les réseaux informationnels francophones plus visibles et accessibles.

Les enjeux linguistiques constituaient une deuxième thématique centrale. Outre l'inégalité en termes d'accès à et de la qualité et quantité de services en français, les participants ont mis l'emphase sur la question du « bilinguisme asymétrique », notamment dans la fonction publique qui tend à valoriser le français dans les discours officiels, mais qui offre relativement peu de postes en français et où les francophones issus de l'immigration se voient défavorisés de par leur manque de connaissances en anglais :

> *« Ce qui arrive souvent c'est que à la place d'embaucher des francophones, on va embaucher des anglophones ensuite on va leur demander d'apprendre le français alors que vous avez déjà des francophones qui sont disponibles, pourquoi est-ce que vous les prenez pas ? »*

Enfin, les participants ont beaucoup débattu au sujet des différences de parlers français (les accents, les expressions, l'humour) qui entravent parfois le rapprochement entre francophones de diverses origines.

La troisième thématique concernait les expériences des jeunes issus de l'immigration. Certains participants ont partagé le fait qu'ils avaient assisté aux difficultés qu'affrontaient leurs parents sur le marché du travail et l'impact que cela avait sur leur famille. Ils ont également expliqué que leur passage par les écoles francophones leur avait servi pour apprendre à connaître la culture et les valeurs francophones canadiennes. Par contre, ils ont fait allusion à l'existence de distinctions, voire de hiérarchisations, entre francophones selon leurs origines et qu'en somme leurs liens sociaux étaient principalement avec d'autres jeunes comme eux :

> *« Je me sens intégrée bien sûr, mais genre j'ai aucun ami purement franco-canadien, j'en ai jamais eu. J'ai que des amis soit leurs parents ont immigré, soit eux-mêmes ils ont immigré avec leurs parents. (…) Je trouve qu'il y a quand même une vraie différence même pas par rapport à la francophonie, mais vraiment culturellement. »*

Les participants ont dit souhaiter voir plus d'ouverture et surtout d'opportunités pour tous les francophones d'interagir entre eux, apprendre à se connaître et travailler ensemble à un projet de francophonie commune. Pour ce faire, ils ont reconnu que l'effort doit être fait de part et d'autre :

> *« chacun doit faire son apport, les nouveaux arrivants doivent essayer de connaître la société canadienne, connaître la culture et essayer de l'intégrer, mais eux aussi qui sont là doivent aussi accepter notre différente culture. »*

Discussions et recommandations

Nous discutons les résultats des analyses faites à propos de la cohésion communautaire francophone en milieu minoritaire en faisant le parallèle des facteurs promoteurs et des facteurs faisant barrières à la cohésion sur les quatre sites étudiés (voir Tableau 1). Cette analyse nous permettra de faire ressortir les enjeux et les défis majeurs de la cohésion sociale. Ces derniers nous permettront à leur tour de lancer des recommandations pratiques facilitantes de la cohésion ainsi que certaines pistes de réflexions cognitives à ce sujet.

Nos analyses font ressortir une certaine similitude quant aux facteurs promoteurs de la cohésion communautaire. C'est ainsi qu'on reconnaît l'importance des facteurs économiques, sécuritaires, éducatifs et d'accès au marché du travail. Cependant, les barrières à la cohésion sont multiples et diverses d'un site à un autre, bien qu'en dernier recours, il existe un certain recoupement. Ces facteurs prohibitifs de la cohésion communautaire vont du sociohistorique à la discrimination passant par le culturel et la linguistique. Plusieurs sont les défis auxquels doivent faire face les individus, les institutions ainsi que les politiques publiques en termes d'incitatifs, d'orientations et de soutien de tout ordre pour les nouveaux arrivants francophones dans les milieux minoritaires ainsi que pour les organisations communautaires (Veronis et Huot, 2018). Faute de quoi, les minorités francophones au Canada vivront dans l'exclusion, la hiérarchisation intra et intercommunautaire, voire même gager leur vitalité.

Comme tout traitement d'une question touchant la société, nous devons répondre aux trois questions suivantes : Quoi ? Pour qui ? Et comment ? La réponse à ces questions nous permettra de mieux conceptualiser la notion de cohésion, de construire de nouveaux modèles de cohésion plus représentatifs et de les instrumentaliser de façon plus inclusive. Notre première recommandation est de type cognitif et interpelle les chercheurs. La diversité et la cohésion sociale doivent être à l'agenda des universitaires pour diagnostiquer la question de la

Sites étudiés Déterminants	Winnipeg, MB.	Vancouver, C.-B.	Acadie, N.-B.	Ottawa, ON.
Facteurs promoteurs	Stabilité économique; français langue d'études; diversité communautaire	Espaces communautaires; participation aux évènements et engagement des membres de la communauté	Qualité de vie; accès à la qualification dans certains secteurs; existence du capital social	Proximité d'espace francophone majoritaire; capitale nationale; promotion du bilinguisme; emploi
Facteurs barrières	Non-réciprocité de relation; vécu sociohistorique; discontinuités culturelles	Inégalité d'accès aux espaces; manque d'espaces adéquats; coûts de la vie; distanciation des activités	Accueil symbolique des immigrants; marché du travail francophone restreint; discrimination à l'embauche	Inégalité d'accès aux services; bilinguisme asymétrique; hiérarchisation
Défis majeurs	Responsabilité de tous	L'accès à des espaces; l'accueil et le soutien aux immigrants	Passage de l'homogénéité à l'inclusion communautaire	Égalité et rapprochement entre les francophones
Enjeux	Attraction et rétention des francophones; croissance et développement de la communauté francophone	Attraction et rétention des immigrants francophones	Cohésion sociale inclusive; vitalité de l'Acadie; élargissement de la francophonie locale	Appartenance; inclusion; égalité

cohésion des communautés francophones minoritaires au Canada en mobilisant différents outils méthodologiques comme les rapports ethnographiques (comprendre les vécus), les approches qualitatives d'entrevues et de discussions (comprendre le présent) et le sondage quantitatif (faire des prévisions et des extrapolations pour le futur). C'est de cette manière que la recherche pourra répondre aux questionnements des gestionnaires des programmes, des administrateurs des organismes et des décideurs en politiques publiques. Le deuxième

volet de recommandation exige, quant à lui, la mobilisation des toutes les composantes de la société autour de projets d'intégration et de cohésion sociale. Ces projets doivent être basés sur un partage de valeurs, l'égalité de chances, la confiance mutuelle, des relations réciproques et communicantes. Ceci est conditionnel à ce que la cohésion communautaire soit avancée comme projet de la société canadienne, les politiques publiques devant adopter des mesures proactives favorisant la cohésion et démanteler les facteurs prohibitifs à leurs sources.

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Affinity to the Canadian Polity (Society, Nation and State):

A Case Study of Refugee Youth in Western Canadian Cities[1]

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Abstract

The overarching purpose of this article is to analyze the level and likely determinants of the affinity of refugee youth to the Canadian polity, including the actual and aspirational aspects of their identity formation as Canadians or as hyphenated Canadians. The analysis is based on a survey of such youth in several large communities in the Western Canadian provinces. The analysis reveals that refugee youth have a very strong affinity to the Canadian polity. This includes those who have dual or multiple affinities and identities to other polities. The analysis also reveals three major factors that likely account for their affinity to the Canadian polity, namely positive perceptions regarding the quality of the polity and the quality of life therein, the relatively positive social climate, their treatment by Canadians, and their social integration.

Résumé

L'objectif principal de cet article est d'analyser le niveau et les déterminants probables de l'affinité des jeunes réfugiés avec la société canadienne, y compris les aspects réels et aspirationnels de la création de leur identité en tant que Canadiens et/ou Canadiens à citoyennetés multiples. L'analyse est basée sur une enquête menée auprès de ces jeunes dans plusieurs grandes communautés des provinces de l'Ouest canadien. L'analyse révèle que les jeunes réfugiés ont une très forte affinité avec le système politique canadien. Cela inclut ceux qui ont des affinités et des identités doubles ou multiples avec d'autres pays. L'analyse révèle également trois facteurs principaux qui expliquent probablement leur affinité avec le système politique canadien, à savoir les perceptions positives concernant la qualité du système politique et la qualité de vie dans ce système, le climat social relativement positif, le traitement que leur réservent les Canadiens et leur intégration sociale.

Introduction

Most research on various categories of immigrant and refugee adults and youth has focused primarily on their experiences of mistreatment, settlement needs, their economic and social integration, and the adverse effects of their experiences of mistreatment on such integration. Substantially less research has been devoted either to their affinity to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state) or their identity formation either as Canadians or as so-called hyphenated Canadians. This is particularly true of refugee and immigrant youth. Although some studies on such youth have touched directly or indirectly on their affinity to the Canadian polity and their identity (e.g., Wenshya Lee and Hébert 2006; Hébert et al. 2008; Sundar 2008; Shahsiah 2009; Shakya et al. 2010; Social Planning Council of Ottawa 2012; Berns-McGowan 2013; Kafili 2013; Baker 2017; Guo, Maitra, Guo 2017; Guo, Maitra, Guo 2019; Shields and Luja 2018), this remains an inadequately explored area in which much remains to be explored.

The overarching purpose of this article is to provide an analysis of the affinity of refugee youth to the Canadian polity and, to some extent, also to the actual and aspirational aspects of their identity formation either as Canadians or as hyphenated Canadians. Toward that end, the two central objectives are to provide an overview of their affinity to the Canadian polity and to provide an explanation of the key factors that likely account for that affinity.

The data on which this article is based is drawn from a survey of refugee youth in several major cities in the four western provinces in recent years (Garcea 2019). The survey sample consists of a cohort of refugee youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who had lived in Canada for approximately one to five years, who were living in seven major cities and city regions in the four western Canadian provinces (i.e., Vancouver city region in British Columbia, Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta, Regina and Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg and Brandon in Manitoba) when the survey was conducted. The total number of respondents was 52 and ranged from 2 to 13 in each of those communities. The respondents of the self-administered online survey were recruited by settlement agencies in the various cities and city regions. The

survey was produced in 2018 and 2019, which was the period following the massive influx of so-called Syrian refugees, and during the influx of asylum seekers from the United States. Because of the influx of those refugees and asylum seekers, it was a period when a high-profile debate emerged on how many and what types of refugees, asylum seekers, and other categories of migrants should be admitted into the country annually.

The remainder of this article consists of three major sections. The first provides an overview of the major findings related to the perceptions of youth regarding their affinity to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state). The second provides an overview of some major factors that likely account for their affinity to the Canadian polity. The third and concluding section provides a summary of the major findings regarding the level and determinants of the affinity of refugee youth to the Canadian polity and outlines some important directions for further research on this topic.

Level of Affinity to Canadian Polity

To reiterate, the objective in this section is to provide an overview of the survey findings of the perceptions of refugee youths regarding their affinity to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state). The refugee youth who participated in the research project expressed a high degree of affinity to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state). Before reporting their responses on this issue, an important caveat is useful. Admittedly, the distinctions between their affinity to each of the three major components of the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, state) were not clearly or fully delineated either by the questions that were asked or the responses that were provided. Nevertheless, regardless of precisely to which of those three inextricably interrelated dimensions of the Canadian polity they were alluding in their responses, the affinity to it was very strong for a vast or at least a large majority of them.[2] This is very evident in their responses regarding their attachment to the Canadian polity rather than to any other national polity.

2 Three types of majority for purposes of this paper are (a) vast majority (80%-99%), (b) large majority (60%-79%), and (c) small majority (51% to 64%).

Attachment to Canadian Polity

In response to the question of the strength of their attachment to Canada, a total of 82.4% indicated that it was either strong (45.1%) or very strong (37.3%) and only 17.6% indicated it was either not very strong (13.7%) or weak (3.9%). However, it is important to note that the survey data suggests the refugee youth did not have an undivided or exclusive affinity to the Canadian polity. Indeed, the data suggests that most of them had what might best be termed dual- or multiple-affinities -one to the Canadian polity, and one to the polities in which their parents were born. More specifically, it reveals that 72.5% of respondents indicated that their attachment or affinity to the polities in which their parents were born was very strong (50.9%) or strong (21.6%), and only 27.5% indicated it was either not very strong (21.6%) or very weak (5.9%).

Despite the strong identification with and affinity to their parents' country of birth, their responses to another question suggest that their primary identification, attachment and affinity was to Canada. This is quite evident in their responses to an explicit "forced-choice" question regarding whether their strongest attachment was to the Canadian nation or to some other nation. Whereas (74.5%) of the respondents indicated that their strongest attachment was to the Canadian nation, only (25.5%) indicated that it was to some other nation.

The percentages related to their attachment to the Canadian nation were comparable to the percentages related to their attachment to the other components of the Canadian polity (i.e., state and society). In response to the question of the strength of their attachment to Canada, a total of 82.4% indicated that it was either strong (45.1%) or very strong (37.3%).

In summary, the data of the respondents' responses regarding their attachment to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation and state) reveal that a high percentage of respondents had a strong or very strong attachment to the Canadian nation (74.5%), and an even higher percentage (82%) indicated that they had a strong or very strong affinity to the other two components of the Canadian polity (i.e., the Canadian state and society). The important point here is not the difference in the percentages per se, but the high percentages of respondents

who indicated that they had a strong or very strong attachment or affinity to the various components of the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state). Moreover, the data also revealed a duality in their attachment to the Canadian polity and the polities in which their parents were born. Nevertheless, their strongest attachment was to the Canadian polity.

Sense of Becoming and Aspiring to Become Canadian Citizens

The strength of attachment or affinity to the various components of the Canadian polity of a substantial majority of respondents is also evident in their responses regarding their sense of becoming Canadian and their desire to become Canadian citizens. The vast majority of respondents (96.1%) indicated that they felt they were "becoming" Canadians, and only a small percentage (3.9%) felt that they were not. Moreover, they indicated that they regarded "becoming Canadian" as a positive ideal to which they should aspire. Precisely what that meant to each respondent is difficult to know because "becoming Canadian" or "being Canadian" are multifaceted and complex concepts and mean different things to different people (Wenshya Lee and Hébert 2006). Nevertheless, at their core is the notion that involves developing various degrees of identity as a Canadian or a sense of belonging in Canada, and accepting or espousing the prevailing norms, values, and traditions that collectively constitute the prevailing public philosophy or philosophies that are viewed as quintessential values of social and political culture.

Another major indicator of the respondents' attachment to the Canadian polity was the value they attached to Canadian citizenship. This is equally true of those who had Canadian citizenship (7.7%) and those who aspired to acquire it (92.3%). All of those who possessed Canadian citizenship indicated that they were very happy to have it, and all of those who did not possess it indicated that they would be very happy to acquire it.

Despite the positive dimension of this data, admittedly, it does not provide a clear indication of whether or to what extent the respondents who were or wanted to become citizens, were either "citizens of conviction," "citizens of convenience" or some combination of the two.

However, an overview and analysis of the data suggest that it was indeed a combination of the two in many cases. The reason for this is that most respondents alluded to the positive aspects of the Canadian polity, and the tangible benefits citizenship afforded them in terms of rights and entitlements therein.

Determinants of Affinity to the Canadian Polity

Whereas the objective in the previous section was on the level of affinity to the Canadian polity among the sample of refugee youth, the objective of this section is to explain several factors that likely affected their affinity. The explanation is based on their responses to a series of questions on their perceptions regarding four key interrelated factors: the quality of the Canadian polity and quality of life therein; the social climate as reflected in public discourse; the treatment by Canadians; and their social integration.

Quality of Canadian Polity and Quality of Life Therein

The first major set of factors that likely influenced their attachment to the Canadian polity was their positive perceptions regarding the quality of the Canadian polity and the quality of life therein. More specifically, they indicated that they liked what they perceived as Canada's stable democratic political system, its multicultural and peaceful society, its progressive social welfare system consisting of good social programs and services, its adherence to the principle of equity, and what they perceived as its readily accessible and expedited citizenship acquisition regime. Furthermore, the vast majority also indicated that they liked living in Canada because it was a welcoming country, which provided opportunities for them to enhance their career and economic situations. This is not to suggest that they perceived Canada as a panacea for them or their families, because they listed many things they did not like about living in Canada. In addition to the sadness they felt for the people and things they left behind by resettling in Canada, some of them also pointed to the following categories of resettlement and integration challenges they faced since arriving to Canada: the frustration with the inadequate or problematic components of the settlement and social policies, programs, and

services; coping with the high cost of living on limited income; the feeling of loneliness; the feeling that they were foreigners or strangers; and the discomfort created by some aspects of the country's socio-political climate with its undercurrent of racism and discrimination.

Social Climate

The second major set of factors that likely influenced their attachment to the Canadian polity was their positive perceptions of Canada's social climate. More specifically, it was their perception regarding public opinion and public discourse on refugees and immigrants.

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they perceived public opinion on refugees and immigrants positively. More than 90% indicated that such public opinion at the national, provincial and local levels in Canada was either good or very good. Moreover, the vast majority believed that such public opinion was better in Canada than in the United States of America or in any other country.

The vast majority of respondents also indicated that public opinion had a positive, rather than negative, effect on the following aspects of their lives:

1_ Their happiness (90.4%);

2_ Their sense of being welcomed to and belonging in Canada (88.5%);

3_ Their desire to become involved in activities in Canadian communities (96.2%);

4_ Their identities as members of the national and provincial communities (82.7%), local communities (80.4%) in Canada; and

5_ Their identities as members of ethnocultural communities (86%).

The high percentages suggesting that public opinion in Canada was either good or very good and that it had a relative positive effect on them is somewhat surprising given the controversies that prevailed when this survey was undertaken related to Syrian refugees from Europe and asylum seekers from the United States. Some possible explanations for this are:

1_ That they felt that public opinion was not as negative as it may have been in Canada;

2_ That they did not feel too adversely affected directly by public opinion; or

3_ Their perceptions that public opinion was better in Canada on this matter than anywhere else.

Treatment, Acceptance, and Inclusion by Canadians

The third major set of factors that likely accounts for the refugee youth's strong attachment to the Canadian polity is the refugee youths' perceptions of how they were treated, accepted, and included by Canadians. The vast majority of respondents (84.6%) reported that generally they were treated well (65.4%) or very well (19.2%) by Canadians. The bulk of the rest indicated that sometimes they were treated well, and sometimes they were treated badly (13.5%), and only a small percentage indicated that they were generally treated badly or very badly (1.9%). Similarly, the vast majority of the respondents (96.1%) indicated that Canadians accepted them, and only 3.9% indicated that they did not. Finally, the vast majority of respondents (82.7%) felt included in activities and events by Canadians, and only 17.3% felt excluded. This is lower than their sense of being accepted by Canadians. Furthermore, there was a gender difference as a notably higher percentage of males (94.4%) than females (76.5%) felt included.

Social Integration

The fourth major set of factors that likely influenced their positive attachment to the Canadian polity were perceptions regarding their social integration as manifested in the following three aspects of their lives since arriving in Canada:

- Their number and types of friendships and relationships;
- Their involvement in social activities (i.e., private events and public events); and
- Their involvement in sports activities, recreational activities, and hobbies.

The data presented below regarding each of those three aspects of their lives suggest that socially, at least a small majority, and in some instances even a large majority of the respondents were, moderately integrated to well integrated. The social integration of refugee youth is very important because refugees with permanent resident status are no different than Canadians by birth or naturalization in terms of the important effect that the social connections and relationships within their social networks have on various matters, including their "...levels of self-esteem, overall life satisfaction, enhancing health outcomes, improving employment prospects, and increasing overall commitment to community" (Sinha 2014).

Number and Types of Friendships and Relationships

The data regarding the number of friends reveal that (53.8%) of the respondents indicated they had either many friends (36.5%) or a lot of friends (17.3%), and (46.2%) indicated they did not have very many friends. The data also reveals that (45.1%) of the respondents indicated their friends were mostly of non-Canadian heritage, 21.6% indicated their friends were mostly of Canadian heritage (21.6%), and 33.3% indicated their friends were relatively equally of Canadian heritage and of non-Canadian heritage. Furthermore, the data reveal that 88.8% indicated they had not been involved in a special relationship, and only 21.2% indicated they had been involved in such a relationship. Moreover, of the latter most respondents indicated their special relationship involved either special or very special friendships, and only very few indicated it involved either dating (5.8%) or marriage (1.9%).

Participation in Private Social Events and Public Community Events

The data also reveal that approximately 46% had participated in private social events; approximately 75% had participated in special public events. Moreover, in response to the questions of the heritage profile of most people at the private social events they attended, 25% indicated they were mostly Canadian, 29.2% indicated they were mostly non-Canadian, and 45.8% indicated they were included relatively equal numbers of Canadian and non-Canadian heritage. In response to the questions of the heritage profile of most people with whom they attended public social events, 41% indicated mostly Canadian heritage, 23.1% indicated mostly non-Canadian heritage, and 35.9% indicated a relatively equal number of Canadian and non-Canadian heritage.

Participation in Sport, Recreation, Hobbies

The data regarding their involvement in sports, recreation, and hobbies suggest that collectively a small majority were involved in each type of activity. Whereas 65.4% indicated they were involved in sports, 55.8% indicated they were involved in recreational activities, and 55.8% indicated they were involved in hobbies.

The social integration of refugee youths is very important because refugees with permanent resident status are no different than Canadians by birth or naturalization in terms of the important effect that the social connections and relationships within their social networks have on various matters, including their " ...levels of self-esteem, overall life satisfaction, enhancing health outcomes, improving employment prospects, and increasing overall commitment to community" (Sinha 2014).

Conclusions

To reiterate, the overarching purpose of this article has been to provide an overview of the affinity to the Canadian polity of a sample of refugee youth from various continents living in several cities in the four western provinces, and the factors that likely account for their

affinity. The objective in this concluding section is to summarize the findings, discuss the value and limitation of this research project, and proffer some strategic directions for further research.

Summary of Major Findings

This overview has revealed that their affinity to the Canadian polity (i.e., society, nation, and state) is remarkably strong. This is true even though most respondents indicated they also had an affinity to the ethnocultural groups, nations, societies and states to which they and their families had historical ties. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that ultimately their highest or strongest affinity was to the Canadian polity.

In explaining this strong affinity to the Canadian polity, three sets of explanatory factors emerged from their responses to the questionnaire, namely their positive perceptions regarding the quality of the Canadian polity and the quality of life therein; their perceptions of what they depicted as a relatively warm and positive social climate in Canada toward refugees and other categories of immigrants; their perceptions of what the vast majority of them depicted as relatively positive treatment, acceptance, and inclusion by Canadians; and the level of their social integration.

Implicitly, the respondents seem to be suggesting that their affinity to the Canadian polity is a function of its many positive features including its stable political and social systems and its multicultural ethos, the rights and benefits that it offers them both as permanent residents and as citizens, and the relatively higher overall quality of life that they had and would likely continue to have in Canada, compared to the quality of life they had and would likely have continued to have in their country of origin or refugee camps.

In short, they indicated that despite any of its flaws and any resettlement and integration challenges they faced within it, they valued the Canadian polity very highly, and their affinity to it was very strong. Moreover, implicitly they suggested that the rating and valuing would

have been higher, and their affinity even stronger if key state and societal actors implemented their recommendations for improving the lived experience of refugee youth in Canada. This included numerous recommendations for improving the resettlement processes, the economic integration processes, and the social integration processes.

Important Research Questions

In reflecting on the strong affinity to the Canadian polity by this sample of refugee youth and the determinants of the same, at least three important interrelated questions emerge. First, to what extent do their views and perceptions reflect those of most refugee youth between the ages of 16 and 24 either in those communities or in comparable communities in those four provinces or in any other provinces?

Second, to what extent did the profile of the sample of respondents' account not only for what this study has identified as a strong affinity to the Canadian polity, but also for the factors that accounted for the strength of that affinity? In this regard, it is important to reiterate that most, if not all, refugee youth who responded to the survey had a direct connection to agencies that provided special settlement and integration programs and services for them. This raises the possibility that they may have had certain views and perceptions either because of the perceived and actual benefits of the various orientation and integration programs and services provided by those agencies, or because of their connections or relationships with the employees, volunteers and other youth in those agencies which may have provided them with positive settlement and integration supports and a warm and caring community.

Third, and related to the second, to what extent were their views and perceptions influenced by the possibility that refugee youth who connect with such agencies already possess a relatively higher degree of social capital and a higher level of trust and efficacy than their counterparts who do not connect with such agencies?

These questions, as well as others, suggest that more extensive and in-depth research is required to improve our understanding of the level and determinants of affinity to the Canadian polity of any cohort of refugee youth at any point in time in various communities across Canada.

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