

## Refugee Integration & Long-Term Health Outcomes in Canada (SyRIA.lth)

### What it is:

Refugee Integration and Long-term Health Outcomes in Canada is a pan-Canadian longitudinal study funded by The Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). The project is a partnership **between settlement service agencies and academic research institutions in three of Canada's largest refugee resettlement provinces: British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.**

We are looking at how different resettlement programs support the social integration of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) and the impact of integration pathways on their long-term physical and mental health. Our goal is to improve the health and well-being of new Canadians by understanding what leads to successful integration outcomes and for whom so that we can tailor resettlement programs to best suit **newcomers' needs and circumstances.**

### Our research goals:

To produce knowledge that will:

- Inform promising practices for refugee resettlement and integration
- Strengthen knowledge exchange in the settlement sector
- Identify the impact of settlement policies on refugee health and well-being
- Deepen our understanding of the influence of social conditions on long-term health and well-being

### Our approach:

Interviews will be collected once a year for four years with Syrian adults who resettled in Canada between 2015 and 2017. In year two and year four, we will also conduct focus groups to gain **more insight into the nature of people's experiences.**

These interviews will follow key integration markers at the material or functional level (e.g., employment, housing and social services accessed), the social level (e.g., social networks, discrimination), and the subjective or psychological level (e.g., sense of belonging, stress).

# Project Updates

## Work up-to-date:

- REB approvals in Toronto, Windsor and Montreal have been granted.
- Money has been transferred to each site
- Research staff have been hired at each site
- iPads, Quicktapsurvey and all research related materials including consent forms, honorarium forms and field notes have been prepared and distributed to each site

## Which phase are we at now?

Interview phase runs from March-July during the four years of the study. Based on our **project's workplan, the project is at its mid survey data collection point.**

## Next Steps:

- Planning for preliminary data analysis and early findings dissemination.
- **Following Montreal's example, each site is to invite agencies working with Syrian refugees** to be part of their advisory committee so that they are involved and benefitting from our work.

# Sites Updates

## Kitchener, ON

Following successful early recruitment of participants in Kitchener, additional research staff will be hired to complete data collection there; 47 interviews conducted so far.

## Montreal, QC

Montreal site started data collection last week. Montreal site also had their first Advisory Board meeting two weeks ago and it was a success; they had representatives from 13 organizations, including settlement organizations, Syrian community groups and 5 government reps. They also had someone from the CCR and the TCRI (equivalent of OCASI).

## Okanagan Valley & Vancouver, BC

Now that the funds have been successfully transferred, research staff have been hired and data collection is ready to begin

## Toronto, ON

Big interest in the research study from the Syrian community in Toronto. Toronto was the first site to start collecting interviews data. 24 pilot surveys and 117 Interviews conducted so far.

## Windsor, ON

Pilot studies have been completed and data collection begins this week

# Stories



## Educational Tour

Recognizing the importance of education in the process of resettlement, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County has been actively investigating opportunities for newcomers.

Many refugees arrived in Canada with College and University educations, and wish to obtain equivalencies or to explore other careers. In order to help make these choices possible, the Multicultural Council sought to provide information to all interested clients.

Tours were held for Syrian and non- Syrian refugees at both St. Clair College and the University of Windsor, exploring options available and requirements. Clients, staff, and volunteers visited the St. Clair College Windsor Campus and the University of Windsor this spring. Newcomers heard about various programs and classes, and about what their prior learning may offer in terms of transfer credit.

Many expressed interest in pursuing their career goals by first gaining appropriate education and training, and were glad to know about post-secondary options in Windsor and Essex County.

Source: Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County spring 2017 gazette. To become a member and receive more news from the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, visit: <http://themcc.com/>

## Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee initiative

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) conducted a Rapid Impact Evaluation (RIE) to assess the early outcomes of the 2015-16 Syrian Refugee Initiative. The evaluation was targeted in nature and examined the Syrian refugees who were admitted to Canada between November 4, 2015 and March 1, 2016 and were a part of the initial 25,000 Syrian refugee commitment.

The evaluation focused on resettlement and early settlement outcomes for the Syrian population who were admitted as Government Assisted Refugees (GAR), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) and Blended Visa Office-Referrred (BVOR) refugees, as well as lessons learned and areas to monitor in the future. In addition, comparisons were made where possible to previous resettled refugees who arrived in Canada between 2010 and 2014.

The evaluation found that adult Syrian GARs tend to be less educated and less knowledgeable of Canadian official languages compared to previous resettled refugee cohorts. Conversely, the adult Syrian PSRs are more educated and have more knowledge of Canadian official languages compared to the resettled PSRs admitted between 2010 and 2014. Additionally, the evaluation demonstrated that adult Syrian refugees were less likely to be referred to employment services and had gained less knowledge and skills compared to previous resettled refugee cohorts. However, the evaluation found that they were more likely to be referred to language services.

Overall, both GARs and PSRs reported that they were happy with their life in Canada. With regards to meeting the immediate and essential needs of Syrian refugees, PSRs were more likely to indicate that their immediate needs were met and reported receiving more help to resettle compared to GARs. In addition, the evaluation found that due to expedited timelines of the initiative, some challenges occurred. Most notably those challenges included finding permanent housing, lack of consistency in the standards of RAP delivery, the adequacy of RAP income support for GARs and BVOR refugees and a lack of reporting on RAP services.

Read the full report on: [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

# Events

## Highlights from the 19th National Metropolis Conference– March 2017 (16-18)

The National Metropolis Conference is an annual forum for researchers, policy makers, representatives from community and settlement organizations to get together to share and exchange knowledge and experience in the field of immigration and settlement.

The 19th National Metropolis Conference was held on March 16th-18th, 2017 in Montreal. This **year's conference focused on immigration trends and policies and the challenges and opportunities** that they create for Canadian society.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, initiated 27 targeted, short-term grants to focus on the arrival, settlement and integration of Syrian refugees. Award recipients have been examining issues related to employment, social integration, youth, families, housing, mental health and local support systems. The conference included many plenary panels, workshops and roundtable sessions on some of the initial results of this targeted research.

Read more about the 19th National Metropolis conference on: [metropolisconference.ca](http://metropolisconference.ca)

### Upcoming Events:

Date	Event	Location	Website
May, 2017 (15-18)	CARFMS 2017- 10th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies	Victoria, BC Canada	<a href="http://carfms.org">carfms.org</a>
June, 2017 (7)	The Impact of education on social inclusion for refugees– Research symposium	Toronto, ON Canada	<a href="http://Eventbrite.ca">Eventbrite.ca</a>
June, 2017 (16-18)	North American Refugee Health Conference	Toronto, ON Canada	<a href="http://northamericanrefugeehealth">northamericanrefugeehealth</a>

# News

## New Report: The Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada: A Mixed Record

A new report from the Migration Policy Institute's Transatlantic Council on Migration, *The Economic Integration of Refugees in Canada: A Mixed Record?*, assesses the economic outcomes of refugees, drawing upon a pair of major surveys of refugees and immigrants conducted over the last decade. It draws lessons for how policymakers can identify and remove (or at least minimize) some of the barriers that impede integration. "Refugees in Canada have experienced mixed success when it comes to economic outcomes," write authors Lori Wilkinson and Joseph Garcea. "While their employment status and income levels do, on average, catch up to those of native-born Canadians over time, with most eventually achieving a middle-class lifestyle, full integration can still take more than a decade."

The report provides an overview of the key components and features of the Canadian refugee resettlement system, and examines economic integration outcomes by resettlement pathway, finding that those who are privately sponsored in some ways have better results than those resettled by the government.

Read the report on: [Migration Policy Institute](#)

### Education opportunities:

Course/ Webinar	Website
Refugee Mental Health: Focus on Syrian Refugees, by CAMH	<a href="#">rmhp/courses</a>
Domestic/Sexual Violence in Immigrant and Refugee Communities, presented by OCASI	<a href="#">ocasi</a>



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