

THE CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

SEVEN YEARS OF RESEARCH AND COLLABORATION



2024 IMPACT REPORT

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The CYRRC is based at the Resilience Research Centre (RRC) at Dalhousie University in K'jpuktuk, Mi'kma'ki (Halifax, Nova Scotia), the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

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Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



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MESSAGE FROM CYRRC'S SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR, MICHAEL UNGAR

After seven years of research, I am both gratified and saddened to see the close of the CYRRC project. Starting from a desire to understand and improve government and settlement sector responses to large cohorts of refugees to Canada, CYRRC has funded over 80 research projects that deepened our understanding of refugee child, youth, and family integration pathways and advocated for best practices in newcomer settlement. The partnerships with settlement service providers and government agencies that made this project possible have strengthened over time. New partnerships have formed as well. It is my hope that these partnerships will continue going forward and that CYRRC has helped lay the foundation for responsive, respectful research that is truly co-created with community.

Although the CYRRC project has ended, our website – with its repository of publications, reports, executive summaries, and infographics – will continue to exist for the next five years. Furthermore, our podcast series, *The Refuge*, can still be found on our website, YouTube, and most podcast streaming services.

I am as always inspired by the work of our partners in welcoming and advocating for the growing number of refugees to Canada, especially children and youth, and I am excited to see how that work continues to develop. There is growing attention to the needs and voices of refugee youth, and I hope the lessons learned throughout the CYRRC's mandate can be used to further advocate with them and for them.

Finally, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the wonderful team of co-applicants who made this work possible, and the incredible staff and students who have worked so hard to create the research that was funded and share its results. I'm confident the impact of this effort will continue for years to come.

Michael Ungar

CYRRC Scientific Director

ABOUT CYRRC

From 2017 to 2024, the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) was a nationwide alliance of academics, service providers, community partners, and government agencies working to promote the successful integration of refugee children, youth, and their families. Our members carried out rigorous research, promoted best practices, and engaged in knowledge mobilization on the social integration, economic outcomes, education, and mental and physical well-being of refugee children, youth, and families in Canada. CYRRC prioritized multiple disciplinary perspectives and engaging with non-academic sectors, including people with lived experience, in creating and mobilizing knowledge.

WHERE CYRRC BEGAN

In October 2015, Canada announced that 25,000 Syrian refugees would be accepted, with priority placed on families with children. A group of researchers from across the country reached out to their colleagues, directors of service provider organizations (SPOs), educators, and senior staff at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Their collective goal was to use research to facilitate the successful resettlement of those with refugee experience, focusing specifically on the unique challenges facing children and youth.

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) was funded in 2017 by a \$2.5 million SSHRC Partnership Grant. The goal was to address the pressing need for a national multidisciplinary team that could respond quickly and flexibly to factors threatening young people's integration, while building and promoting protective interventions to support their resilience. CYRRC was initially created in response to the arrival of a large cohort of Syrian refugees, but the Coalition's purpose soon expanded to explore the heterogeneity of experiences found among children and youth from all parts of the world with refugee experience. The shared aim was to understand and improve how governments and SPOs respond to mass migrations of forcibly displaced people.

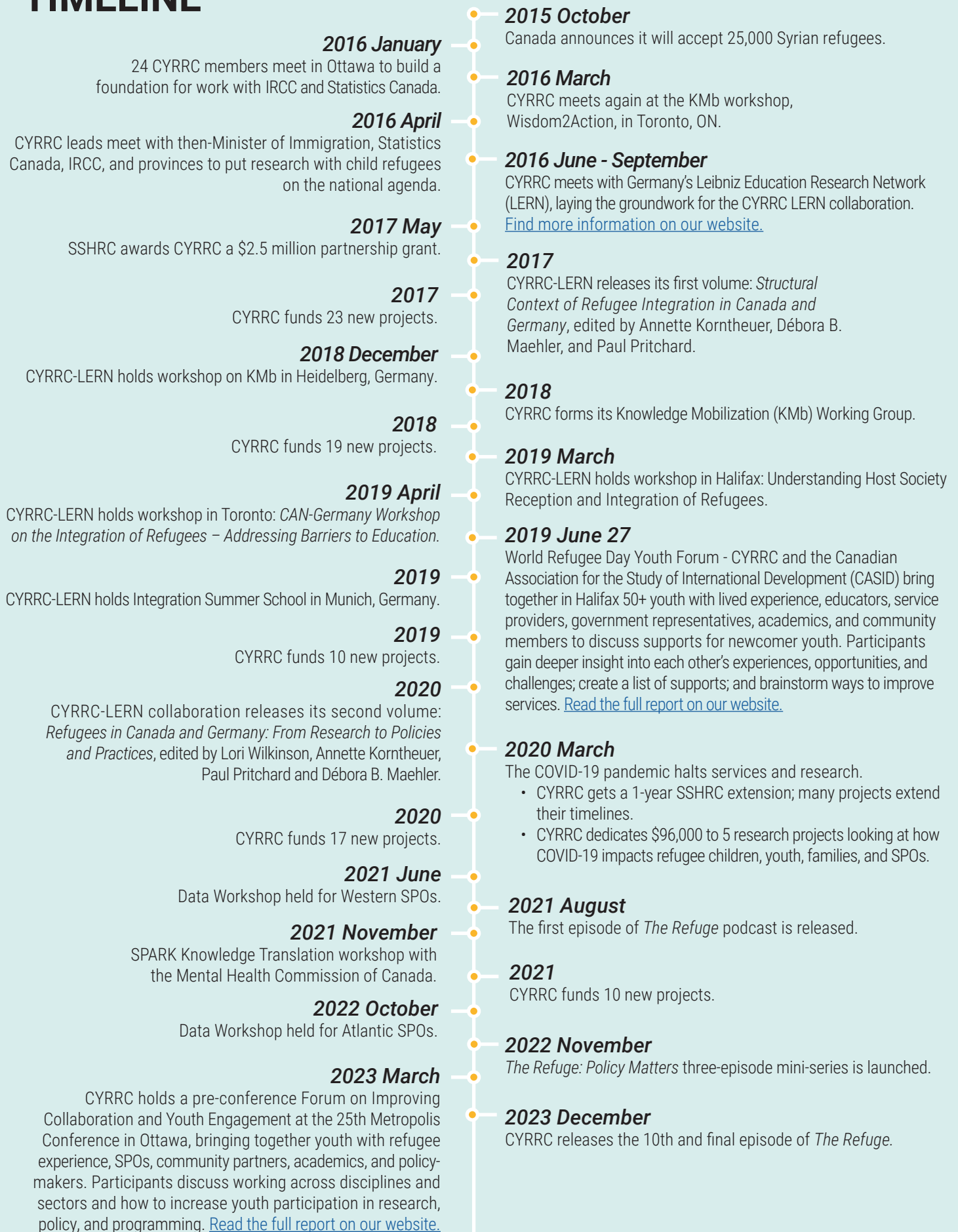
Partnership-based research and knowledge co-creation were central to CYRRC's mandate. SSHRC partnership grants are intended to support formal partnerships between academic and non-academic collaborators, foster cooperation and leadership-sharing, and support accessible knowledge mobilization. CYRRC academic-community partnership occurred at three levels: governance, research, and knowledge mobilization.

Governance Structure: CYRRC's Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) included academics, community organizations, and SPO representatives, as well as government partners IRCC and Statistics Canada, to provide impact oversight. The Coordination Committee (COC) included equal numbers of academics and community partners as research leads.

Research: Funding priority went to research projects that included community partners throughout the process.

Knowledge Mobilization (KMb): CYRRC's KmB Working Group, comprised of seven SPO representatives from across Canada, initiated CYRRC's larger KmB projects and ensured the accessibility of research findings for SPOs.

TIMELINE



WHAT WE DID

Using an academic-community partnership model, CYRRC members carried out over 80 projects on the integration of refugee children, youth, and families in Canada.

Our research addressed the challenges and opportunities youth with refugee experience encounter in four areas: (1) The economic and political contexts that affect them and their families; (2) language, literacy, and learning; (3) social and cultural integration; and (4) child, youth, and family well-being. Our research included longitudinal studies, qualitative and quantitative studies, arts-based research, case studies, and program evaluations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, CYRRC researchers responded by studying how the pandemic impacted youth and families with refugee backgrounds.

PROJECT FUNDING BY CLUSTER

Socio-Economic

\$279,842

Integration

\$230,317

Language

\$283,650

Well-being

\$361,207

Hub & COVID-19

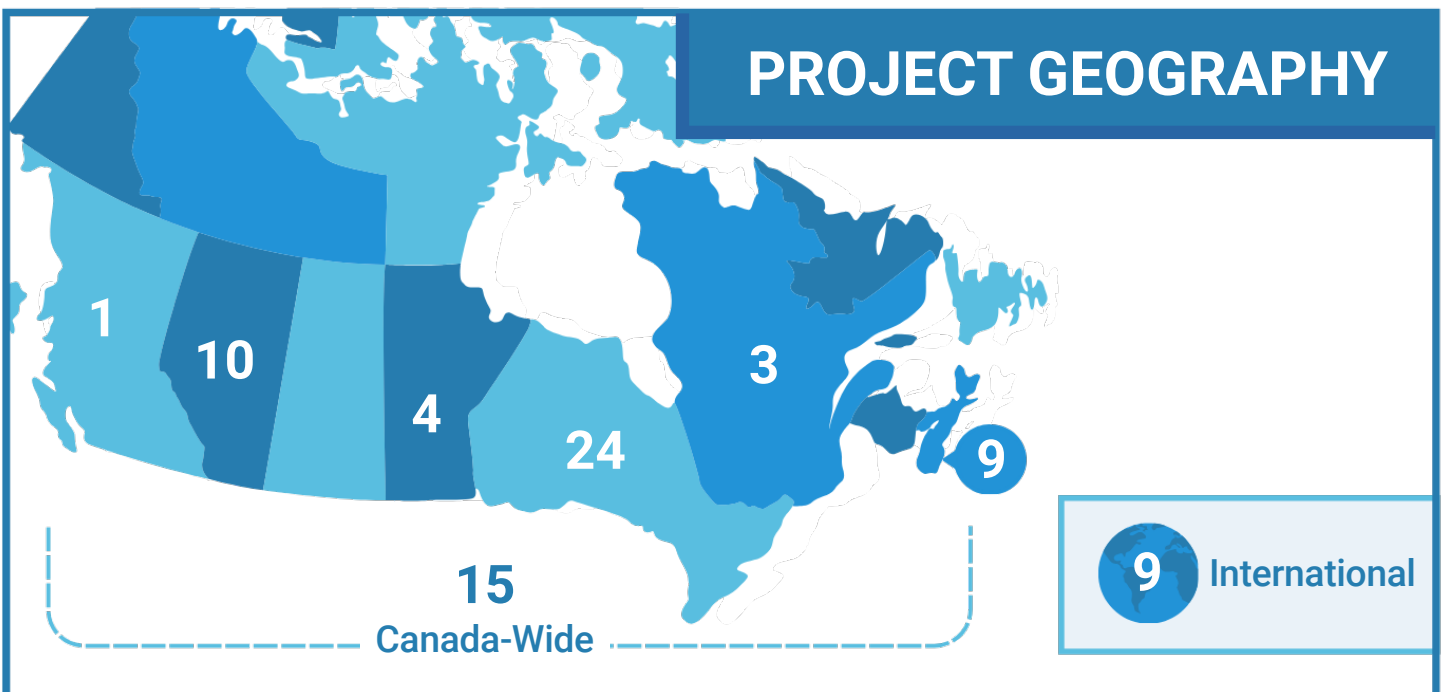
\$366,135

Knowledge Mobilization (KMb)

\$14,955



PROJECT GEOGRAPHY





55 Projects involved community partners



17 Involved youth with lived experience as co-researchers

OUTREACH STATISTICS



4 BOOKS

38 BOOK CHAPTERS

101 REPORTS & GREY LITERATURE

74 PUBLICATIONS

77 INFOGRAPHICS

333 PRESENTATIONS

47 WORKSHOPS

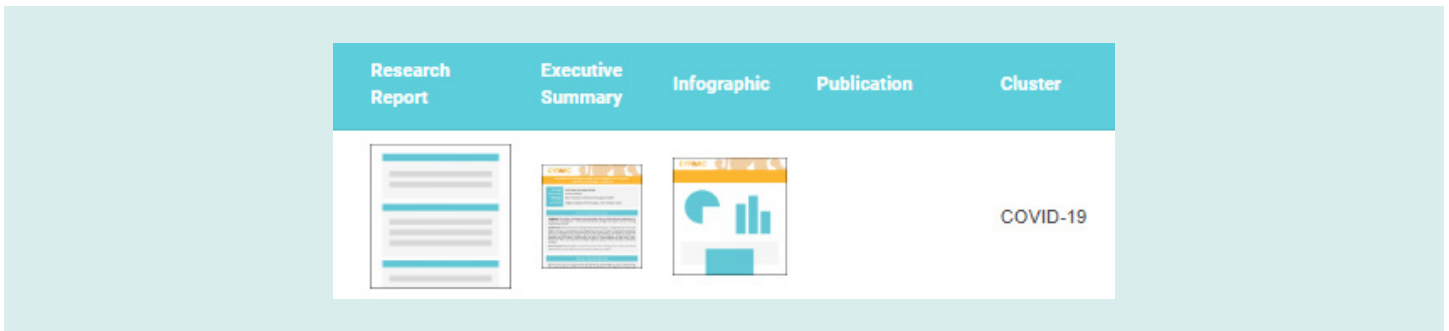
23 COMMUNITY EVENTS

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION (KMB)

CYRRC Infographics and Executive Summaries

CYRRC's Knowledge Mobilization team created 40 sets of executive summaries and infographics to share research findings in an accessible way with SPOs and community partners.

[Find the CYRRC infographics and executive summaries on our website.](#)



The Refuge Podcast + Policy Matters Mini-Series

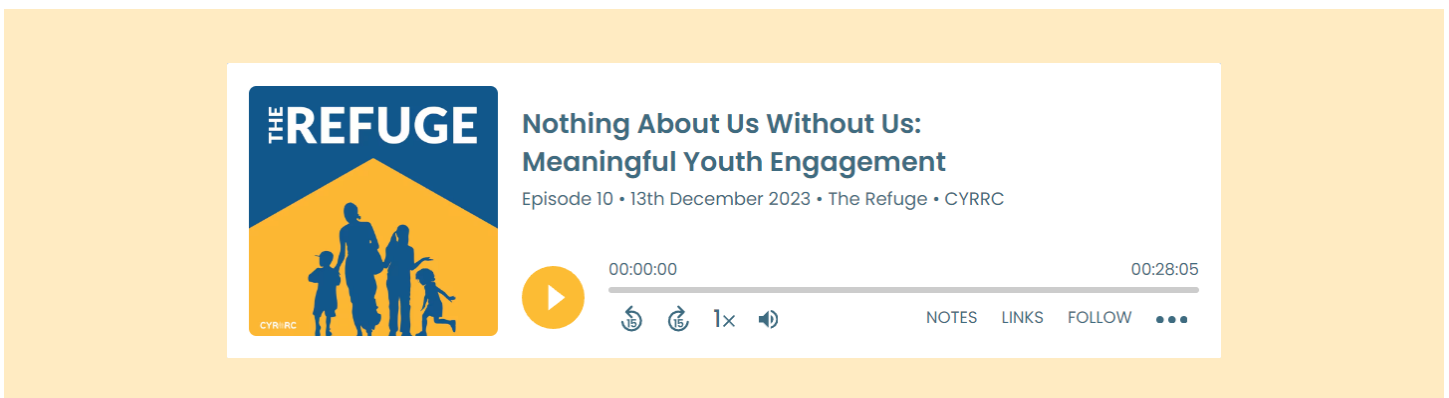
In 2021, CYRRC's Knowledge Mobilization Working Group wanted to share our research in a more accessible way. *The Refuge* podcast brought together youth with refugee experience, academics, and community partners to discuss issues affecting refugee children, youth, and families in Canada. Episodes have touched on the connection between language and belonging, how youth transition from school to employment, mental health challenges, and more.

The Refuge – Policy Matters is a special three-episode series focused on policy issues that brought policy-makers into discussion with academics, community partners, and people with lived experience. These episodes focus on collaboration, school supports, and a sense of belonging. Each has an associated policy brief.

[Episodes of *The Refuge* can be found on our website](#), podcast streaming platforms, and YouTube.

📄 **1,172** downloads across podcast streaming platforms

👁️ **1,783** views on YouTube



CAPACITY BUILDING

Data Workshops for Service Provider Organizations (SPOs)

CYRRC partnered with SPO umbrella groups to provide two sets of data workshops for Western SPOs in 2021 and Atlantic SPOs in 2022. The objective was to build the capacity of SPOs to access and use data from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB). The workshops were facilitated by CYRRC researchers Yoko Yoshida (Western University) and Jonathan Amoyaw (Dalhousie University). They provided specific instruction on how to produce tables and charts based on the publicly available IMDB data products, what this information means in the context of program planning and evaluation, limitations of the IMDB, and who to contact for more information.

Video recordings and presentation slides from the workshops are available on our website:

[Western SPOs Data Workshop, 2021](#)

[Atlantic SPOs Data Workshop, 2022](#) (English-language and French-language recordings and slides are available)

Knowledge Mobilization Training

In 2021, CYRRC partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to offer a tailored version of MHCC’s knowledge translation (KT) training program, SPARK, to CYRRC members working to support the social and economic integration, education, and mental and/or physical well-being of refugee children, youth, and families in Canada. The CYRRC SPARK online program ran for three weeks, followed by a year of mentorship support. Ten participants were supported to identify key stakeholders, design effective strategies to reach their audiences, and implement their KT plans.

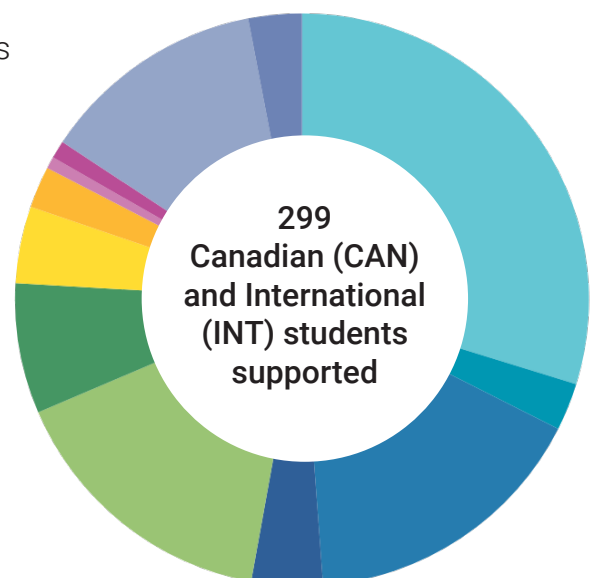
Following the SPARK program, participants showed an increase in knowledge of KT strategies and over three-quarters of respondents (77.8%) were “very satisfied” with the workshop overall.

Students Trained

CYRRC was committed to providing opportunities for students and early career scholars to train in research and program evaluation methods, as well as to access national data and other tools to launch their own research.

Undergraduate	Masters	PhD
89 CAN	49 CAN	47 CAN
8 INT	12 INT	22 INT
Post Doctoral	College	Other*
47 CAN	47 CAN	47 CAN
22 INT	22 INT	22 INT

*(technician, community member)





TESTIMONIALS

“Throughout this journey, what has been truly remarkable is not just the opportunities but the support, empowerment, and encouragement I have received from the CYRRC team. They have always provided a welcoming space for me to voice my experiences, vulnerabilities, and strengths. The team’s commitment to amplifying diverse voices and fostering meaningful collaborations has not only expanded my knowledge and connections but has also deepened my respect for the impactful work they do ... By facilitating discussions and collaborations, and providing platforms for individuals with lived experiences, CYRRC is contributing significantly to bridging gaps in policies and programming. This not only enriches the resettlement experience for refugees but also enhances Canada’s ability to create inclusive and effective immigration and settlement policies.”

– Hanen Nanaa

“My journey with CYRCC occurred in 2018; the involvement has offered meaningful opportunities for self-empowerment, resiliency value, voice representation, refugee experience validation, community building, leadership development, skill and knowledge learning, mental health support, peer support, and social justice advocacy. Thanks to CYRRC’s various projects, I have implemented the sense of belonging, and grown professionally. I have become an agent of positive changes within the community and beyond.”

– Praise Mugisho

“Being a part of the CYRRC network has been a wonderful opportunity for us at ISANS to build our capacity to participate in research, to connect with others across sectors and regions of the country, and to contribute our expertise and experience. ISANS was invited to join the CYRRC partnership in 2016, at the application stage, so we were able to understand the design and to take an active role from the start ... The CYRRC partnership has been an outstanding model of inter-sectoral national collaboration, empowering partners and producing a significant number of practical studies to support the work of refugee settlement across Canada.”

– Nabiha Atallah, Advisor, Strategic Initiatives
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

“This [Knowledge Mobilization] working group reinforced to me the need to have people with lived experiences to have direct participation on research and engagement initiatives focused on their communities – a practice that has been translated into my line of work. The success of the working group can be attributed to the exemplary coordination and cooperation which has been highly responsive to the evolving socioeconomic, pandemic, and humanitarian crises that have occurred since the emergence of CYRRC. It has been a wonderful experience to work with the dedicated, insightful, and inspiring individuals who will continue to carry on the best practices developed through this working group into our regular practices.”

– *Celine Truong, Research & Policy Team Lead,
Alberta Association for Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)*

“Being a part of CYRRC has been an empowering experience for a research-focused Service Provider Organization like Access Alliance. We received grants two times that helped us to strengthen our community-based research department, engage refugee youth as peer researchers, create career pathways for them to enroll in graduate studies, connect with mainstream academic researchers to be post-doctorate fellows at the universities, and build their agencies. The peers built capacity and self-efficacy and regained their self-confidence to be motivated leaders even at the national level.”

– *Akm Alamgir, Director, Organizational Knowledge & Learning,
Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services*

“CYRRC, from day one, intentionally built a genuine partnership with service providers and more importantly the refugee youth they were serving, in a true co-creation project. We were all flown to Toronto for a very impactful first in-person meeting, and even though COVID hit and all meetings went online for 3 years of the network’s journey, the relationships I have built with researchers and settlement practitioners from across the country have changed the way I look at how to create genuinely newcomer-led research ... The ensuing Infographics, podcasts, Executive Summaries, interactive Annual Impact Reports and CYRRC contributor gatherings, which gave youth with refugee experience a platform to amplify their voices, have led the way in Settlement Sector Knowledge Distribution. I have been proud to be part of the planning and creation of these inspirational KMB products, and to share them with our networks and present them at sector conferences where I was always asked – “why doesn’t everyone do it this way?” followed by “how can we do it this way?” and that is the CYRRC legacy.”

– *Vicki Sinclair, Executive Director,
Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)*

“CYRRC provided us with an opportunity to engage with research that newcomer, immigrant and refugee communities could feel actively involved and proud of being a part of, while addressing large systemic issues and gaps that were affecting their settlement journeys. With funding sources for research that are community based, having access to CYRRC allowed us to do impactful research that has led to action in policy and program development that will positively affect our communities.”

– *Kathleen Vyrauen, Project Manager,
Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) & Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba (ECCM)*

WHERE WE GO NEXT

Policy, Program, & Research Recommendations

We have organized recommendations emerging from our research into those relevant for policy-makers, service provider organizations, and school systems. See the box on the right for links to research projects related to each recommendation.

Policy

Social Assistance: Policy-makers must prioritize adequate social assistance and living wage policies for refugee families beyond the first year after arrival. This could help address:

- Food insecurity and mental health
- Parental mental health
- Academic persistence
- Family conflict and domestic violence

Family Reunification: Immigration policies that remove barriers to family reunification are instrumental in helping build resilience in newcomer families by maximizing social support and minimizing isolation.

Immigration Status: Refugee youth need access to affordable housing and education regardless of their claimant status.

Gender-Based Policy:

- Policy-makers need to consider gender differences to ensure equal access to education and skill-building opportunities for newly settled refugees.
- Funding is needed to support initiatives that create spaces for newcomer women and girls to empower themselves and make social connections.

Education Policy:

- Anti-bullying initiatives should explicitly name racism and Islamophobia and centre BIPOC students.
- Teachers require professional development regarding cultural competency, the learning conditions for first and second language learning, and trauma-informed approaches.
- Increased funding for English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming and for Educational Assistants (EAs) with additional language abilities is needed to better assist children in schools.

Links

Social Assistance

[Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth's Experience with COVID-19](#)

[Mental Health and Help-Seeking Among Refugee Children and Families in Hamilton, Ontario](#)

[Refugee Youth and Interrupted Schooling: Economic and Social Implications, Youth Newcomers' Educational Resistance](#)

[Addressing Domestic Violence in Refugee Families in Waterloo Region](#)

Family Reunification

[Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth's Experience with COVID-19](#)

[Loss and Protracted Family Separation Among Refugee Children and Youth](#)

Immigration Status

[Loss and Protracted Family Separation Among Refugee Children and Youth](#)

Gender-Based Policy

[The Labour Market Vulnerabilities of Refugees in Canada: The Impacts of Entry Programs](#)

[Refugee Youth and Interrupted Schooling: Economic and Social Implications](#)

[Weathering the Storm: How African Families with Refugee Backgrounds Coped with Online Schooling during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Safe Spaces: Youth with Refugee Experience and Their Parents Harnessing Resilience](#)

[An Exploration of Integration Journeys and Well-being](#)

[Refugee Youth in Western Canadian Cities: Perception of, Identification with, and Affinity to Canada](#)

Education Policy

[Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience in Nova Scotia](#)

[An Exploration of Integration Journeys and Well-being](#)

[Specific Needs in Literacy and Language Learning of Syrian Refugee Children in Germany and Canada](#)

[Refugee Youth and Interrupted Schooling: Economic and Social Implications](#)

[Mobilizing Innovative Models in Early Childhood Education and Care for Newcomer Families and Children](#)

[Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling in Smaller Communities in Manitoba](#)

[Family Contexts of Migrant Children: Language and Other Socioeconomic Inequalities](#)

Links

Collaboration

[School-Work Transition Barriers for Newcomer Youth in Alberta](#)

[Supported Transitions: Effective Educational Approaches for Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling](#)

[Enhancing Cultural Literacy to Improve Refugee Mental Health Services](#)

[COVID-19 and Refugee Families in Montreal](#)

[Social-Emotional Development in Refugee Children and Families](#)

[Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling in Smaller Communities in Manitoba Children and Families](#)

[Ethnocultural Communities' Role in Supporting Newcomers to Winnipeg](#)

Cultural Brokering

[COVID-19 and Refugee Families in Montreal](#)

[Communicating Through COVID-19: Experiences of Multilingual Families with Refugees Experience](#)

[Language and Literacy Development of Syrian Refugee Children and Arabic-Speaking Immigrant Children](#)

[Enhancing Cultural Literacy to Improve Refugee Mental Health Services](#)

[Addressing Domestic Violence in Refugee Families in Waterloo Region](#)

Involving People with Lived Experience

[Promoting Emotional Well-Being in Refugee Newcomer Families in the Waterloo Region](#)

[Loss and Protracted Family Separation Among Refugee Children and Youth](#)

[Social-Emotional Development in Refugee Children and Families](#)

[Mental Health and Help-Seeking Among Refugee Children and Families in Hamilton, Ontario](#)

[Singing My Story: Building Capacity with Newcomer Youth Through Songwriting, Recording, and Creative Arts-Based Pedagogies](#)

Service Provider Organizations (SPOs)

Collaboration: settlement agencies need to partner with educators, employers, ethnocultural community organizations, and health- and faith-focused community groups to address:

- Youth's school-to-work transition
- Youth with interrupted schooling
- Mental and physical health
- Youth resettlement in smaller communities
- Early settlement

Cultural Brokering: Settlement services need to be socio-culturally attuned to the needs of families with refugee experience.

- Service providers should go beyond simple language translations to engaging communities in cultural brokering.
- Language programs should be culturally responsive by engaging the real-life issues refugee students face and validating their identities and life experiences. Programs should also include trauma-informed approaches when necessary.
- Increasing diversity in the staff and governing bodies of SPOs by attracting and retaining culturally diverse staff could help make services more culturally appropriate.
- Organizations serving refugee families should create a cultural navigator position to help strengthen the cultural appropriateness of services.

Involving People with Lived Experience (PWLE): PWLE should be involved in refugee-serving initiatives to help maximize the impact, provide culturally-sensitive services, and overcome language barriers.

- A strengths-based approach would recognize the resilience of refugee populations and allow refugees themselves to become key stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- Parents should be engaged in identifying and responding to children's mental health needs to ensure that care does not clash with cultural values, thereby causing or exacerbating intergenerational conflict.
- Youth from newcomer and refugee communities should be consulted in the development of arts- and music-based programming.

Accessibility of Programs and Services: Services need to be accessible in terms of cost, availability, and language, and use trauma-informed approaches.

- ▶ Language-learning programs for adults need to be more accessible in terms of transportation assistance and childcare.
- ▶ Employment services and mental and physical health supports need to be improved for youth with refugee experience in rural areas.
- ▶ Mental health services should meet newcomer families where they are by embedding supports in community settings such as schools and ethnocultural associations.

Specific Program Needs:

- ▶ Arts and music programming for youth
- ▶ Sports and recreational activity programming, especially for girls
- ▶ Supports to help children and parents cope with stress and loss in ways that celebrate their strengths, culture, and resilience
- ▶ Workshops for newcomer families to familiarize them with workplace norms and culture and Canadian systems for daily tasks (e.g., taking the bus and buying groceries) and essential tasks (e.g., networking and applying for jobs)
- ▶ Employment programs that provide more opportunities for youth to acquire Canadian work experience through paid work opportunities and work with more diverse employers
- ▶ More supports for women with refugee experience to help them in caring for children, providing for their families, and becoming more involved in decisions affecting their children's education
- ▶ Ways for SPOs to engage fathers in programs, services, and supports, because without their participation, whole-family approaches to addressing inter-family tension and social integration are less effective
- ▶ Role models and mentors to help newcomer youth navigate settlement, education, and employment pathways

Links

Accessibility of Programs and Services

[Loss and Protracted Family Separation Among Refugee Children and Youth](#)

[Family Contexts of Migrant Children: Language and Other Socioeconomic Inequalities](#)

[Safe Spaces: Youth with Refugee Experience and Their Parents Harnessing Resilience](#)

[Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience in Nova Scotia](#)

[Mental Health and Help-Seeking Among Refugee Children and Families in Hamilton, Ontario](#)

Specific Program Needs

[Singing My Story: Building Capacity with Newcomer Youth Through Songwriting](#)

[Flash Forward Photovoice](#)

[Safe Spaces: Youth with Refugee Experience and Their Parents Harnessing Resilience](#)

[Mental Health and Help-Seeking Among Refugee Children and Families in Hamilton, Ontario](#)

[Loss and Protracted Family Separation Among Refugee Children and Youth](#)

[Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience in Nova Scotia](#)

[Developing Skills, Building Relationships: The Social and Employment Outcomes of ISANS' Immigrant Youth Employability Program, Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience in Nova Scotia](#)

[Analysis of LINC Students' Career Goals Pathways](#)

[Weathering the Storm: How African Families with Refugee Backgrounds Coped with Online Schooling during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling in Smaller Communities in Manitoba](#)

[Social-Emotional Development in Refugee Children and Families](#)

Links

Valuing Newcomer Culture and Language

[Communicating Through COVID-19: Experiences of Multilingual Families with Refugees Experience](#)

[The Effect of a Dual-Language Stimulation Program for Refugee Children](#)

[Weathering the Storm: How African Families with Refugee Backgrounds Coped with Online Schooling during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Syrian Refugee Children's Representations of their Memories of Syria, a Transition Country, and Early Days in Canada](#)

[Refugee Youth and Interrupted Schooling: Economic and Social Implications](#)

[Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience in Nova Scotia](#)

Community Engagement

[Newcomer Refugee and Immigrant Youth's Experience with COVID-19](#)

[Supported Transitions: Effective Educational Approaches for Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling](#)

[Communicating Through COVID-19: Experiences of Multilingual Families with Refugees Experience](#)

[Specific Needs in Literacy and Language Learning of Syrian Refugee Children in Germany and Canada](#)

[Older Refugee Youth with Interrupted Schooling in Smaller Communities in Manitoba](#)

Language Learning

[Family Contexts of Migrant Children: Language and Other Socioeconomic Inequalities](#)

[Specific Needs in Literacy and Language Learning of Syrian Refugee Children in Germany and Canada](#)

[The Effect of a Dual-Language Stimulation Program for Refugee Children](#)

[Successes and Challenges of Children who are Syrian Refugees: Language, Literacy, and Wellbeing](#)

[Refugee Youth and Interrupted Schooling: Economic and Social Implications](#)

[Language and Literacy Development of Syrian Refugee Children and Arabic-Speaking Immigrant Children](#)

[Well-Being and Learning: Processes of Resilience in Refugee Children](#)

[Case Analysis of the Language for Young Adults Program](#)

[School and Community Resources and the Social-Emotional and Academic Adjustment of Refugee Children](#)

Schools

Valuing Newcomer Culture and Language: Schools must value newcomer families' home languages and the strengths and cultural capital that newcomer parents employ.

- ▶ School curriculums should be diversified, with both physical and virtual educational spaces and services becoming more culturally responsive and supportive.
- ▶ Students' prior educational and language experiences should be recognized and they should be supported to pursue higher-level classes and post-secondary education.

Community Engagement:

- ▶ School boards should consult with community partners to identify best practices for creating culturally aware and competent school environments.
- ▶ School systems, teachers, and communities need to help establish meaningful parent-teacher collaboration to support children's language development.
- ▶ Schools are encouraged to use interpreter services regularly. If this is not feasible, schools could recruit parents of similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds to act as cultural brokers.
- ▶ There needs to be improved communication and outreach between educators and students with interrupted schooling about the benefits and limitations of e-credits in completing their education and fulfilling career aspirations.

Language Learning:

- ▶ While learning English and/or French, newcomer children should also be encouraged to maintain their home language to facilitate inter-generational connections and family cohesion.
- ▶ Schools should create more opportunities for English language learning through formal instruction (e.g., classes) and informal methods (e.g., peer mentoring, English language circles, etc.).
- ▶ Positive relationships between teachers and students and among peers are vital for language learning. Teachers and schools should find ways to foster positive relationships in the early months of children's and youths' resettlement experiences.

Community & Youth Engagement

The success of CYRRC as a research network is largely due to our ongoing partnerships with SPOs and community organizations. These partnerships ensured the relevance of our research to the refugee-serving sector and allowed us to mobilize knowledge in new and effective ways. Throughout our seven years of operation, we have come to see how crucial it is to also involve people with lived experience (PWLE), specifically youth with refugee experience (YREs), in the research, programming, and policy that affects them.

We would like to highlight our knowledge mobilization efforts around the importance of collaboration and how to meaningfully engage community partners and youth:

The Refuge – Policy Matters: Why Collaboration Matters [[Link to episode on YouTube](#)]

Refugee Resettlement Policy: Why Collaboration Matters [[Link to pdf policy brief](#)]

The Refuge: Youth Involvement in Research & Community Programs [[Link to episode on YouTube](#)]

The Refuge: Nothing About Us Without Us – Meaningful Youth Engagement [[Link to episode on YouTube](#)]

Lessons Learned About Academic-Community Partnership

- 1 Initial in-person meetings between academic and community partners helped build relationships.
- 2 The four research clusters helped guide CYRRC's research focus and allowed for the creation of smaller teams that could develop closer and more efficient working relationships.
- 3 It was important to place community partners on an equal level with academics by including them on steering committees and as cluster co-leads.
- 4 Involving community partners in the grant from the beginning contributed to their sense of ownership over the project.
- 5 Regular meetings of the steering committees and Knowledge Mobilization Working Group helped maintain relationships and investment in the project.
- 6 Including community partners in budget meetings helped them feel equally involved in key decisions.
- 7 Having a budget for knowledge mobilization was important to prioritizing the accessibility of the research.
- 8 Having a project manager and project assistant to organize meetings and take minutes ensured that the project ran smoothly.

Recommendations for Engaging Youth with Refugee Experience (YRE)

- 1 Recognize that youth are experts in their own lives.
- 2 Allow youth to lead consultations and focus groups in research. Give them decision-making power.
- 3 Recognize and address power dynamics between YREs and established systems and structures.
- 4 Include YREs in consultations on data analysis to help researchers understand the limitations of the data and ensure that data is shared in ways that reflect how it was given.
- 5 Listen to what youth want and what challenges they are facing. Treat each youth as a unique individual and do not treat YREs as a monolithic group.
- 6 Listen to YREs with an open heart and mind, without judgement, to allow youth to share their insights and experiences.
- 7 Compensate YREs fairly for their time and expertise.
- 8 Secure sustainable funding to retain staff and build trusting relationships over a longer time. At-risk youth especially need the involvement of someone they trust, which can be achieved by hiring an ambassador.
- 9 Hold focus groups in places youth are familiar with, such as restaurants or community centres, and provide a meal to build a sense of community.

These insights come from our 2023 Forum. [Find the full 2023 Forum report on our website.](#)



For more information or to [download this report](https://www.cyrrc.org) visit [cyrrc.org](https://www.cyrrc.org)
Thank you to all of our partners, researchers, and the youth who contributed to this work!

