CYRRC

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

FROM THE CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

© CYRRC | Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition | cyrrc@dal.ca

March 2019

Dalhousie University
SSHRC Canada

Print Design by Brandon Mott
Copy and Proofing by Erin Elaine Casey
Project Managed by Simone Chia-Kangata

The CYRRC is based at the Resilience Research Centre (RRC) at Dalhousie University.

CONTENTS

4 ABOUT THE CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

10 DELPHI PROCESS OF RESEARCH AND POLICY INTERVENTION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

12 PARTICIPATORY ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

13 BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS CLUSTER

21 LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND LEARNING CLUSTER

24 SOCIAL INTEGRATION, RIGHTS, CULTURE, AND SECURITY CLUSTER

31 CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY WELLBEING CLUSTER

34 CANADA-GERMANY COLLABORATION

36 DATA AGGREGATION

ABOUT THE CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) is an alliance of scholars, service provider organizations, community partners, and government agencies committed to promoting the successful integration of refugee children, youth, and their families.

Our objective is to conduct and share research that practitioners, community groups, and governments can use to help young people with refugee experience succeed.

The CYRRC grew out of conversations that began in 2015 at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) supported the dream of a research coalition that would contribute to policies and interventions for the integration of recently arrived Syrian refugees to Canada. In May 2017, the Coalition was awarded a $2.5 million SSHRC partnership grant. We are now focused on the broader goal of helping young people with refugee experience succeed, both in Canada and around the world.

Coalition researchers are committed to:

- conducting rigorous research,
- promoting best practices, and
- mobilizing knowledge to further the social integration, education, and mental and physical wellbeing of refugee children and youth.

In 2018, CYRRC researchers were involved in over 40 research projects on social integration, economic outcomes, education, and mental and physical wellbeing of refugee children, youth, and families.

To learn more about our work, connect with CYRRC members, and explore opportunities to collaborate, visit us at cyrrc.org.

@CYRRCOALITION

@CYRRCOALITION

JOINING THE CYRRC

Interested in learning more about our work, connecting with CYRRC members, and exploring opportunities to collaborate? Join us! Membership is free. Visit us online at cyrrc.org to apply.

Academics are invited to join as Associate Members in the research cluster of their choice. Associate Members receive routine data distributions, information about upcoming opportunities and events, and are eligible to collaborate on CYRRC-funded projects.

NGOs and Education and Service Provider (ESPO) Organizations may join as many clusters as they want. ESPO partners collaborate with academic partners on CYRRC project grants, and in some instances are eligible to hold funds. ESPO members may also request assistance in processing or accessing IRCC, Statistics Canada, or other data sources that the CYRRC has access to.

Students are invited to join as many clusters as they want. They receive updates about the opportunities available to them, including subsidies to attend conferences and workshops.

CYRRC members collaborate to produce new research and share best practices nationally and internationally. Members hail from academic institutions, education and service provider organizations (ESPOs), and government departments. We fund new research through our regular calls for proposals, which are announced several times a year.

The CYRRC also offers a wide range of opportunities and training for students and early career scholars, including opportunities to get involved with research as well as attend conferences, workshops, and other events.

STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

COORDINATION AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

RESEARCH CLUSTERS

BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS

Analyzes the economic, social, and political policy contexts that affect the wellbeing and development of refugee children and youth as they integrate into Canadian society.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND LEARNING

Focuses on the role of language of origin of refugee children and youth on their cognitive and literacy skills in the destination country, and looks at the social contexts that further their educational achievement, literacy levels, and language skills.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION, RIGHTS, CULTURE, AND SECURITY

Examines the factors associated with social integration, different stressors experienced by child and youth refugees, discrimination, and social support pre- and post-resettlement.

CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY WELLBEING

Investigates young people's experiences of trauma and the social conditions, policies, and initiatives that facilitate resilience pre- and post-resettlement.

A MESSAGE FROM DR. MICHAEL UNGAR, CYRRC SCIENTIFIC DIRECTOR

It's been another successful year for the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC). In the past twelve months, CYRRC researchers started twenty new research projects on social integration, economic outcomes, education, and mental and physical wellbeing of refugee children, youth, and families. Our membership continues to grow, with over 170 members across Canada and internationally, hailing from academic institutions, education and service provider organizations (ESPOs), and government departments, including many students.

Results from our 2017 projects are beginning to emerge, revealing important findings regarding provincial funding programs for refugees and immigrants in Canada, the role of ethnocultural communities in supporting newcomer youth, and labour market outcomes of refugee families, to name just a few.

Among our notable outputs this past year, CYRRC researchers completed a Delphi study which established a consensus on research and policy priorities for refugee children, youth, and families in Canada. It is our hope that this report will help inform researchers, service providers and policy-makers as they develop programs, create policies, and advance research in this field.

In September, our *Social Justice in Focus* participatory photography project, in which Nova Scotian youth with refugee backgrounds shared their experiences through photography, culminated in a successful public event that brought together participants from academia, government, the service sector and members of the public. You will find photos and captions from this project interspersed throughout this report. We look forward to a similar event which will take place in Toronto this year as part of our *Flash Forward* photovoice project. Through participatory and arts-based research projects, we continue to create much-needed platforms for newcomer youth to share their stories and experiences with us.

Lastly, I'm pleased that we recently established a Knowledge Mobilization working group. Spearheaded by our service provider members, the group's mission is to ensure that our research findings are translated into formats useful to service provider organizations and accessible to the public. This is an important step in meeting our objective to produce and share innovative research that is relevant to service providers and policy makers.

I would like to thank all our members for your continued commitment to producing research that helps young people with refugee experience succeed in Canada and beyond. I also invite interested new members to join our Coalition. It's been a productive year and much more lies ahead.

Dr. Michael Ungar
Scientific Director, CYRRC

WWW.MICHAELUNGAR.COM
@MICHAELUNGARPHD

DR. MICHAEL UNGAR is the Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience and Professor of Social Work at Dalhousie University. He is also a practicing family therapist, the founder and Director of the Resilience Research Centre, and consults and trains with the World Bank, UNESCO, and the Red Cross. Dr. Ungar's research has helped to identify the most important factors that influence the resilience of children and adults during periods of transition and stress. He is the author of 15 books that have been translated into five languages, numerous manuals for parents, educators, and employers, as well as more than 180 scientific papers. His blog Nurturing Resilience is on Psychology Today. In 2012 Dr. Ungar was the recipient of the Canadian Association of Social Workers National Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contribution to clinical work with families and communities.

COORDINATION & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (COC)

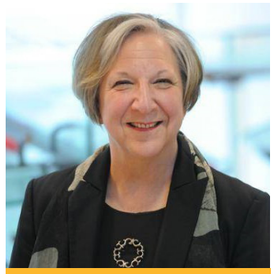
The COC is chaired by the CYRRC Scientific Director and includes leads from each Research Cluster as well as representatives from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Statistics Canada. The COC oversees all research and operational activities of the CYRRC. To find out more about our Cluster Leads, turn to the detailed descriptions of our Research Clusters.

STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

The Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) is chaired by a Vice-President Research (VPR) from a Canadian university and is made up of representatives from ESPOs (education and service provider organizations), academic institutions, the refugee community, IRCC, and Statistics Canada. The committee's mandate is to provide scientific and impact oversight of projects, identify links for partnership, oversee knowledge mobilization strategies, and advise on other issues.

The CYRRC's **Knowledge Mobilization Working Group** was formed in 2018. Its mission is to help researchers translate their findings into formats useful to settlement service organizations and communicate findings in ways accessible to the general public. Membership in the working group is comprised of the seven ESPO representatives on our Coordination and Operations Committee, a KMb Assistant, and the CYRRC's Project Manager.

STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS



MARTHA CRAGO

MARTHA CRAGO is McGill University's Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation). She researches language acquisition across a variety of languages and learners, including monolingual and bilingual Indigenous children, as well as children learning English, French, and Arabic. Dr. Crago was editor of Applied Psycholinguistics from 2002 to 2018 and is former vice-president of the International Association for the Study of Child Language. She has been named Femme de Mérite de Montréal, Chevalier de l'Ordre des palmes academiques by the French government, Woman of Excellence in Nova Scotia, and was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2018.

MEHRUNNISA ALI

MEHRUNNISA ALI is a Professor in the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University. She has extensive experience in developing and evaluating educational projects, and has taught prospective and practicing teachers, community development workers, and university students. Dr. Ali teaches in the graduate programs in Early Childhood Studies, Immigration and Settlement Studies, and Policy Studies. She is also the Ryerson Director of the Centre of Excellence for Research in Immigration and Settlement, the Ontario Metropolis Centre. Her research interests include newcomer children, youth, and families; parent-teacher relations; and preparation of teachers to work with diverse populations.

FARIBORZ BIRJANDIAN

FARIBORZ BIRJANDIAN has served on numerous national and international bodies related to immigration, refugees, diversity, equal rights, and the cultural arts. He became a refugee when he left Iran with his family in 1987, and has been working with refugees for more than 30 years. As CEO of Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), Mr. Birjandian leads 300 staff members and 1,600 volunteers as they deliver approximately 90 programs and services. He has also been instrumental in designing and implementing many methodologies related to settlement and integration, including the UNHCR Settlement Handbook used nationally and internationally.

KATHY GEORGIADES is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University. She holds a New Investigator Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the David R. (Dan) Offord Chair in Child Studies. Dr. Georgiades works to quantify and reduce inequities in mental health and academic achievement among vulnerable populations, particularly immigrant and refugee children and adolescents. Her research examines how individual- and contextual-level influences (family, school, and community) independently and jointly contribute to inequities early in life.

KATHY GEORDIADES

BAYAN KHATIB

BAYAN KHATIB is the co-founder and Director of the Syrian Canadian Foundation, which aims to empower newcomers and connect communities. She is also co-founder of the Syria Film Festival in Toronto. For the past five years, Ms. Bayan has led a multinational media campaign, made multiple media appearances, and participated as a speaker on the Syrian crisis at local and international events. She is also the translator of Just Five Minutes: Nine Years in the Prisons of Syria, the memoir of a female political prisoner, and the author of numerous short works of fiction and opinion articles.

Canada

STATISTICS CANADA

STATISTICS CANADA, formed in 1971, is the Government of Canada agency commissioned with producing statistics to help better understand Canada, its population, resources, economy, society, and culture.

Canada

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA (IRCC)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA (IRCC) is the Government of Canada agency responsible for matters dealing with immigration to Canada, refugees, and Canadian citizenship.

DELPHI PROCESS OF RESEARCH AND POLICY INTERVENTION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

DELPHI STUDY IDENTIFIES KEY CYRRC PRIORITIES

In 2018, CYRRC researchers Howard Ramos, Serperi Sevgur, and Patrick McGrath carried out a Delphi Study to reach consensus on research and policy priorities for refugee children, youth, and families in Canada.

The Delphi technique uses a series of questions to collect respondents' opinions and identify consensus. This research was administered in two rounds through online surveys sent to 87 CYRRC members. Experts from academia, service provider agencies, and education organizations participated in the study.

WHAT DID THE DELPHI STUDY FIND?

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The study found that there is consensus on five key areas for research and policy:

1. Family wellbeing and integration
2. Educational experiences and aspirations
3. Long-term, longitudinal, or life course outcomes
4. Mental health and experiences of bullying and discrimination
5. Coordinating best practices, policies, and data

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The study identified the following research priorities:

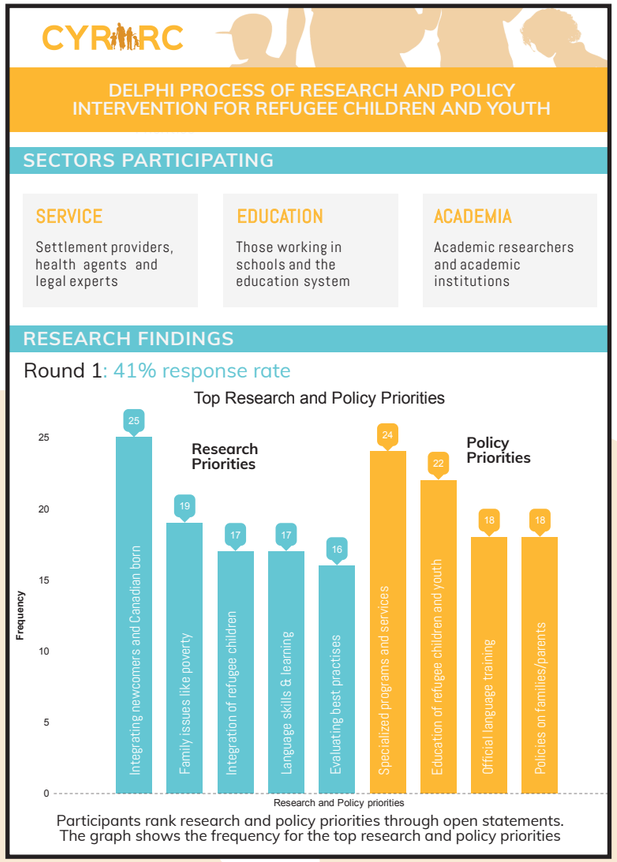
- Factors that facilitate the integration of refugee children and youth
- Refugee families
- Factors that predict settlement and immigration outcomes
- Language skills and learning
- Factors that facilitate and impede social integration and education outcomes, the impact of mental health conditions, and school dropout issues

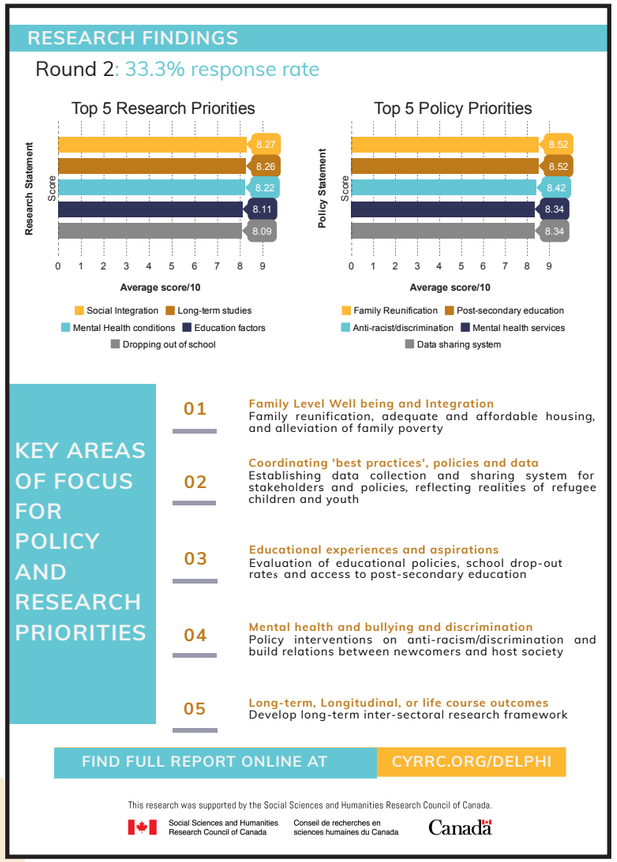
POLICY PRIORITIES

The study identified the following policy priorities:

- Specialized education programming
- K-12 education
- Family reunification
- Access to postsecondary education
- Intervention in official language training and issues that affect refugee parents and families
- Provision of anti-racist and anti-discrimination programs
- Family issues, including more effective family reunification outcomes, and poverty

ACCESS THE FULL REPORT ON OUR WEBSITE AT: HTTP://CYRRC.ORG/OUR-REPORTS/





SOCIAL JUSTICE IN FOCUS: YOUTH WITH REFUGEE EXPERIENCE EXPLORE SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY IN HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

SUSAN BRIGHAM, Mount Saint Vincent University
APRIL MANDRONA, NSCAD University

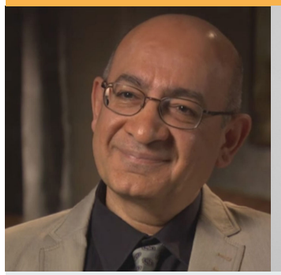
This project was a collaboration between the CYRRC, Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), and Youth Art Connection (YAC). Ten youth between the ages of 16 and 24 with refugee experience participated in workshops to explore concepts of social justice and activism. They also learned photography skills and how to use photography to represent issues of concern. In September 2018, participants presented their work at a public forum held at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. They were joined by youth from New Brunswick and Montreal, and more than 80 people attended the event.

FLASH FORWARD PHOTOVOICE PROJECT

APRIL MANDRONA, Project Lead
Assistant Professor, Art Education, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD)

Syrian youth served by the Syrian Canadian Foundation (SCF) face significant challenges, including low educational attainment, interrupted schooling, poverty, social isolation, bullying, discrimination, and violence. The SCF has developed strong relationships with youth, families, and communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). As part their programming, this project provides an educational and artistic platform for Syrian refugee youth to share their perspectives and experiences through photovoice, a research tool and community-based framework that positions young people as social agents with the capacity to make valuable contributions to issues of concern in their lives. Photovoice uses photography, discussion, and critical reflection to access and represent the needs, experiences, and knowledge of groups whose voices may be marginalized. Twelve Syrian refugee youth aged 16 to 21 participate. Over 20 weeks, they will take part in photography classes, mentorship, and workshops. The youth will make a body of artwork and develop new ways of interacting with their surroundings and understanding their unique experiences. The project will culminate in an exhibition where participants present their stories and photography to the community.

CLUSTER LEADS

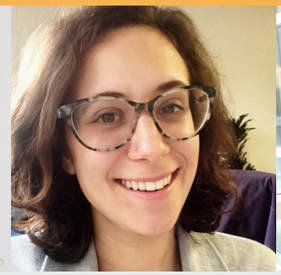


ABDIE KAZEMIPUR

is a Professor of Sociology and the Chair of Ethnic Studies at the University of Calgary. He came to Winnipeg from Iran in 1993 to do his PhD at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Kazemipur was Stephen Jarislowsly Chair in Culture Change and Immigration at Memorial University, and was founding director of Statistics Canada Research Data Centres at the University of Lethbridge and Memorial University. His research interests include the socio-economic experiences of immigrants in Canada and socio-cultural developments in the Middle East. Dr. Kazemipur has received the John Porter Award from the Canadian Sociological Association and the Researcher Award from Canadian National Metropolis.

DANIELLA BAGMEIJER

is Research and Policy Officer at the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA), a recognized leader in the settlement and integration sector. Originally from the Netherlands, Ms. Bagmeijer holds a double Masters of Science in Public Policy and Human Development through a joint program specializing in Social Protection Policy from Maastricht University and United Nations University. As an immigrant to both Colombia and Canada, she is passionate about the work AAISA does in representing immigrant-serving agencies and organizations. In addition to immigration policy, she is also interested in social justice, equality, and access to healthcare.



LJUDMILA PETROVIC

is Research and Information Coordinator at AMSSA, British Columbia's association of immigrant and refugee settlement support services. Her role includes maintaining Settlement Net (AMSSA's weekly bulletin), knowledge mobilization, coordinating with community researchers, and developing resources. Ms. Petrovic holds a BA from Simon Fraser University and is currently pursuing an MA in counselling psychology with a research focus on intergenerational trauma, gender-based violence, trauma of displacement, and counselling informed by gender and cultural analysis. She has done frontline work with at-risk youth, and women and children escaping violence.

YOKO YOSHIDA

is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University. Her research interests include social statistics, integration processes of immigrants, and socio-economic inequality. Her work measures immigrant integration and settlement in Atlantic Canada, social and economic activities of immigrants who come under the sponsored family streams, and impacts of family and gender in settlement processes. Dr. Yoshida has research partnerships with the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration; Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; and Statistics Canada. She is a co-investigator for Pathways to Prosperity and is a board member for the Canadian Population Society.

PROJECTS (BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS)

NEW IN 2018

LEGAL STATUS TRAJECTORIES AND SOCIOECONOMIC EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEE CLAIMANTS IN CANADA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY USING ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

LUIN GOLDRING, Project Lead

Professor of Sociology and CERLAC Fellow,
York University

Refugee children, youth, and adults are not homogeneous — they arrive in different ways at different times and with a range of characteristics. The location and timing of refugee selection and determination, immigration status on arrival, and access to services and supports all play a role in status trajectories. This study explores questions about legal status trajectories and the socioeconomic experiences of people who make refugee claims in Canada. How do they and their children fare compared to newcomers arriving through skilled and family class categories, refugees selected overseas, and temporary residents or international students? How does the timing of claims, time in Canada, and experience in other immigration situations affect labour market integration? Can we identify trajectories with only a refugee claim versus a claim and additional status information?

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA: TRENDS IN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL FUNDING

DOMINIQUE CLÉMENT, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Sociology,
University of Alberta

This project is a collaboration between the University of Alberta and the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AISSA). Alberta accepts almost double the number of refugees and humanitarian classes of immigrants as British Columbia, but has fewer service provider organizations (SPOs) receiving federal grants for settlement. Recent research also demonstrates that Alberta underfunds settlement services. Federal funding is critical to filling this gap, but there is no concrete data on this funding. Provinces such as BC and Ontario also have a longer history of admitting large numbers of immigrants, and sophisticated programs and services for settlement. There are potentially vast disparities in services available across Canada, which can have a profound impact on successful integration and settlement. This project uses the Access to Information Act to collect data on funding for immigrant and refugee settlement across Canada between 2010 and 2018.

REFUGEE RECEPTION AND PERCEPTION IN GERMANY AND CANADA: YEAR 2

ELKE WINTER, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa

In 2015 and 2016, about one million refugees/asylum seekers literally marched to Germany's doorstep, and Canada has resettled more than 53,000 Syrian refugees since November 2015. In its first year, 2017-2018, this project compared the representation of Syrian refugees in one German and one Canadian newspaper between September 2015 and January 2016. The German articles revealed stark divisions regarding "the refugee question". In the Canadian articles, coverage of Syrian refugees was less negative compared to other refugee groups, but this positive representation was mainly used to highlight Canadians' generosity and benevolence toward minority groups. In Year 2, this project examines public claims-making in the context of the so-called "refugee crisis", asking: Who are the actors or "carrier groups" that manage to get their voices heard? What claims are made for, against, and by refugees, specifically about refugee families and youth? Who is targeted by these claims? How do actors justify their claims?

MULTIPLE-BARRIERED REFUGEE YOUTH AND INTERRUPTED SCHOOLING

RAY SILVIUS, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Political Science,
University of Winnipeg

In recent years, the Newcomer Education Coalition (NEC), in cooperation with Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW), has been engaged with the public school system in Winnipeg, Manitoba, to learn about the challenges facing refugee and newcomer youth and develop responses to better serve them. Many factors affect the ability of refugee youth to remain in school: the inadequacy of e-credits for educational advancement, structural economic problems, and mental health issues as a result of trauma. This study asks: What existing practices and models exist in Winnipeg schools to combat interrupted schooling for refugee youth? How can schools and educators be supported to connect with older refugee youth to prevent interrupted schooling? How can resettled refugee families be better supported to combat interrupted schooling? Existing data from a range of sources will be combined with focus groups and interviews with educators, superintendents, principals, resource teachers, EAL teachers and consultants, refugee youth, and refugee families to create a best-practices document.

PROJECTS (BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS)

NEW IN 2018

IMMIGRANT WAGES IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS: HOW DO THESE COMPARE TO THE WAGES OF THE CANADIAN-BORN?

RICHARD MUELLER, Project Lead

Professor, Department of Economics, University of Lethbridge

Immigrants are an increasingly important source of labour in Canada, but research shows that they tend to earn less than Canadian-born employees and that Canadian employers perceive credentials obtained outside of Canada to be less valuable. Government employers, because of their size, may be in a better position to evaluate foreign credentials, and wage distribution in the public sector tends to be narrower compared to the private sector. As a result, we may see a smaller (if any) wage gap between immigrants and the Canadian-born in the public compared to the private sector. This study documents immigrant wage differentials in the public and private sectors using two separate data sets: the Labour Force Survey (LFS) spanning three years on either side of 2015, and the 2016 Census. This data helps determine if any wage gaps can be explained by factors such as higher levels of education, and if wage gaps cannot be explained by the usual factors that influence wages.

LABOUR MARKET VULNERABILITIES OF REFUGEES IN CANADA: THE IMPACTS OF ENTRY PROGRAM, ARRIVAL AGE, AND GENDER

MONICA BOYD, Project Lead

Canada Research Chair in Immigration, Inequality, and Public Policy, University of Toronto

The objectives of this project are to document and analyze the stratifying effects of immigration admission policies, differentiated by entry program, and to demonstrate the impacts of gender and age at arrival on the socioeconomic integration of refugees. Research shows that entry status not only sorts migrants, but moulds their integration experiences. Using information from Statistics Canada and the IRCC merged with 2016 census records, this research asks three core questions: What are the associations between entry programs of refugees and levels of socioeconomic integration, and are indicators of integration higher for refugees admitted under Private Sponsorship compared to other groups? To what extent do between-program differences reflect differences in the characteristics of the populations in each program? What are the impacts of gender and arrival age and do these impacts vary by refugee program?

NAVIGATING NEW SPACES: AN EVALUATION OF ISANS YOUTH LIFE SKILLS SUPPORT PROGRAM

CATHERINE BRYAN, Project Lead

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

Refugee youth face challenges and find opportunities across intersecting spaces: personal, familial, social, economic, and cultural. In partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), this study will look at the ISANS Youth Life Skills Support (LSS) Program. Since 2013, 190 Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) youth ages 15 to 25 have participated in LSS, which provides group orientation, links youth to programming, and matches them with a peer mentor. Mentors are refugee youth trained in peer support. Recently, LSS has expanded to include in-house workshops on financial literacy, Canadian law, volunteerism, transportation, stress management, relationship building, and intergenerational conflict. This project will document the successes of LSS, and identify areas where it might be strengthened. In-depth interviews will be conducted with 30 youth who have completed LSS in the last three years and 20 peer mentors.

IFSSA CLIENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT: UNDERSTANDING WHAT INDEPENDENCE LOOKS LIKE FOR OUR CLIENTS

RICHARD ENNS, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Social Work, University of Calgary

This project is a partnership between the Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA) and the University of Calgary. IFSSA primarily serves newcomers and refugees, and was one of the key responders to the Syrian refugee crisis in Edmonton, Alberta. Today, IFSSA serves more people in one month than it did in all of 2011 and operates one of the largest food depots in the city. IFSSA's resources are stretched. A better understanding of the needs of long-term clients is required to identify thoughtful approaches to increasing their independence. This work will help IFSSA use research and best practices to inform decision making, ensure ethics approval and honouring of clients' data and stories, support broader efforts at addressing food security and poverty, and use an assets-based perspective that recognizes clients' skills and resources.

PROJECTS (BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS)

ONGOING PROJECTS

THE APPEARANCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF ASYLUM SEEKING FAMILIES FROM THE DPRK IN CANADA

ANNE KIM, Project Lead

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, York University

Between 2010 and 2014, hundreds to thousands of asylum seekers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—North Korea—arrived in Canada. Many arrived with children, hoping to obtain refugee status. North Korean asylum seekers often migrate to Canada through the Republic of Korea (ROK)—South Korea—where they are recognized as South Korean nationals. This means they cannot legally apply for asylum in Canada. Partly as a result of this, very few North Korean families have arrived in Canada since 2014. This is unlikely to change unless there is a policy shift or a viable alternate passage to Canada emerges. This study examines how domestic and international policies affect the movement of North Korean refugee families to Canada, what the construction of North Koreans as South Korean refugees means to families, and how North Korean immigrants and their children have been received by Korean Canadians, among other key questions.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF REFUGEE YOUTH

REZA NAKHAIE, Project Lead

Professor, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, University of Windsor

Sociological research on the integration of refugees has focused on differences in socio-demographic characteristics, cultural distance, language proficiency, governmental support, discrimination, class background, and social and human capital. There has been little research into the importance of personality characteristics in refugee youth. The stress of leaving home, living in refugee camps, and adjusting to new living conditions in the host country could result in maladaptive attitudes, behaviours, and personality problems. Parenthood is more likely to be disrupted among refugees than immigrant newcomers, and parents of refugee children and youth tend to suffer psychological distress and are less able to effectively address the social and emotional needs of their children. This project explores an alternative explanation for refugee child and youth integration, and asks: Do self and social control help the social and economic integration of refugee youth after accounting for other relevant explanations?

REFUGEE RECEPTION AND PERCEPTION IN GERMANY AND CANADA

ELKE WINTER, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa

The first phase of an ongoing project comparing the representation of Syrian refugees in German and Canadian media between September 2015 and January 2016 is now complete. (See Cluster 1: New in 2018 for the full project description.)

COMPLETED PROJECTS

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PROVINCIAL FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

DOMINIQUE CLÉMENT, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Alberta

A collaboration between the University of Alberta and the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), this study looked at provincial funding programs for refugees and immigrants in Canada. Most provincial budgets remained static between 2012 and 2017, even though the number of newcomers to Canada continued to rise. Ontario still provides the most funding for immigration and settlement while receiving the highest amount of federal transfer payments. Alberta surpassed British Columbia in the number of immigrants but funding remained unchanged. The sharpest drop in funding has been in British Columbia, while the Atlantic Provinces have a notably high per capita funding ratio. This report also looks at provincial programming for immigrants and refugees.

PROJECTS (BROADER ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS)

COMPLETED PROJECTS

THE IMPACTS OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY ON EARNINGS: DO ADMISSION CATEGORIES MATTER?

RICHARD MUELLER, Project Lead

Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, University of Lethbridge

This study explored the economic returns of literacy and numeracy skills for immigrants to Canada in different admission classes compared to their Canadian-born counterparts. Results suggest that immigrants do not perform as well on literacy and numeracy tests as those born in Canada, although young immigrants have higher test scores than adult immigrants. Similar results were found for wages. Across all immigration categories, economic immigrants tend to have the highest test scores and hourly wages, and refugees have the lowest. A one-standard deviation increase in literacy attracts a wage premium of 8% for men and 9% for women. With numeracy, the same increase is associated with a 10% wage premium for both.

ETHNOCULTURAL COMMUNITIES' ROLE IN SUPPORTING NEWCOMERS TO WINNIPEG

RAY SILVIUS, Project Lead

Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Winnipeg

This project involved a literature scan and two workshops organized by Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) that invited representatives from ethnocultural community organizations (ECOs) to share their experiences in supporting newcomer settlement and integration. The study provides a good starting point in accounting for the range of ECOs and community groups and the roles they play in supporting immigrant and refugee youth and their families over the course of their settlement. It showed that newcomer youth do want to be engaged in initiatives that listen to their needs and value their experiences, and that ECOs require active youth engagement to stay vibrant and functioning into the future. The settlement needs of newcomer youth and families warrant further study and community response.

Chadia Kayinamura
Social Justice in Focus Participant

"I always pictured my life as a path. Over every path there is destination we always hope for the best the bright light at the end of each road. The journey doesn't end there; we keep on facing more challenges."

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND LEARNING CLUSTER

CLUSTER LEADS

JOHANNE PARADIS

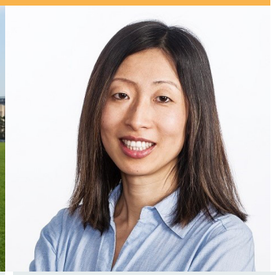
is Professor of Linguistics and Adjunct Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Alberta and studies bilingualism and second language acquisition in children. Her primary research focus is children with typical development learning English as a second language. Dr. Paradis has also focused on the capacity for bilingualism in children with developmental disorders. She is first author of the 2011 book Dual Language Development and Disorders: A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning. She is currently the editor of Journal of Child Language and with her colleagues maintains the CHESL Centre website at www.chesl.ualberta.ca, which includes assessment resources.

LISA ROCHMAN

is the Associate Dean of Immigrant Education in the Faculty of Foundational, Career and Intercultural Studies at NorQuest College, Edmonton. Dr. Rochman holds a PhD in linguistics and a Standard 3 Certificate in teaching English as a second language. Her portfolio focuses on programs for newcomers to Canada with an emphasis on English as a second language, literacy learning, and workplace essential skills. Dr. Rochman also served on the board and as president of the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL). She was the 2012 recipient of the Carolyn Dieleman Award from ATESL.

MAZEN EL-BABA

is pursuing a doctor of medicine degree at the University of Toronto. He is the founder and director of H-appi, a not-for-profit organization that works to destigmatize addictions and mental health issues in the Middle East and Africa. He manages a diverse team and ensures that all campaigns are positively impacting society. Mr. El-Baba leads an annual summer camp program for refugee children focusing on literacy, integration, and wellbeing and works to introduce social change by facilitating workshops on diversity, human rights, and leadership. He is passionate about global health, medicine, and travel.



XI (BECKY) CHEN

is Associate Professor of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research focuses on bilingual and English Language Learner (ELL) children's language and literacy development. Dr. Chen is interested in how children develop literacy skills simultaneously in their first and second languages, and whether these skills transfer between the two. Her research has explored how to identify bilingual children at risk for reading difficulties. Her study of Syrian refugee children looks at their language and literacy development in English and Arabic, as well as their mental health.

ONGOING PROJECTS

THE EFFECTS OF A DUAL-LANGUAGE STIMULATION PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

ANDREA MACLEOD, Project Lead

Associate Professor and Director of Speech-Language Pathology Programs, University of Montreal

Research into the impact of interventions that support language acquisition for immigrant and refugee children is critical. This project assesses the effect of a language stimulation program on the dual language development, emergent literacy, and wellbeing of Arabic-speaking preschoolers who have recently arrived in Canada as refugees from Syria. It also gathers preliminary data on their language abilities and addresses concerns of teachers: the children's language abilities in French are very weak; it is not clear that their first language is developing without delays; and the children are more insecure, more timid, and display more frequent inappropriate behaviours than children from immigrant families in the same school. This research helps practitioners develop data-driven approaches to supporting the language development of refugee children, and helps pre-service speech-language pathologists and educators develop similar competencies through university course work. Findings will also be shared with Syrian refugee parents through meetings and a dedicated website.

SPECIFIC NEEDS IN LITERACY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING OF REFUGEE CHILDREN: A COMPARISON OF GERMANY AND CANADA

XI (BECKY) CHEN, Project Lead

Associate Professor, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, OISE, University of Toronto

This study explores the family and school learning environments of Syrian refugee students in Canada and Germany through three family case studies in each country. The study analyzes the development of language and literacy skills, addresses the impact of social-emotional wellbeing and motivation, and explores how the specific needs of Syrian refugee children in terms of second language and literacy acquisition are met by the institutions in both countries. The comparison includes children's performance at school as well as their family dynamics and wellbeing in their new environment. This multi-year project is currently in its second phase. The same participants will be observed for another school year to see how their language and literacy skills in L2 develop, which needs teachers identify, to what extent teachers' views converge with those of parents and students, and how effective school supports are. Standardized tests and interviews will also be used.

A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE INTERVENTION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN WITH INTERRUPTED SCHOOLING: TARGETING MATH VOCABULARY AND ASSOCIATED NUMBER SENSE SKILLS

ESTHER GEVA, Project Lead

Professor, Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at OISE, University of Toronto

Before arriving in Canada, many Syrian refugee children have had their education disrupted or stopped. Various educational initiatives ease the transition, but there are not enough supports in mathematics and the language of mathematics. This study includes approximately 60 students in grades two to seven and includes novel math vocabulary and word reading measures. The objectives of the intervention study are to evaluate its effectiveness; evaluate the contribution of individual differences in cognitive skills, math vocabulary reading skills, age, and extent of interrupted schooling; test the hypothesis that command of math vocabulary will be positively related to students' increased command of math skills; and develop two assessment tools that will be used and refined in future studies.

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN WHO ARE SYRIAN REFUGEES: LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND WELLBEING

JOHANNE PARADIS, Project Lead (Edmonton)

Professor, Department of Linguistics and Adjunct Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Alberta

ALEXANDRA GOTTARDO, Project Lead (Waterloo)

Professor of Psychology, Wilfred Laurier University

This ongoing longitudinal project examines factors that contribute to language and literacy development, both in English and Arabic, as Syrian refugee children settle in Canada. It focuses on children from refugee backgrounds and takes a new and broader look at sources of individual differences in language and literacy development. Given their difficult pre-migration experiences, the contribution of socio-emotional wellbeing to refugee children's language and literacy development is a key consideration. Conducted in Edmonton, Toronto, and Waterloo with families whose children are between six and 12, the first year of the study involved development of experimental measures and identification of standardized measures that were parallel in English and Arabic, and recruitment and testing for the first round.

Zee Nolza

Social Justice in Focus Participant

"I took this picture because the way he was crying and felt lonely was reminding me the life from back home. There's no diversity here and back home. I want people to know that the life we live here it's the same to back home."

SOCIAL INTEGRATION, RIGHTS, CULTURE, AND SECURITY CLUSTER

CLUSTER LEADS

NABIHA ATALLAH

is Advisor, Strategic Initiatives at Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and has worked in immigrant settlement for more than 22 years. She has taught EAL in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Cairo. Ms. Atallah has been a Director of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, managed projects for the Atlantic Population Table and the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies, and been active in the Canadian Metropolis and Pathways to Prosperity research networks. She is a member of the Nova Scotia Immigration Research Roundtable, chair of the Atlantic Immigration Research Committee, and on the Board of Pathways to Prosperity.

HOWARD RAMOS

is Professor and Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Dalhousie University. A political sociologist who investigates social justice and equity, he has published on social movements, human rights, Indigenous mobilization, environmental advocacy, ethnicity, race, and Atlantic Canada. Dr. Ramos completed his PhD and postdoctoral fellowship at McGill University and holds a BA from York University. He is currently working on projects looking at Atlantic Canadians, secondary cities, state funding of NGOs, environmental advocacy, tourism development, and integration of immigrants and refugees. He also works to promote knowledge mobilization and translation of issues related to refugee children and youth.

LORI WILKINSON

is a Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Manitoba and the Director of Immigration Research West, an academic and community think-tank concerned with settlement and integration. Her research interests include labour market integration among refugees, school-to-work transitions among immigrant and refugee youth, and racism and inequality. Dr. Wilkinson has co-authored two books: The Research Process and Understanding Social Statistics. Recently, she has published her work on refugees in Migration Policy Institute, Journal of Canadian Ethnic Studies, and Migration, Health and Survival: International Perspectives and Immigrant Youth in Canada.

VICKI SINCLAIR

is the first Executive Director of the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO), joining the team in June 2016. Before that, she was the Director of Programming and Development at Immigrant Centre Manitoba. She is a member of the Immigrant Partnership Winnipeg Council, Le Réseau en Immigration Francophone du Manitoba, Immigration Research West, and the Western Region Research Advisory Committee. She is a former member of Winnipeg's Citizen Equity Committee and the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. She became a Canadian Citizen in 2009.

PROJECTS

NEW IN 2018

SAFE SPACES: YOUTH WITH REFUGEE EXPERIENCE AND THEIR PARENTS HARNESSING RESILIENCE

SUSAN BRIGHAM, Project Lead

Professor, Faculty of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University

The goal of this project is to create an open discussion space for Arabic-speaking refugee youth with experiences of trauma and their parents living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Through a series of ten workshops facilitated by a qualified psychologist, the group will explore tensions between youth and parents that may arise from social integration challenges; examine concepts and issues related to culture, inter-family communication, rights, and youth empowerment; develop coping skills (anger and stress management, emotional expression, affect regulation) and life skills (negotiating, compromise, respecting different opinions, problem solving, and non-violent conflict resolution). A key objective is supporting refugee youth and their parents in harnessing resilience, integrating trauma stories, and channelling them into building inner strength. Focus group interviews will be conducted to understand participants' experiences of social integration and inter-family relationships, and determine the effectiveness of the workshops.

EARLY INTEGRATION TRAJECTORIES OF SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CANADA

THOMAS SOEHL, Project Lead

Canada Research Chair in International Migration and Assistant Professor of Sociology, McGill University

This longitudinal survey of Syrian refugees across Canada is a collaboration with IRCC and settlement provider and refugee sponsorship organizations. It will shed new light on the role of social networks, family dynamics, and private sponsorship for integration outcomes, and examine the influence of pre-migration experiences and persistence of home-country and diaspora connections of refugees. Refugee families (and where applicable one adolescent child) will be interviewed in early 2019, with a follow-up survey about three years later. This study will examine the different trajectories of publicly and privately funded refugees to better understand how their backgrounds and experiences shape their integration. For the first time, data that links private sponsors to refugees will be collected, allowing us to see how sponsor characteristics and practices shape integration outcomes and how sponsor-refugee relations develop over time. Data collection will be correlated with a similar project in Germany, allowing a comparative analysis.

NEW IN 2018

L'IMPACT DE L'INCOMPÉTENCE NUMÉRIQUE DANS LA COMMUNICATION ÉCOLE-FAMILLES EN CONTEXTES DE DÉFAVORISATION ET DE MIGRATION: SITUATION DES PARENTS IMMIGRANTS ET RÉFUGIÉS À HALIFAX / THE IMPACT OF LOW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE ON SCHOOL-FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF DISADVANTAGE AND MIGRATION: THE SITUATION OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE PARENTS IN HALIFAX

MALANGA-GEORGES LIBOY, Project Lead

Professeur agrégé/Associate Professor, Université Sainte-Anne

Plusieurs études montrent les positivités de la collaboration école-familles. Aussi, les bonnes relations entre les parents et les enseignants peuvent soutenir la réussite des enfants. Une bonne communication entre l'enseignant et les parents facilite le partage d'apprentissage et intéressera les parents à s'impliquer à l'éducation de leurs enfants. Les parents doivent consulter les sites-web pour vérifier les devoirs et activités parascolaires, mais ils ne possèdent pas tous les mêmes compétences numériques. Grâce à leurs situations socioéconomiques et à leurs valeurs, ils n'ont généralement avec l'école que des contacts rares et formels. Aussi, les enseignants peuvent avoir des lacunes d'expérience des milieux défavorisés ou des familles immigrantes et réfugiées. Puisqu'il existe déjà des expériences NTIC qui visent à améliorer la participation des parents à l'école, notre étude vise à identifier sa place dans la collaboration école-familles immigrantes et réfugiées à Halifax. Elle vise aussi à identifier leurs besoins avec le NTIC. Elle permettra de mieux comprendre leurs perceptions et résistances avec des entretiens, une observation et un questionnaire. Environ 20 parents immigrants et réfugiés nouvellement arrivés à Halifax et dont les enfants fréquentent les écoles y participeront.

Many studies show the positive effects of school-family collaboration, and that good relationships between parents and teachers support student success. School-family relationships are solidified by communication and appreciation of student's accomplishments. Communication between teachers and parents promotes shared learning and encourages parental involvement in their children's education. Parents often have to consult websites to check for homework and extracurricular activities, but not all parents have the same level of information technology and communications (ITC) competency. Socio-economic situations and values can mean that their contact with schools is formal and infrequent. In addition, teachers sometimes lack experience with marginalized families or families with immigrant and refugee backgrounds. Since there are already ITC initiatives to improve parent participation at schools, this study aims to identify their place in school-immigrant/refugee family collaboration in Halifax. It will also help identify the ITC needs of these families and provide a better understanding of their perceptions and struggles. About 20 immigrant and refugee parents whose children attend school and who recently arrived in Halifax will participate in the study.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: SOCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF THE ISANS IMMIGRANT YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAM

CATHERINE BRYAN, Project Lead

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

In partnership with the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), this multi-method study focuses on the ISANS Immigrant Youth Employability (IYE) program, an innovative 30-week newcomer youth employment initiative offering classroom learning and on-the-job training across a range of sectors. ISANS has supported 108 predominantly refugee youth to overcome employment-related barriers through IYE since 2016. Anecdotally, IYE has been a success. In addition to providing refugee youth with the skills required to retain meaningful employment, IYE's integration of employers may help address recruitment and employment practices that hurt newcomers. As a new funding cycle begins, these successes have to be demonstrated. Through IYE data evaluation; a survey of participants; and interviews with participants, employers, and key stakeholders at ISANS, this study will provide quantitative and qualitative insights into IYE, its benefits and outcomes, and how the program can be strengthened.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN YAZIDI REFUGEE YOUTH

TINA MALTI, Project Lead

Professor of Psychology, University of Toronto

In collaboration with the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (SLNRC) in London, Ontario, this study will determine profiles of social-emotional functioning of Yazidi refugees in middle childhood and adolescence. The Yazidi, a religious minority from Northern Iraq, have been subjected to an ongoing genocide by ISIS since 2014. More than 3,000 Yazidis were killed, and 6,800 children and adults were subjected to forced conversion, torture, and sexual slavery. Between 1,000 and 1,500 Yazidi refugee families now live in Canada, many with limited formal education and a lack of English and French language skills. Through interviews with refugees and teacher questionnaires, this project will identify specific social-emotional competencies and areas for improvement in Yazidi refugee youth; shed light on the effects of war and trauma on youth social-emotional functioning; and document how parents and youth understand and cope with their experiences.

PROJECTS (SOCIAL INTEGRATION, RIGHTS, CULTURE, AND SECURITY)

NEW IN 2018

EXPLORING THE INTERACTION OF YOUTH WITH REFUGEE EXPERIENCE WITH SERVICES THAT SUPPORT WORKFORCE ATTACHMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA

IFEYINWA MBAKOGU, Project Lead

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

This proposal aims to understand challenges youths with refugee experience (YRE) face in accessing services for workforce attachment. Ten to twenty youth between 18 and 25 who arrived in Nova Scotia between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2016 and live in Halifax will participate in the study. The project looks at participants' experiences across diverse modes of entry into Canada such as Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs). The objectives of this work are to understand the experience of participants with available services, particularly those leading to employment; understand the link between pre-migration experiences of participants and access to services; and identify the link between programs and accessibility across GAR and PSR youth populations.

AN EXPLORATION OF INTEGRATION JOURNEYS AND WELLBEING: A YPAR PROJECT WITH SYRIAN REFUGEE YOUTH

HELENE BERMAN, Project Lead

Distinguished Professor, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, University of Western Ontario

This project will use a youth participatory action research (YPAR) process, combined with narrative and expressive arts-based methodologies, to engage Syrian refugee youth as co-researchers. It will look at the integration experiences of Syrian refugee youth ages 16 to 22 from their own perspectives to better understand protective factors, as well as challenges and vulnerabilities shaping wellbeing, identity, and belonging. YPAR involves mentoring and engaging young people in all aspects of the research process, including the development of research questions and research methods, facilitating research strategies, and analysis and sharing of findings. Key research questions guided by the perspective of youth will include: What protective factors and contexts of vulnerability shape the social integration experiences of Syrian refugee youth? How can supportive environments (community, school, and home) be enhanced to strengthen protective factors and support refugee youth in experiencing increased resilience? This project is a partnership with the Muslim Resource Center for Social Support & Integration (MRCSSI).

ONGOING PROJECTS

A RETROSPECTIVE LOOK: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEE YOUTH AND THE SECOND GENERATION IN CONTEMPORARY CANADA

MONICA BOYD, Project Lead

Canada Research Chair in Immigration, Inequality, and Public Policy and Professor of Sociology, University of Toronto

Nearly 40 years ago, Vietnamese people arrived in Canada in large numbers. In addition to admitting more than 5,000 Vietnamese people in 1975 and 1976, Canada welcomed approximately fifty thousand Indochinese refugees between 1979 and 1981, colloquially labelled "Boat People". By the beginning of this century, the Vietnamese community represented Canada's fifth largest non-European ethnic group, yet there is little research about their experiences. This study assesses the social and economic integration of three distinct groups of youth associated with immigration flows from 1979 to 1990 and compares them with other Asian birthplace groups arriving or born during the same time. The analyses offer a projection of what might be the experiences of recently arrived vulnerable youth from Syria and other countries.

EXPLORING BELONGING: EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN A MONTRÉAL RECREATIONAL SETTING

NICOLE IVES, Project Lead

Associate Professor and Director of the Bachelor of Social Work Program, McGill University

For more than 40 years, Camp Cosmos in Montréal has provided a six-week summer camp to children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Families typically have low incomes and are newly arrived refugees or single parents. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, Camp Cosmos expanded in 2016, and newly arrived refugee children have quickly embraced the camp experience. There is very limited research on the sense of belonging held by refugee children and parents in educational and recreational settings. This study asks how participation in Camp Cosmos has shaped experiences of social belonging for refugee children, youth, and parents; how refugee children, youth, and parents think about belonging; and how community organizations facilitate social integration for refugees.

PROJECTS (SOCIAL INTEGRATION, RIGHTS, CULTURE, AND SECURITY)

ONGOING PROJECTS

MANUAL FOR REFUGEE PARENTS AND CHILDREN ON THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO EDUCATION IN THE CANADIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

SHAUNA LABMAN, Project Lead

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba

For refugee students and their parents, schools offer tremendous educational opportunities and important social integration, but recently arrived refugee children and their parents face many challenges adapting. Refugee parents play a significant role in helping their children as they begin to trust teachers and principals, but for many the Canadian school system and the implicit "Canadian" expectations of "good parenting" can be overwhelming. There is little research on refugee parent involvement in schools from the parents' perspectives. This project is preparing a manual for refugee parents and children on their rights and responsibilities related to the Canadian school system. It covers legal issues; registration and attendance; discipline; students with special needs; privacy and discrimination; custodial and non-custodial parents and family; and other issues.

PERCEPTIONS OF REFUGEE YOUTH OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CLIMATE IN CANADA: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTEGRATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

JOSEPH GARCEA, Project Lead

Department Head of Linguistics & Religious Studies, University of Saskatchewan

This project has three central objectives: 1) to examine the perceptions of refugee youth regarding the sociopolitical climate in Canada and in their communities, and the factors that inform/shape those perceptions; 2) to examine the beliefs of refugee youth regarding the effect the sociopolitical climate in Canada and in their communities has on their actual and aspirational happiness, sense of belonging, community involvement, and identity; and 3) the implications that these perceptions and beliefs of refugee youth have for integration policies and programs. Focused on the four western provinces of Canada, this study makes a significant contribution by laying the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological foundations for a study on refugee youth in other provinces.

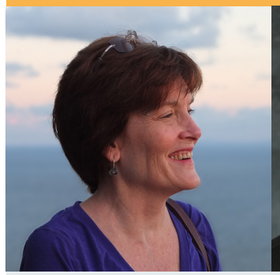
Praise Muigisho

Social Justice in Focus Participant

My name is Praise,
Am a winner
Am the captain of my thoughts
I believe I was born to make a difference and to leave a mark.

CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY WELLBEING CLUSTER

CLUSTER LEADS

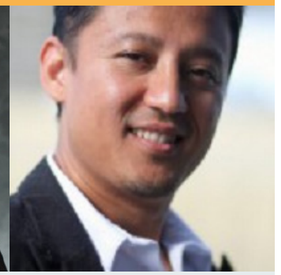


JENNIFER JENKINS

is the Atkinson Chair of Early Child Development and Education, Director of the Atkinson Centre, and the Academic Director at the Fraser Mustard Institute of Human Development at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on the influence of marital, sibling, and parent-child relationships on young children's social understanding, early learning, and wellbeing. Dr. Jenkins studies why some children are more resilient than others when exposed to risky environments and is particularly interested in within-family differences in sibling development. She has investigated parenting and family dynamics amongst immigrant families.

PATRICK MCGRATH

is a child psychologist, clinician-scientist, administrator, mentor, and social entrepreneur. He founded the Clinical Psychology PhD program at Dalhousie University and is VP Research, Innovation and Knowledge Translation for the IWK Health Centre and the Nova Scotia Health Authority. Dr. McGrath is an Officer of the Order of Canada, fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and the Royal Society of Canada, and the inaugural Health Legacy Leader from HealthCareCan. The Strongest Families Institute shares his award-winning e-health program across Canada, Finland, and Vietnam. He also conducted pioneering research on the measurement and psychosocial interventions for pain in children.



YOGENDRA B. SHAKYA

is the Senior Research Scientist at Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services and Assistant Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. His research examines how critical health determinants affect wellbeing and healthcare access for racialized groups, immigrants, and refugees. Dr. Shakya has led studies on precarious employment, migration and health, refugee mental health, post-migration changes in family relationships and responsibilities, and the role of newcomer youth in resettlement. He has also developed resources on community-based research (CBR) and trained hundreds of community members to become critical researchers and agents of change.

PROJECTS (CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY WELLBEING)

ONGOING PROJECTS

WELLBEING AND LEARNING: PROCESSES OF RESILIENCE IN REFUGEE CHILDREN

JOHANNE PARADIS, Project Lead

Professor, Department of Linguistics and Adjunct Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Alberta

XI (BECKY) CHEN, Project Lead

Associate Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development, OISE, University of Toronto

Syrian refugee children are at high risk for problems in both cognitive functioning and wellbeing. As victims of war, they have typically been exposed to high levels of threat and loss as well as disrupted schooling. Associations between children's language, literacy, and wellbeing are well established in the general population, and in some new immigrant populations, but the relationship between these critical aspects of functioning in childhood has not been examined in refugee children. This study has three goals: 1) to identify rates of cognitive and mental health problems among refugee children; 2) to examine the extent to which learning and mental health influence one another over time; and 3) to identify parents' concerns, service use, and gaps in service.

PTSD IN SYRIAN REFUGEES

PATRICK MCGRATH, Project Lead

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University

Mental health problems are common in refugees due to extreme stress. Refugees are exposed to war, violence, family separation, and loss of income and social status. There may be exposure to violence and extreme uncertainty in refugee camps. When finally settled, refugees experience significant stress in adapting to a new language and culture, as well as catching up on education. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or significant symptoms of PTSD are common in Syrian refugees. This project develops and implements initial testing of an Arabic language, coached, distance intervention for children and their families with PTSD.

LOSS AND PROTRACTED FAMILY SEPARATIONS AMONG REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH: EXAMINING POST-MIGRATION IMPACTS AND SERVICE NEEDS

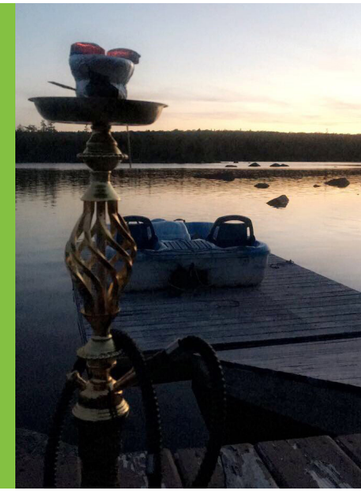
YOGENDRA SHAKYA, Project Lead

Senior Research Scientist at Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services and Assistant Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

Every year, Canada receives between 300 and 500 unaccompanied and separated refugee children and youth. There is very little Canadian evidence about how refugee children and youth respond to loss, death, disappearance, or protracted separation of family members, or about what kinds of supports and services are needed. Policy implications are significant as family members can be given asylum in separate countries, further exacerbating trauma. This community-based research project identifies policies and services that can support these youth better. Key research questions are: How do experiences of loss, disappearance, or separation of family due to war, conflict, persecution, or forced migration affect refugee children and youth and their families? What kinds of services and supports can promote wellbeing of these refugee children and youth and their families?

Saeed Alzoubi
Social Justice in Focus Participant

"This photo introduces the shisha, an old fashioned part of my culture that I brought with me to Canada. It's about relaxing and being slow. I want people to know I came here with my culture and religion, and I will save it wherever I go, and keep it in my heart."



CANADA-GERMANY COLLABORATION

Canada and Germany both responded to the Syrian crisis with commitments to rapidly settle large numbers of refugees, many of whom are children and youth. In both countries, researchers are pursuing research and developing an evidence base to inform policies and interventions to facilitate successful integration. The ongoing Integration CAN-Germany exchange between the CYRRC and LERN networks is aimed at supporting information exchange and collaboration.

One notable output from our exchange has been Structural Context of Refugee Integration in Canada and Germany, a comparative analysis of Syrian refugees in the two countries. The volume is edited by Annette Korntheuer, Débora Maehler, and Paul Pritchard, and features contributions by 32 authors: 16 Canadian and 16 German. It examines policy frameworks that guide refugee protection and settlement and analyzes the educational systems in Canada and Germany. It also compares access to education, housing, health, settlement services, and religious and ethnic communities. The volume has been published online and in print, and a second volume is currently in progress.

THIS WORK WAS SPEARHEADED BY DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY AND GERMANY'S LEIBNIZ EDUCATION AND RESEARCH NETWORK (LERN). IN 2018 AND 2019, WE CONTINUE TO HOLD REGULAR EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS WITH FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE BUNDESMINISTERIUMS FÜR BILDUNG UND FORSCHUNG (BMBF) AND THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ERASMUS+ FUNDING PROGRAMME.

PROJECTS

SPECIFIC NEEDS IN LITERACY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING OF REFUGEE CHILDREN: A COMPARISON OF GERMANY AND CANADA

BECKY CHEN, University of Toronto (OISE)
KATRIN LINDNER, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität
CLAUDIA RIEHL, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

This project, begun in 2017, is a pilot for a large-scale investigation on cross-cultural and cross-linguistic comparison in the development of Syrian refugee children in Canada and Germany. It analyzes the development of language and literacy skills, the impact of socio-emotional wellbeing and motivation, and compares how the specific needs of Syrian refugees are met by institutions in both countries.

REFUGEES IN CANADA AND GERMANY: FROM RESEARCH TO POLICIES AND PRACTICES

LORI WILKINSON, University of Manitoba
ANNETTE KORNTHEUER, City of Munich, Netzwerk Flüchtlingsforschung
PAUL PRITCHARD, University of Toronto
DÉBORA B. MAEHLER, Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS)

Building on the previous volume by Maehler et al. (Eds.), this book examines housing, health, and other resettlement issues from a research and evidence perspective. Unlike the first volume, which was mainly an introduction to systems of asylum and resettlement, this book focuses on how research can and does inform policy and practice.

REFUGEE RECEPTION AND PERCEPTION IN GERMANY AND CANADA

ELKE WINTER, University of Ottawa

This study examines how media perceptions of refugees and refugee-related issues differ in various contexts of reception, notably Canada and Germany, but also along urban/rural and provincial lines in both countries. The goal is to identify major themes and trace how they vary over time and between contexts and media outlets. The first phase is now complete. (See Cluster 1: New in 2018 for the full project description.)

DATA AGGREGATION

One of the CYRRC's primary objectives is to improve access to aggregated national and provincial data. We work in close collaboration with federal and provincial government partners to make aggregated data accessible to our members and other interested parties. We provide several post-doctoral internships in advanced data analysis each year.

DATA ON ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

WHAT IS THE LONGITUDINAL IMMIGRATION DATABASE (IMDB)?

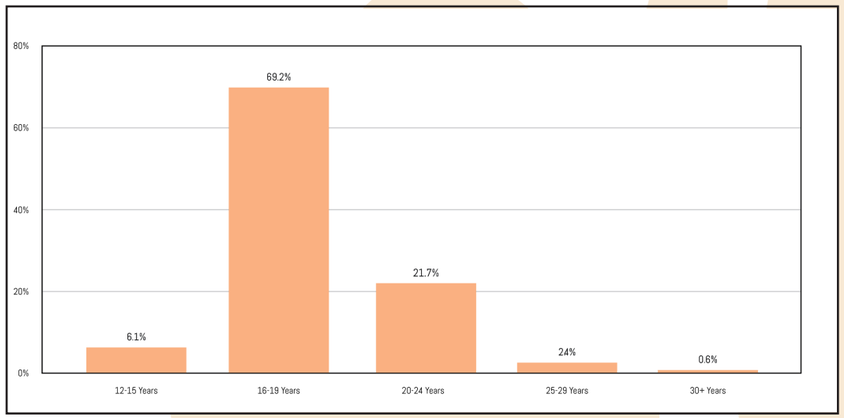
The IMDB holds information about immigrants who became permanent residents (PR) of Canada from 1980 onward. It provides detailed socioeconomic and demographic information about immigrants and some information about the pre-landing histories of migrants using temporary permits.

There are several ways the IMDB can be used to study refugee children and youth:

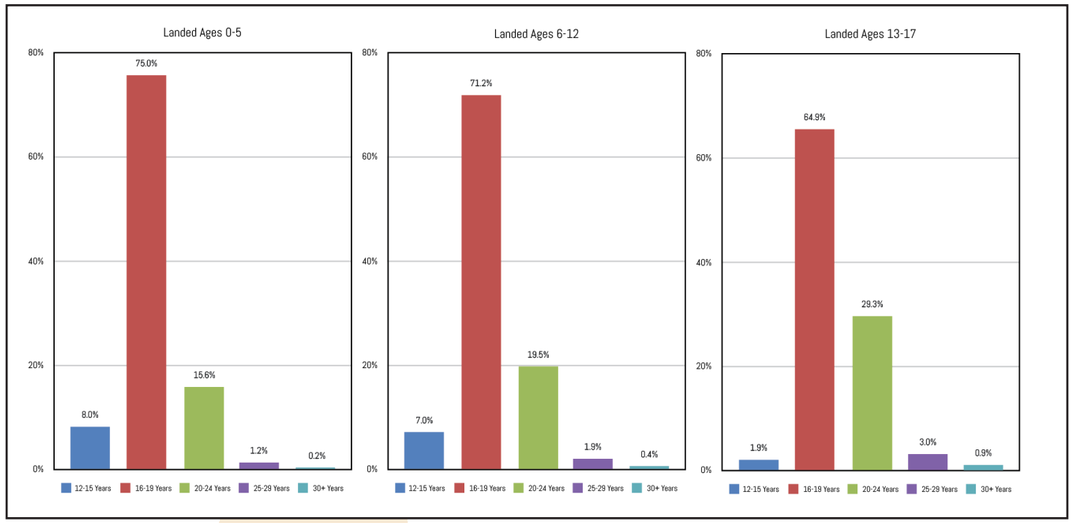
- Household economic situation
- Transition of refugee children and youth into adulthood
- Group comparisons (between landing categories)

WHEN DO REFUGEE YOUTH START WORKING?

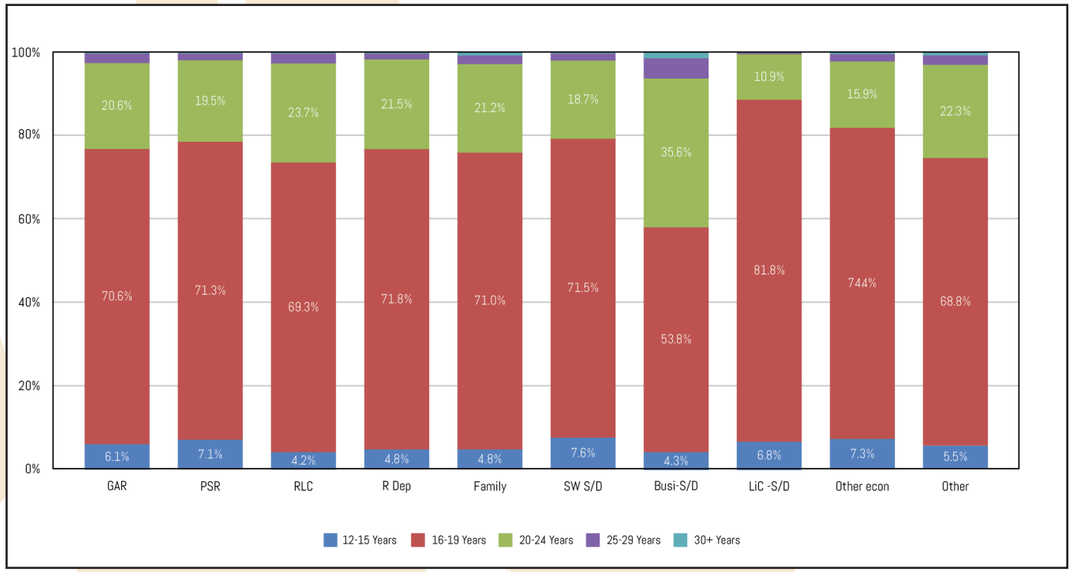
For youth, early entry into the labour force usually means less time studying, socializing, and participating in leisure activities. On the other hand, it can also mean economic independence, contributing to family income, and gaining work experience. Using the IMDB, we can examine the economic outcomes of refugee and immigrant children and youth in Canada.



There were 738,925 children and youth in the data. By 2014, 96% of them reported employment income. Three quarters of immigrant and refugee children and youth earned their first employment income before they turned 20. Those who land in Canada at a younger age start working at a younger age as well.



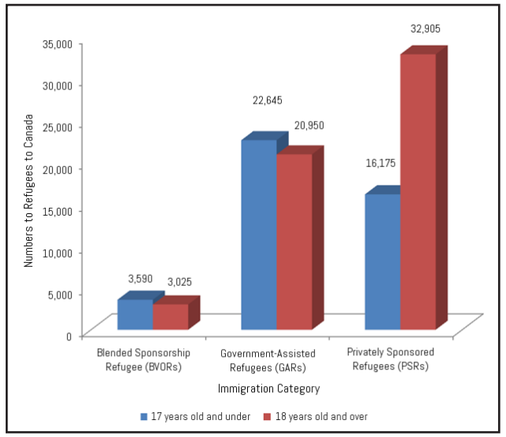
83% of refugee children and youth who land in Canada between the ages of 0 and 5 work before they are 20 years old. For those landing between the ages of 6 and 12, that figure is 78%, and for those who land between the ages of 12 and 17, it's 67%.



78% of those coming as privately sponsored refugees worked before the age of 20, compared to 73% of those who come as asylum seekers.

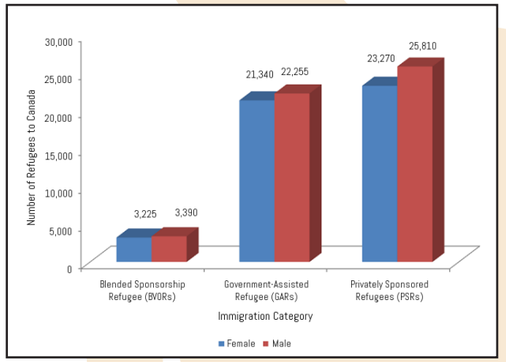
DATA ON DEMOGRAPHIC & SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This CYRRC data aggregation project examines the historical and current demographic and socio-economic characteristics of migrants and refugees in the world. It uses various datasets, including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's open data portal and the International Organization for Migration's global migration portal. Although the project is intended to focus on refugees in Canada, global migration trends are examined to compare and contrast to Canadian trends. The goal is to make important comparative data on refugees accessible to CYRRC researchers and others.



REFUGEES' AGE AT IMMIGRATION

Historically, the majority of refugees entering Canada are of working age, followed by younger refugees. Table 1.1 shows the numbers of refugees to Canada by two categories (17 years and under, and 18 years and over). A majority of refugees to Canada are 18 years and over (57.3%), with 42.7% who are 17 years and under. It is however important to note that with the exception of the PSR category, a majority of refugees to Canada are 17 years or under. For instance, out of 49,080 refugees who were admitted to Canada, two-thirds are 18 years and over (67%) compared to their younger counterparts (33%). Among GARs however, a majority came as younger refugees (51.9%) than older refugees (48.1%). Similarly, among those who came through the BVOR program, a majority were younger refugees (54.3%) than older refugees (45.7%).



SEX OF REFUGEES TO CANADA

Historically, higher numbers of male refugees are admitted to Canada compared to their female counterparts. Out of the 99,290 refugees to Canada from January 2015 to March 2018, a majority of them are males (51.8%). This sex trend is visible across all admission categories. Among PSRs for instance, a majority were males (52.6%) compared to females (474%). Similarly, 51% of GARs were males compared to females (49%). Again, out of 6,615 refugees admitted to Canada through the BVOR program, a majority are males (51.2%) than females (48.8%).

DATA ON CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT OF REFUGEE CHILDREN

MARTIN GUHN, Assistant Professor at the Human Early Learning Partnership, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia

Refugee children face multiple, intersecting challenges associated with pre-migration trauma and post-migration adaptation struggles. A number of studies have found evidence for resilience in refugee children, but there are many gaps in our understanding of what ways refugee children are resilient and in what contexts.

This study focuses on school and community resources and how they are associated with the social-emotional and academic adjustment of refugee children. Leveraging a population-based dataset in British Columbia that has data linked across multiple sources (including the Ministry of Education and the Middle Years Development Instrument), this study investigates how school and community resources are associated with both academic achievement and social-emotional adjustment.

CHILD AND YOUTH REFUGEE RESEARCH COALITION

cyrrc@dal.ca
(902) 494-1913
(902) 494-3050

Dalhousie University
6420 Coburg Road
Halifax, NS
B3H 4R2
PO Box 15000

For more information or to download this report, visit cyrrc.org.