

How Syrian Newcomer Youth Experience Integration

TITLE OF RESEARCH: **An Exploration of Integration Journeys, Identity and Well-being with Syrian Refugee Youth**

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SUMMARY: This study used youth participatory action research (YPAR), and narrative and arts-based methods — such as PhotoVoice — to explore how Syrian newcomer youth experience integration and resilience in relation to family, peers/ friends, school, work, and community.

LINK: Click [here](#) to read the executive summary and [here](#) to learn more about the project

Integration

Participants generally understood integration as a never-ending pathway.

- › Older male youth often felt that family responsibilities held them back, particularly when their families were not well integrated.
- › Some young women felt integration was unachievable due to discrimination related to wearing the Hijab.



Language learning was seen as an essential step in integration — bringing greater connection with English-speakers, but also greater awareness of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping.



Some participants expressed disinterest in integration outside of their cultural group; however, it was difficult to assess whether non-integration was the ultimate goal or a coping mechanism to experiences of discrimination.

Resilience

Participants identified factors that helped them thrive:

- › Supportive family, teachers, friends, and mentors; and access to resources at school and work.
- › Interpersonal skills, such as having passion and setting goals.
- › Meeting family, cultural, and personal expectations gives a sense of worth and motivation.

Recommendations:

- › Anti-bully initiatives should explicitly name racism and Islamophobia and centre BIPOC students.
- › Fund initiatives that create spaces for Muslim girls to empower themselves.
- › Recommendations from the National Summit on Islamophobia and the National Council of Canadian Muslims should be implemented.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition.

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