



Gender, Immigration and Integration: Exploring Challenges and Programs

Facilitators:

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Overview

Welcome

- i. About us
- ii. Context- The Syrian Refugee Influx
- iii. Challenges raised by Resettlement Assistance Providers

Research:

- i. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Study – Initial Findings
- ii. Longitudinal Study

- i. Current Programs

Thank You!

We are....

- An umbrella organization
- A nationally recognized leader in the settlement and integration sector
- A representative, a hub, and an amplifier of information for our member agencies and newcomers
- A centre for knowledge, expertise, and leadership

We are....



36

member agencies



12

communities

Context – the Syrian Refugee Influx

- Canada has resettled 40,081 Syrian refugees since **November 2015**
#WelcomeRefugees
- Syrian influx represented a **66% increase** from previous years
- Most recent figures from IRCC show that Alberta has received more than **4,900 Syrian refugees**



Context – the Syrian Refugee Influx

- Since November 4th 2015, Alberta has welcomed 4,921 Syrian Refugees
- Children and youth represent over half of the Syrian population— 53% of Syrian refugees are under the age of 18 years old, while 17% of all refugees are under the age of five

Composition of refugee arrivals during the 2015/16 Influx

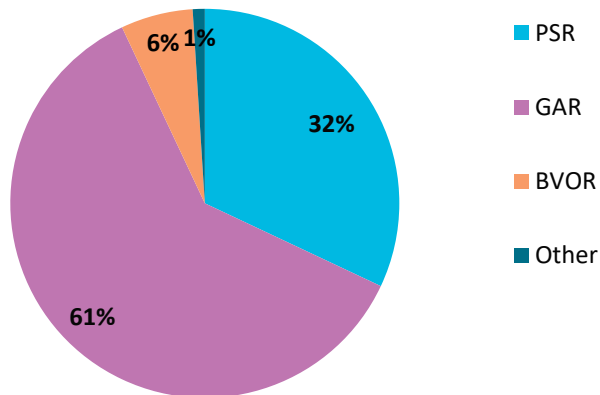
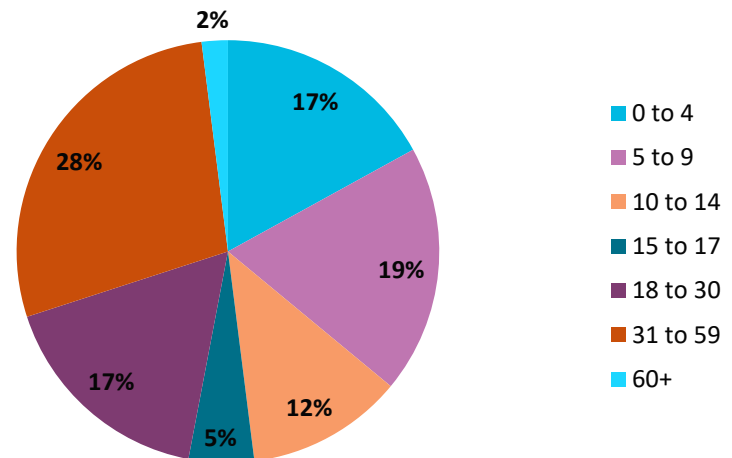
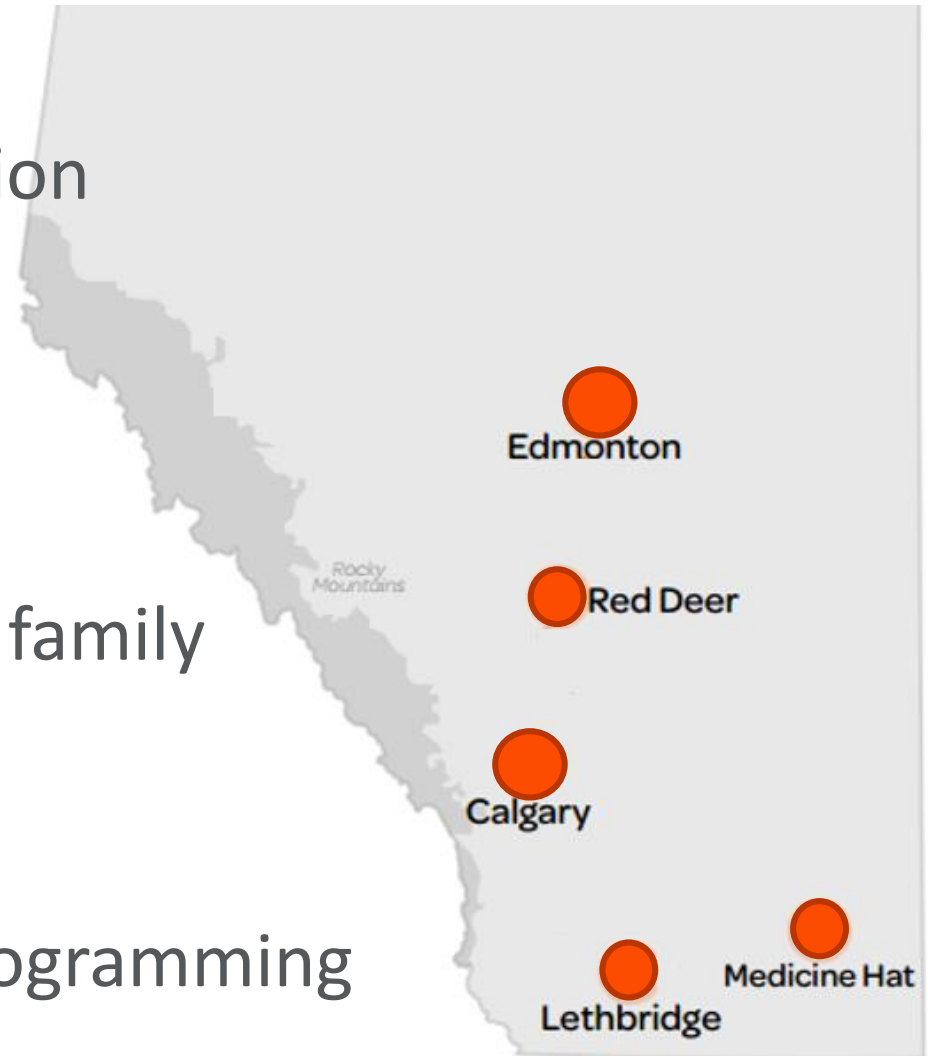


Figure VII: Age Distribution of Syrian Population



Resettlement Assistant Providers

- Engagement in Orientation
- Childminding Services
- Antenatal health needs, family planning needs
- Flexible and targeted programming



Alberta Syrian Refugee Resettlement Project



AAISA in collaboration with Dr. Julie Drolet,
University of Calgary and Habitus Inc.

- Our purpose: To better understand the experiences of Syrian refugees who have resettled in Alberta in 2015 and 2016
- Focus on the types of programs and services needed to support labour market integration, language training, and social connections
- This study builds upon AAISA's **Provincial Needs Assessment: Improving Refugee Resettlement in Alberta** report released in October 2016
- Researchers were keenly aware about the significant vulnerabilities and risks associated with the Syrian refugee populations.

Data Collection and Methods



Literature Review

A review of academic peer-reviewed and grey literature
Language, employment, social connections



Community Forums

Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge through
Resettlement Assistance Providers (RAP)

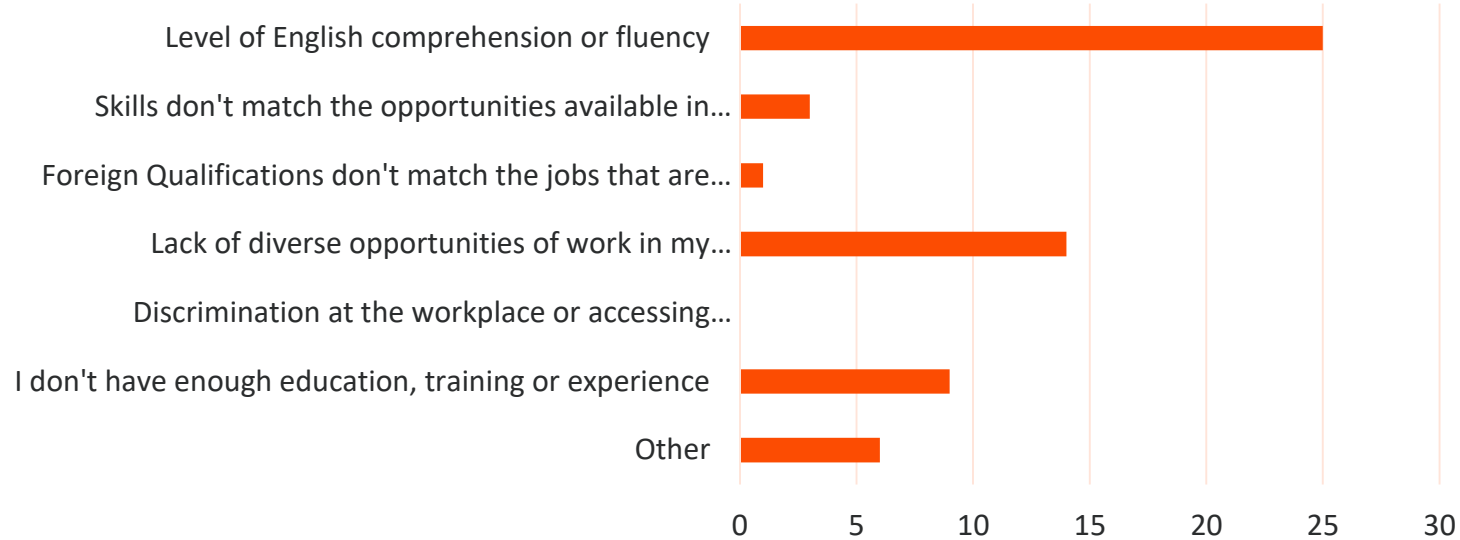


Surveys and Interviews

- 100 survey participants, 20 interview participants
- 18+ years of age
 - GARs, PSRs, BVOR sponsored refugees

Initial Findings-Employment

What are some of the challenges you are facing in terms of employment?

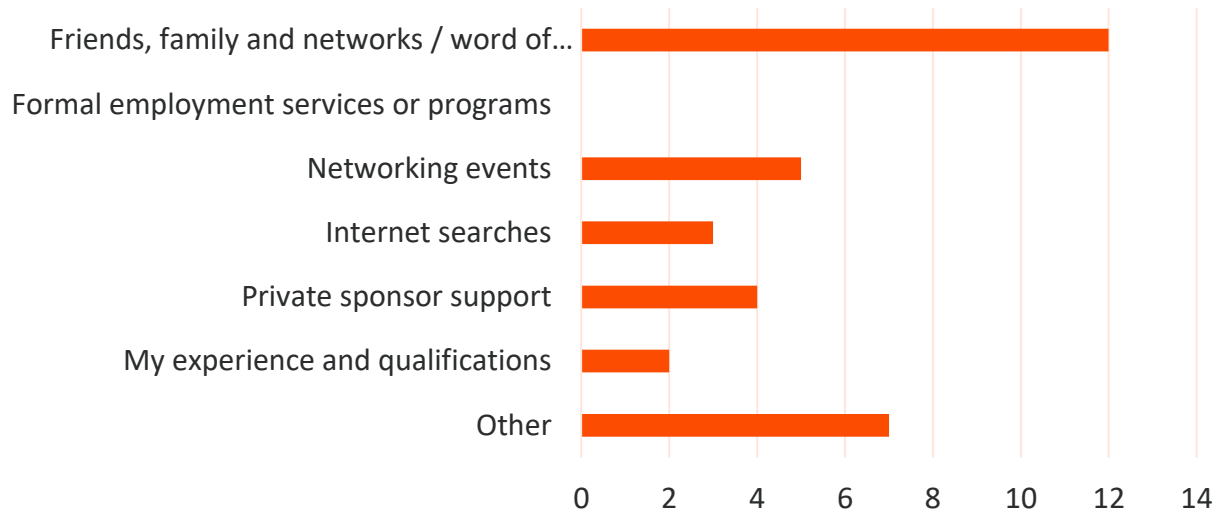


“We knew before coming here that you will not find good employment till your English language skills get better.” (GAR woman, smaller center)

“Now, that his English level is not that good, he [speaking about her husband] will not find the job that he wants, however, once he does reach a good English level, then he would be able to work anything.” GAR woman 3

Initial Findings - Employment

What has been most helpful to you in finding or keeping employment?



“My husband had a friend here in Alberta that encouraged him to move here [from a rural area], and said that he would help us find job..... and getting settled in.....my husband was immediately secured with a job.” (BVOR woman, larger center)

“Mostly CIWA provided me with hope and a positive attitude. They really try to help you out with anything they can whether it was general inquiries or questions or just providing general information. CIWA is even helping me meet a lawyer in order to assist me with inquiries.” (BVOR woman, larger center)

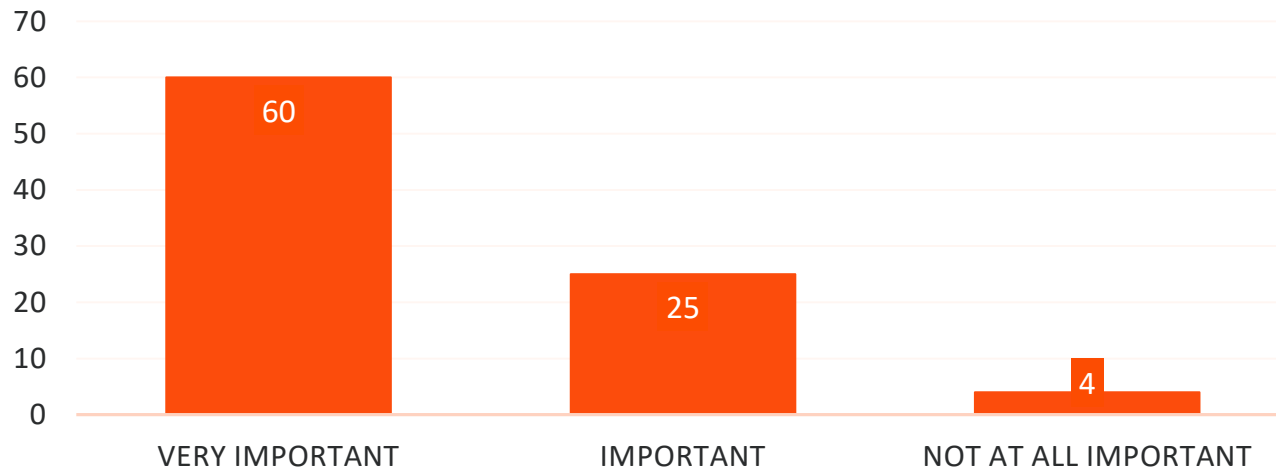
Initial Findings – Social Connections

“So it gets very lonely here..... my biggest struggle here I would say is loneliness.” (BVOR woman 3) “In addition, socially we were surrounded by family and friends, I used to feel that I am not alone. Here, I feel I am a loner.” (GAR woman 1) You could say I became secluded. With my husband out hunting for jobs all the time, I used to spend all my time with my baby and I became very lonely...”

BVOR woman

Initial Findings – Social Connections

How would you rate the importance of settlement organizations in helping you settle?



My wife is in a great program in (*another settlement organization name*), which pays her and gives her training and daycare allowance [for their son].”(PSR man 2-urban)

Language as a barrier to social connections



“When it comes to my neighbors I feel rather secluded because of the language barrier.” (GAR woman 4)

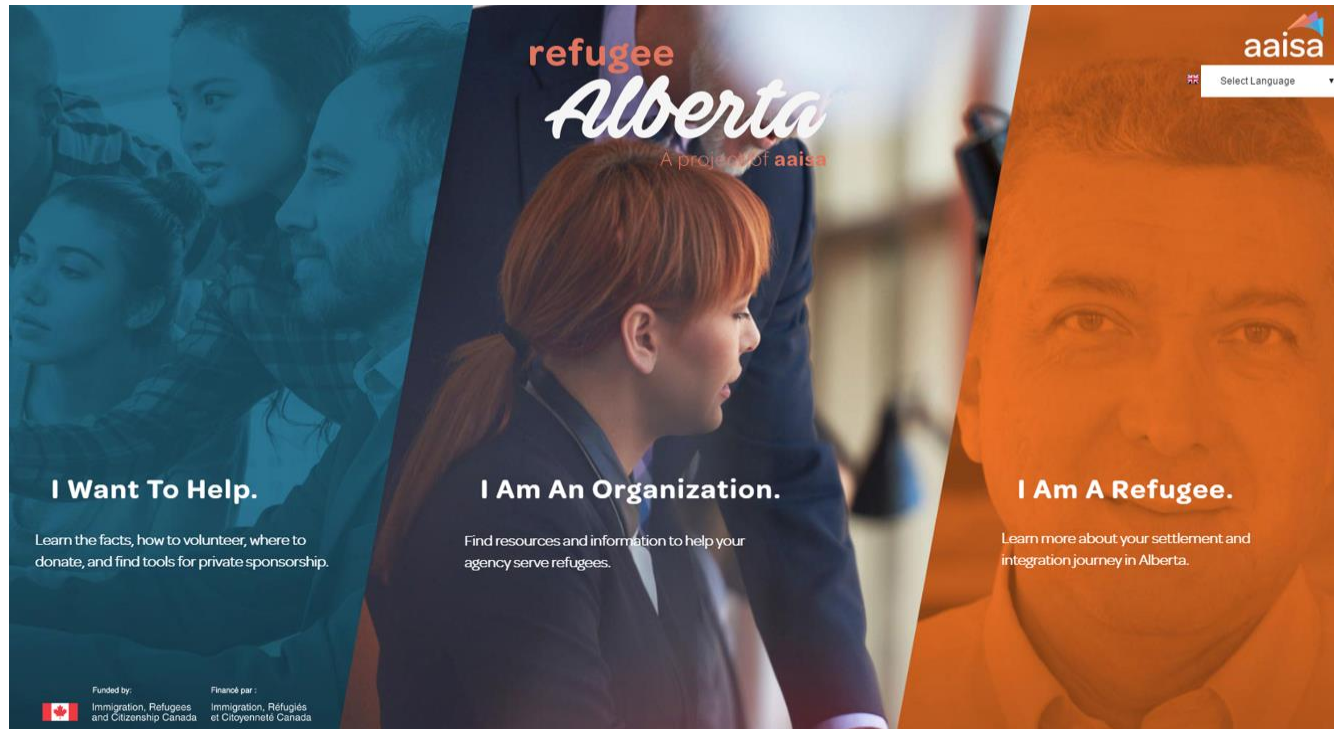
“My kids are adjusting so well because their English is really well.” (BVOR woman 1)

“I do believe that the program I am taking at CIWA now, called “link to success for employment skills and work placement” helped me a lot more in carrying a conversation than the LINC classes, because at LINC you are only fed information and you mostly listen. In CIWA’s program you converse because it’s a smaller class and there are more conversations in English. I see this course as the best opportunity I have received since I got to Canada.” (BVOR woman 3)

Longitudinal Syrian Study

- Conducted by **Immigration Research West** funded by IRCC to guide and inform long term refugee policy making in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- Time period includes Syrian refugees arriving from November 2015 to December 2016
- Surveys conducted over a three year period with a focus on language acquisition, housing conditions, access to settlement services and employment

Programs



Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
Indo-Canadian Women's Association
United Way
Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association

Discussion of Best Practice

- Building capacity;
- Client-centred programming;
- Collaboration, communication and information sharing;
- Community connections; and
- Standardization and coordination

Contact us!

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