

Alberta Syrian Refugee Resettlement Experience Study

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Context

This research study is in response to the identified need by the Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) for enhanced knowledge about the resettlement experience of Syrian refugees.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. What are the main factors that influence a positive resettlement experience for Syrian refugees in Alberta?
2. What are the resettlement challenges facing Syrian refugees in Alberta?
3. What are the social, economic, and language needs of Syrian refugees in Alberta?
4. What types of programs and services are most needed in Alberta in order to support their language needs, labour market and social integration?

About AAISA

AAISA is a regionally and nationally recognized leader, representative, a hub, and an amplifier of the settlement and integration sector in Alberta. As an umbrella organization, AAISA's mandate is to build sectorial capacity by providing member agencies that serve newcomers access to relevant and meaningful professional development opportunities, to act as a liaison with stakeholders, and provide a centre for knowledge, expertise, and leadership.

Goal & Objectives

The aim of this project is to contribute to an evidence-based understanding of the experiences of Syrian refugees.

The two key goals of this project are to develop a body of knowledge on the unique needs, barriers and reflections of Syrian refugees in order to better understand their immediate settlement and integration experiences within the first 6–18 months of arrival, and to inform the development of client-centred programs, services and policies that foster successful settlement and integration.

The study will explore the resettlement experiences of Syrian refugees, with particular attention to labour market integration, language training, and social connections.

Methods

The research methods include mixed methods and case study research as follows:

- Literature review on refugee resettlement;
- A first language survey administered in person with Syrian refugees (N=80);
- Interviews with Syrian refugees to inform case studies (N=20); and
- The use of community forums for recruitment and integrated knowledge mobilization.

Syrian refugees who resettled in Alberta in 2015 and 2016 will be included in the study. The population includes Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) and Blended Visa Office-Referral (BVOR) sponsored refugees. The sample will include adults over the age of 18 who live in Alberta.

Anticipated Benefits

The potential benefits of the study include:

1. Contributions to the limited empirical and theoretical literature on Syrian refugee resettlement in Alberta;
2. Improved understanding of the needs and experiences of Syrian refugees to inform services and programs in Alberta;
3. Improved understanding of resettlement needs based on language training, labour market integration and social integration;
4. Practice and policy recommendations on Syrian refugee resettlement in Alberta;
5. Opportunity for participants to share their experiences and input into shaping the system of care for refugees.

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