

**Province of British Columbia
December 2015**

Ministry of Education Syrian Refugee Information Kit

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Purpose..... | 2 |
| Ministry of Education Refugee Readiness and Response | 2 |
| Ministry of Education Actions to Date | 2 |
| Map of Five Refugee Settlement Phases | 4 |
| Backgrounder – The Role of the Federal Government | 5 |
| Related Federal Links..... | 6 |
| Refugee Welcome Site | 6 |
| Refugee Key Facts and Milestones | 6 |
| Map of Destination Communities for Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) | 6 |
| Population Profile: Syrian Refugees | 6 |
| Backgrounder – The Role of the Provincial Government | 7 |
| Provincial Actions to Date..... | 7 |
| Provincial Refugee Readiness Fund | 7 |
| Related Provincial Links | 8 |
| Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers & Schools | 8 |
| BC Newcomers Guide | 8 |
| Province of BC News Release | 8 |
| Backgrounder – Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) | 9 |
| Arrival Projections | 9 |
| Arrival Process | 9 |
| The Refugee Settlement Destinations | 10 |
| RAP Links..... | 11 |
| S.U.C.C.E.S.S | 11 |
| C.A.N.N..... | 11 |
| ISSofBC | 11 |
| Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions..... | 12 |

Purpose

This document provides an overview of the process for welcoming up to 3,500 Syrian into BC as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 29, 2016. The information kit is intended to provide our sector partners with timely information and links to resources to support in the Syrian refugee settlement process.

This document will be updated frequently as information is received.

Ministry of Education Refugee Readiness and Response

The Ministry of Education is committed to establishing a positive experience for refugee learners as they settle into the BC education system. To this end, the Ministry is proactively working in collaboration with our key stakeholders to compile an inventory of support services available in the school districts in those communities with historical refugee settlement patterns.

Led and coordinated by the Ministry, a cross-divisional Syrian Refugee Response and Readiness Working Group has also been launched to proactively share information and work with Ministry staff and external stakeholders like the Metro Vancouver Superintendents and Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC). The goal is to collaboratively respond to the education and related settlement needs of Syrian refugees.

Ministry of Education Actions to Date

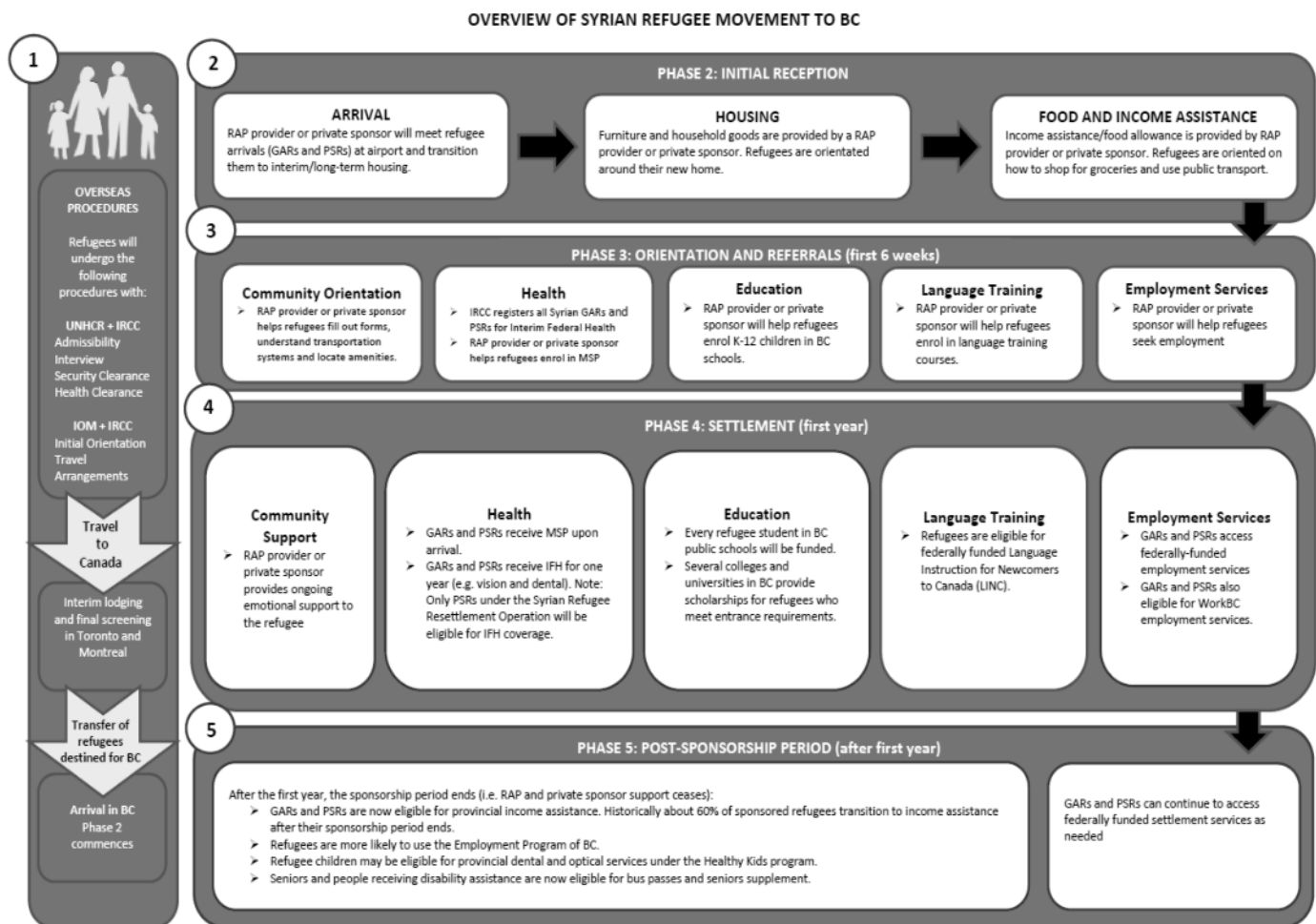
In collaboration with the education sector, the Ministry of Education has been actively working to prepare for the registration, integration, and settlement of school-age children into the BC school system.

- Participation by the Ministry of Education in a cross-ministry Assistant Deputy Minister Committee on Refugee Readiness and Response group led by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training (JTST)
- Participation in an ISSofBC-led Metro Vancouver federal, provincial and partners planning meeting
- Launch of cross-divisional Ministry of Education Working Group
- Working with the Metro Vancouver School Districts and the federally contracted Resettlement Assistance Provider (RAP) – the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) to increase the seamless flow of information
- Distributed initial information about refugee settlement in the Superintendents' weekly newsletter; commitment to distribute information to the sector on a regular basis as known
- Scheduled bi-weekly conference calls with Ministry of Education Assistant Deputy Ministers, all superintendents and executive members from:
 - ✓ BC School Superintendents Association
 - ✓ BC Principals and Vice Principals Association
 - ✓ BC Schools Trustees Association
 - ✓ BC Association of School Business Officials
 - ✓ Federation of Independent School Associations
 - ✓ ISSofBC

- Review and revise the *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers & Schools* with an addendum on Syrian refugee crisis
- Creation of a *Ministry of Education Fact Sheet for New Immigrants* for distribution at the airport by S.U.C.C.E.S.S' Community Airport Newcomers Network (C.A.N.N) and in the ISSofBC Welcome Centre

Map of Five Refugee Settlement Phases

Below you will find a visual summary of the five phases of the refugee settlement process as they move from their overseas locations to British Columbia.



Source: Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training

Legend

UNHCR - The United Nations Refugee Agency
IRCC - Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
IOM - International Organization for Migration
RAP - Settlement Assistance Provider
MSP - Medical Services Plan
IFH - Interim Federal Health Program

Backgrounder – The Role of the Federal Government

According to the Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada website, the federal government has committed to bringing in 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by February 29, 2016 and will invest up to \$678 million over six years toward expediting the settlement and ensuring integration support for these Syrian refugees.

The federal government is endeavouring to identify 25,000 refugees by December 31, 2015 and it is anticipated that 10,000 of these refugees will arrive in Canada by that date. The remaining 15,000 will arrive by February 29, 2016. Of the first 10,000, 80 per cent are expected to be individuals in the Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) category. The remainder, and most of the subsequent 15,000, will be individuals in the Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) category.

The federal government has primary responsibility for the entire refugee settlement process. Through the Government Operations Centre, multiple federal departments (led by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada) are planning all logistical aspects of the selection, transportation, screening, immigration, and settlement process.

The federal government is also responsible for ensuring appropriate settlement funding and supports are available. There are currently 36 refugee reception centres or entry points into Canada including Quebec. Although entry points may be in a specific city, final destinations can vary significantly due in significant part to the location of the permanent rental accommodation. The federal government is also responsible for a year of income support for all government assisted refugees based on provincial income support rates. Resettlement Assistance Providers (RAP) also ensure that appropriate arrangements are made in advance of refugee arrivals, including providing transitional housing, first language case workers and basic household goods, furniture and clothing. In BC, the RAP provider is the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC), an organization based in Vancouver.

The federal government has responsibility for the following five phases of settlement:

Phase 1: Identification and Selection

Newcomers in the Privately Sponsored Refugee category are selected by the sponsorship agreement holders. Privately sponsored newcomers are primarily named individuals in family reunification cases.

In contrast, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and visa officers from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will identify and select individuals and families in the Government Assisted Refugee category, based on an assessment of vulnerability. The vulnerability assessment will focus, for example, on single parent families, women at risk, and members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community.

Phase 2: Overseas Assessment

Individuals and families will first be assessed overseas. This includes a full medical examination and security screening (interviews, biometrics collection, and checks against international security databases). Individuals who pass the screening will be issued a permanent resident visa and arrangements will be made for transportation to Canada.

Phase 3: Transportation to Canada

Transportation to Canada will primarily be provided by private chartered aircraft, supplemented with military aircraft as required. Visual health checks will be completed during the transportation process. The initial point of entry in Canada will be either Toronto or Montreal.

Phase 4: Welcoming to Canada

Upon arrival in Canada, individuals will be processed through normal Canadian Border Service Agency procedures. This includes final verification of identity and screening for signs of illness per the *Quarantine Act*. Those who are being privately sponsored will continue directly on to their final destination. Those who will be government assisted will be destined to one of 36 refugee reception centres as per Federal-Provincial and will continue directly to those communities or, as a last resort, be provided temporary accommodation (likely on a military base) until transportation to their final destination is arranged.

Phase 5: Settlement and Integration

Newcomers will be welcomed in their host communities by their private sponsors or by RAP personnel. RAP personnel and private sponsors are responsible for greeting families at the airport, arranging housing, and providing income support for the newcomers for up to one year.

Related Federal Links

Refugee Welcome Site

Information on how refugees from Syria are being settled in Canada
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/latest.asp>

Refugee Key Facts and Milestones

Latest milestones and key figures for the Syrian settlement program
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>

Map of Destination Communities for Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

Map of the destination communities for the Syrian PSRs
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp?_ga=1.80214039.1812590618.1429900247

Population Profile: Syrian Refugees

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) document on the demographics, culture, education and health characteristics of Syrian refugees
<http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EN-Syrian-Population-Profile.pdf>

Backgrounder – The Role of the Provincial Government

The provincial government's role is to ensure that newcomers settling in BC have access to all the provincially-funded services and supports that are available. This includes education, health care, and other social services (except income assistance in the first year).

In addition, the provincial government, led by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training (JTST) is providing planning and coordination support to the federal government and service providers for the settlement process. This includes embedding a staff person in the federal Government Operations Centre and working collaboratively with the federal government and settlement providers to determine the appropriate volume and flow of newcomer arrivals in BC.

Provincial Actions to Date

- Announced a \$1 million Refugee Readiness Fund and initiated policy and procurement design;
- Established a toll-free number to field questions on existing settlement support and the Fund (See Frequently Asked Question 9 in Appendix A for details);
- Engaged with key stakeholders to receive input on the Fund and BC's settlement capacity (in-person workshop and broad teleconference with 87 stakeholders);
- Attended the Union of BC Municipalities to discuss the Fund;
- Convened cross-ministry Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) committee, led by JTST, to coordinate inter-ministry impacts and actions
- Coordinate regular updates with provincial mayors

Provincial Refugee Readiness Fund

On September 8, the province of BC announced one-time funding of \$1 million to support the province's readiness for receiving refugees from Syria. Click [here](#) for the news release. The Fund will be used to supplement, but not duplicate, existing federal and provincial services and supports for refugees.

A further Province of BC news release on December 2, 2015 outlined that half of the \$1M Refugee Readiness Fund will go toward five Refugee Response Teams in the province to proactively plan for the settlement of refugees in their communities across BC. The teams will have representatives from the immigrant serving agencies and will be located in the communities where refugees will likely settle.

The other half of the \$1M will be provided to the ISSofBC. Activities will include:

- Development of an online hub to connect private sponsors, settlement workers, counsellors, and other service providers across the province to the information they need to support refugees.
- Track volunteer offers, in-kind donations and housing and employment leads.
- Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.
- Provide workshops and support to the Refugee Response Teams.

Related Provincial Links

Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers & Schools

Teacher's resource guide for teachers working with students with refugee backgrounds can be found in the attachment and in the link below:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/diverse-student-needs/refugee-students>

Note: this is currently being updated to include a fact sheet on Syria

BC Newcomers Guide

A Welcome BC website geared to help ensure new British Columbians are able to get settled, gain employment, become active members of their communities, and contribute fully to the social and economic prosperity of BC:

http://www.welcomebc.ca/newcomers_guide/newcomerguide.aspx

Province of BC News Release

Information on the December 2 news release by the Premier on the new provincial fund to help Syrian refugee settlement:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2015JTST0182-002011>

Backgrounder – Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)

Arrival Projections

According to historic settlement patterns documented by ISSofBC, BC typically receives up to 10-12 per cent of the total number of refugee arrivals in the Government Assisted Refugee category and on average, 800-900 government assisted refugees and 400-600 privately sponsored refugees annually.

As stated on the December 16 Teleconference, ISSofBC expects BC to welcome up to 3,500 Syrian government assisted refugees and upwards of 280 privately sponsored refugees as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 29, 2016. By December 31, 2016, ISSofBC estimates that BC will receive 33,000 Syrian refugees. It is also estimated that 32 per cent of Syrians could be 16 years of age or younger or an estimated 1,120 school-age children (See *Population Profile: Syrian Refugees*, an IRCC published guide).

According to ISSofBC, between November 4 and December 10, a total of 13 Syrian GAR newcomers have arrived with another 227 expected to arrive before December 31. Between January 1 to February 28, it is projected that BC will receive 1,800 Syrian GAR newcomers. Between March and December 2016, it is estimated that BC will receive 1,460 Syrian in the GAR category.

RAP Arrival Process

As the newcomers arrive in BC, they will be greeted at the airport by S.U.C.C.E.S.S and the Community Airport Newcomers Network (C.A.N.N.). Funded by the federal government through the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), C.A.N.N. facilitates the pre-settlement of all immigrants arriving in Canada at the Vancouver International Airport. C.A.N.N. offers individualized reception, orientation, information, and referrals. The one-time service helps newcomers gain a better understanding about the first steps to take as they settle in Canada, and provides them with information about the province as well as referrals to other organizations.

Following the welcome at the airport, Government Assisted newcomers arrive at ISSofBC Welcome House in downtown Vancouver (or other temporary accommodations if their Welcome House is full) for a maximum two week stay. ISSofBC is responsible for helping families locate permanent housing in the Metro Vancouver area. In some cases, it may be necessary for a family to stay in temporary housing, such as a hotel, until permanent housing can be secured. ISSofBC helps arrange for the settlement of the family into their furnished new home.

Through Welcome House staff, each government assisted refugee newcomer goes through a two week orientation program in their home language. This includes:

- educational workshops on money management, community resources and the transit system
- mental well-being and primary health care assessments
- opening of a bank account and completion of various government applications including Social Insurance Number, PR card, Health Care Card, Child Tax Benefits (if applicable) and a Recreation Centre/Leisure Access Card
- Crisis intervention is also provided in case of medically compromised clients. Through this process refugee clients complete an informed consent form that facilitates ISSofBC ability

to share client contact information through key referral protocols including the BC school system.

Once permanent rental housing has been secured, ISSofBC staff informs the local school district about the new family's arrival in the community by email. The School Principal's Letter, which is emailed to a school district contact, includes the names and ages of the school age children, a high level assessment of their length of time in a refugee camp, any primary health care concerns, and education experience. ISSofBC also provides the school district with the name of the ISSofBC RAP Counsellor who can provide more information about the family if required. IRCC provides a school start-up allowance.

Note: the private sponsor helps their sponsored family fill out forms, learn about the community, register for programs, and enrol any school age children in school. Privately sponsored newcomers who arrive as refugees can also access the same settlement supports available to all immigrants, including language classes and employment services.

Refugee Settlement Tracking

Since 1987 all government assisted refugees have been processed by ISSofBC and settled within Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley region. All arrivals in the Government Assisted refugee category are tracked through ISSofBC's case management database system.

Privately sponsored Syrian newcomers will be mapped and tracked by the federal government. Click [here](#) to access interactive map with the numbers of individuals settling in Canadian cities.

Map of Privately Sponsored Refugee Communities



The BC Refugee Settlement Destinations

According to the federal site, as of December 10, 2015, privately sponsored refugee newcomers will locate in the following BC communities:

- Vancouver (54)
- New Westminster (49)
- Burnaby (27)
- Coquitlam (20)
- Surrey (20)
- Victoria (10)
- Richmond (10)
- Kelowna (9)
- Delta (6)
- Prince George (5)
- Langley (less than 5)
- North Vancouver (less than 5)

RAP Links

S.U.C.C.E.S.S

A charitable organization that provides services in settlement, language training, employment, family and youth service, business community development

Source: Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

<http://www.successbc.ca/eng/services>

C.A.N.N.

Community Airport Newcomers Network (C.A.N.N) facilitates the pre-settlement of all immigrants arriving in Canada at the Vancouver International Airport

<http://www.cannyvr.ca/>

ISSofBC

Immigrant Services Society of BC's Syrian refugee crisis response as well as frequently asked questions.

<http://www.issbc.org/prim-corp-nav/our-work-with-refugees/refugee-crisis>

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Syrian Refugee settlement process?

The Government of Canada will welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada through a five-phase national plan. All refugees arrive as permanent residents. It should be noted that none of the 25,000 Syrian refugees will be refugee claimants.

According to the federal website as of December 16:

- 946 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada
- 1,570 refugee applications have been finalized
- 15,779 settlement applications in progress

Source: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/latest.asp>

2. How many Syrian refugees will BC receive?

- The Federal Government is still working out the number of Government-Assisted Refugees to be allocated to the provinces and have assured BC that it will share this information as soon as it becomes available.
- According to ISSofBC
 - BC typically accepts 10-12 per cent of all Canadian refugees and based on past data, most refugees settle in the Lower Mainland
 - It is estimated that BC will accept between 2,700 and 3,500 Syrians based on historical patterns. Note: Last year our province took in just over 1,500 refugees.
- According to the federal government, no unaccompanied minors will be entering Canada.

3. Where will these Syrian refugees be settled?

- Where the refugees will go once they arrive in BC is still being worked out.
- BC is exploring options across the province for settlement.
- According to ISSofBC, the majority of government assisted newcomers will settle in the Lower Mainland

4. What is the Syrian Refugee screening process?

Protecting the safety, security and health of Canadians and refugees is a key factor in guiding the Government of Canada's actions throughout this initiative.

According to the federal web site, each individual Syrian refugee that Canada welcomes will undergo a robust, multi-layered screening:

- Refugee identification before referral to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
- Immigration and security interview by experienced visa officers
- Identity and document verification; biometric and biographic collection
- Health screening
- Identity confirmation prior to departure
- Identity verification upon arrival

5. What types of Syrian Refugees will enter Canada?

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

- Individuals with official refugee status provided by the Government of Canada who have the majority of their settlement costs covered by federal government under their Settlement Assistance Program. This includes immediate and essential financial, clothing and housing assistance.

Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

- Private sponsors include individuals, community groups, churches or mosques that provide financial and emotional support. This includes financial, clothing and housing assistance.

6. Who are the Settlement Assistant Program (RAP) providers in B.C?

- Immigration Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) is the primary RAP provider in our province while S.U.C.C.E.S.S (and the Community Airport Newcomers Network) provides airport reception services to refugees.

7. What is the current role of ISSOFBC?

ISSofBC is currently the only service provider in BC that provides the full suite of federally-funded Settlement Assistance Program services to government-assisted refugees.

Services include:

- Temporary accommodation
- Basic orientation to Canada – e.g. taking a bus, shopping for groceries
- Life skills training
- Financial orientation – e.g. setting up a bank account
- Assistance in finding permanent housing
- Referrals to other settlement programs
- Income support for one year, including food and shelter allowance (based on provincial welfare rates)
- Furniture, clothing
- Housing supplement allowance
- Basic household needs allowance to buy beds, dressers, tables etc.
- Help setting up utilities
- Support with school enrolment, and school start-up allowance
- Maternity-related and new-born allowance

8. How is the province helping refugees?

The provincial government helps all refugees once they are settled in BC. Provincial services for all refugees include:

- MSP coverage
- Enrolment in our schools
- Employment programs
- Childcare subsidies
- Student aid (post-secondary)

9. What will the Province's \$1M Refugee Readiness Fund cover?

According to the [provincial news release](#), on December 2, the province announced further information on the \$1M Refugee Readiness Fund. This includes expanding capacity for private sponsors, community and church groups that are directly helping refugees.

Half of the \$1M Refugee Readiness Fund will go toward five Refugee Response Teams in the province to proactively plan for the settlement of refugees in their communities across BC. The teams will have representatives from the refugee service provider community and will be located in the communities where refugees settle.

The Refugee Response Teams across BC will have representatives from the refugee service provider community as well as local employers. Teams are anticipated in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Okanagan and Cariboo – although locations are contingent on where refugees ultimately settle. For those interested in applying for funding through BC's new Refugee Readiness Fund, information is available on BC Bid at: www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca.

The other half of the \$1M will be provided to the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC). ISSofBC will:

- Develop an online hub to connect private sponsors, settlement workers, counsellors, and other service providers across the province to the information they need to support refugees.
- Track volunteer offers, in-kind donations and housing and employment leads.
- Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.
- And they will provide workshops and support to the Refugee Response Teams.
- Provide workshops and support to Refugee Response Teams to ensure that organizations serving refugees outside of the Lower Mainland have the knowledge and expertise in place in advance of the bulk of the refugees arriving in BC by February 2016; and
- Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.

To learn more, visit ISSOFBC at: <http://www.ISSofBC.org/prim-corp-nav/our-work-with-refugees/refugee-crisis/how-can-i-help-refugees>.

10. What other provincial supports will be available to refugees?

- Through the Canada-BC Job grant, up to \$1.5 million is being made available to help get refugees job training and match them with employers.
- Refugees will also have access to job-specific language training as part of \$2.6 million being provided to community organizations, professional associations and post-secondary institutions across the BC; this includes \$1.27M in the Lower Mainland.
- Provincial Health Services Authority is hiring and training 30 additional interpreters dedicated to languages spoken by refugee populations.

Provincial Supports (Continued)

- In addition:
 - Wait periods and premiums for Medical Service Plan coverage are waived for all refugees.
 - Each refugee student in public school in BC is funded from the Province's pupil funding formula.
 - All refugees are able to access the Employment Program of BC
 - All refugees are eligible to receive:
 - Child Care Subsidy
 - BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit - up to \$55 per month per child under age 6.
 - BC Basic Family Bonus - up to \$111 per child per month when combined with the National Child Benefit Supplement
 - Student Aid
 - All government-assisted refugees are eligible to apply for housing through the Housing Registry managed by BC Housing.

11. Who do I contact for more information on Syrian refugees?

- Contact the Government of British Columbia Call Centre at: 1-877-952-6914
- Immigrant Services Society of BC at 1-844-447-9742 or refugee.crisis@ISSofBC.org
- For anything related to media around Government Assisted Refugees contact Citizenship and Immigration at 613-952-1650 or cic-media-relations@cic.gc.ca

12. What other supports are in place to help School Districts with Syrian refugee enrolment?

1. The Ministry has a guide for teachers and schools to support students from refugee backgrounds, which is available at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/ell/refugees_teachers_guide.pdf
2. BC schools have provided English Language Learning (ELL) services for many years. ELL services focus both on teaching English and providing an orientation to the societies and cultures of BC. The Ministry provides supplemental funding to Boards of Education for ELL services and Apprentissage de la langue anglaise services in the Conseil scolaire francophone.

Information about supports for English Language learners can be found at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/diverse-student-needs/english-language-learners>

Page 017 to/à Page 034

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Ministry Of Education Syrian Refugee Readiness and Action Plan

Friday, December 18, 2015 - 13:04

Background

- The federal government of Canada has committed to bringing in 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by Feb 28, 2016. Typically, BC accepts 10-12 per cent of the influx to Canada and 80 per cent settle in Greater Vancouver.
- BC has committed to receiving up to 3,500 refugees under this process. Based on historical data compiled by Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC), it is estimated that approximately 30-40 per cent of the 3,500 will be of school age and will reside in Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster and Vancouver through government assistance.

Ministry of Education Role

- The Ministry of Education is committed to establishing a positive experience for these newcomers as they settle in-BC and enter the education system.
- A Ministry of Education cross-divisional Syrian Refugee Response and Readiness Working Group has been launched to proactively share information, and to work with Ministry staff and with external stakeholders like the Metro Vancouver Superintendents and ISSofBC.
- Working Group members include Kevena Bamford and Erin Kelly (Partner and Intergovernmental Relations), Rebecca John (Resource Management), Brian Jonker (Knowledge Management and Accountability), Renee Mounteney (Planning and Major Projects), Nell Ross (Learning Division), Emilie Hillier (Services and Technology), and Craig Sorochoan (GCPE).

Ministry of Education Actions to Date

The Ministry is actively working, in collaboration with our education partners, to prepare for the arrival of the newcomers in our school system. This includes:

- Participation on a cross-ministry ADM Committee on Refugee Readiness and Response group led by the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training (JTST)
- Participation in a Federal/Provincial partners Metro Vancouver planning meeting
- Meetings with the Metro Vancouver Superintendents to discern processes and supports already in place
- Distribution of information about refugee settlement in the Superintendents' Weekly Newsletter
- Bi-weekly conference calls with Ministry of Education Assistant Deputy Ministers, executive members from BCSSA, BCPVPA, BCSTA and BCASBO as well as all Superintendents throughout the Province; ISSofBC also invited to participate

- Updating and streamlining of *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers & Schools* 2009 edition; inclusion of federal Syrian refugee profile to accompany the *Guide*
- Preparation of a *Welcome to Education in BC* ‘one-page info sheet’– adapted from the *BC Newcomers Guide*

Provincial Refugee Readiness Fund

On December 2, the Province announced further information on the **\$1M Refugee Readiness Fund** and outlined plans for distribution of the funds.

Half of the \$1M Refugee Readiness Fund will go toward five Refugee Response Teams in the province to proactively plan for the settlement of refugees in their communities across BC. The teams will have representatives from the refugee service provider community and will be located in the communities where refugees settle.

The other half of the \$1M will be provided to the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC). ISSofBC will:

- Develop an online hub to connect private sponsors, settlement workers, counsellors, and other service providers across the province to the information they need to support refugees.
- Track volunteer offers, in-kind donations and housing and employment leads.
- Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.
- Provide workshops and support to the Refugee Response Teams.

Please check the following links for more helpful information.

Federal Information on Syrian Refugees

Current information on how Canada is helping Syrian refugees

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp>

Map of Destination Communities for Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

A map of the destination communities for the Syrian PSRs

http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp?_ga=1.80214039.1812590618.1429900247

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Q&A for BC Service Centres

OFFERS TO ASSIST

Where can I learn more about refugees from Syria?

- There is a wide diversity of social, socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds among refugees from Syria.
- The federal government has recently published an online population profile for Syrian Refugees which provides an overview of demographic characteristics, countries of asylum, health characteristics, and cultural considerations. You can find the online profile at <http://lifelinesyria.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/EN-Syrian-Population-Profile.pdf>

How can I sponsor a refugee?

- Groups of Canadian Citizens or permanent residents can privately sponsor a refugee by establishing a Group of Five or Community Sponsorship Group.
- Refugee sponsors must commit to supporting refugees emotionally and financially for at least one year.
- Please refer to the following online resources for specific guidance on how to sponsor a refugee, as well as information on the roles and responsibilities of refugee sponsors:
 - The federal government's website on How to Sponsor a Refugee: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp>
 - The federal government's Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/index.asp>
 - The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program's (RSTP) Handbook for Sponsoring Groups: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/resources/handbook-for-sponsoring-groups/>
 - The application guide for privately sponsoring refugees: Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Application Guide (IMM 5413)
 - A list of existing sponsorship groups in BC can be found at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/list-sponsors.asp>.

What training is available to refugee sponsors?

- The federal government provides training assistance for refugee sponsors to address information and ongoing training needs. Please refer to the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) website for more details: <http://www.rstp.ca/en/>

What does it cost to support a refugee?

- The estimated cost of sponsoring a single refugee is \$12,600. For a family of four, the estimated cost is \$27,000. More details are available at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/applications/guides/5413ETOC.asp#appa>

What percentage of the money required to sponsor a refugee must I have on hand before I can submit an application to be processed?

- You will need to show proof of funds at the time of filling out a sponsorship application (see IRC's document checklist: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5437E.pdf>).
- However, using in-kind donations can reduce the amount of money you are required to have on hand. For example, if you have a free place to shelter the refugees, you will not need to show any funds to pay for rent – you should, however, be able to provide detailed information such as the address and number of rooms available for the refugees when you submit your application. The same is true for other in-kind deductions.

How can I make a donation?

- As a province we are proud of the generosity shown by British Columbians in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Making a donation is a personal choice and, as such, we cannot provide advice on how or where to donate your time, money and/or resources. To help you research options for supporting Syrian refugees, we have compiled the following resources for your review:
 - The federal government has launched a new website and social media campaign *#WelcomeRefugees* to support Canadians looking to donate, volunteer, and sponsor refugees. You can find the website at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/help.asp>
 - If you are looking to join or support an existing refugee sponsoring group, you can find a list of Sponsorship Agreement Holders in BC at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/list-sponsors.asp>
 - If you are looking to volunteer with, or make a donation to, a local refugee and immigrant-serving agency, you can find an organization near you using the WelcomeBC's Settlement Services Map at: <http://www.welcomebc.ca/WBC-Map.aspx>
 - If you are looking to help a refugee find housing or employment, you can register your interest on the ISSoBC website at: <http://www.issbc.org/prim-corp-nav/our-work-with-refugees/refugee-crisis/how-can-i-help-refugees>

Where can I volunteer?

- As a province we are proud of the generosity shown by British Columbians in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Volunteering is a personal choice and, as such, we cannot provide advice on how or where to donate your time. However, to help you research options for supporting Syrian refugees, we have compiled the following resources for your review:
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- If you are looking to join or support an existing refugee sponsoring group, you can find a list of Sponsorship Agreement Holders in BC at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/list-sponsors.asp>
- If you are looking to volunteer with, or make a donation to, a local refugee and immigrant-serving agency, you can find an organization near you using the WelcomeBC's Settlement Services Maps at: <http://www.welcomebc.ca/WBC-Map.aspx>
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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

What is the federal government doing to support Syrian refugees?

- The new federal government has committed to resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada and has provided \$100 million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- A new website and social media campaign *#WelcomeRefugees* has been launched to support Canadians looking to donate, volunteer, and sponsor refugees. You can find the website at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/help.asp>
- The *#WelcomeRefugees* website also tracks the latest milestones for Canada's response to the Syrian Crisis and can be viewed here: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>. In addition, there is also an online interactive map tracking the destination communities for privately sponsored Syrian refugees at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp>
- A list of federal government-supported settlement services for refugees in BC is available online at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/map/bc.asp>.

What is the BC government doing to support refugees?

- The province has provided \$1M in funding through a new Refugee Readiness Fund to:
 - Develop an online hub to connect private sponsors, settlement workers, counsellors, and other service providers across the province to the information they need to support refugees.
 - Track volunteer offers, in-kind donations and housing and employment leads.
 - Set up a range of supports for clinicians caring for traumatized refugees, including a new telephone consultation line and a trauma needs assessment tool.
 - Provide workshops and support to Refugee Response Teams to ensure that organizations serving refugees outside of the Lower

Mainland have the knowledge and expertise in place in advance of the bulk of the refugees arriving in BC by February 2016.

- Fund community-led initiatives by Refugee Response Teams across the province.
- In addition to this funding:
 - Wait periods and premiums for Medical Service Plan coverage are waived for all refugees.
 - Each refugee student in public school in B.C. is funded from the Province's pupil funding formula.
 - All refugees are able to access the Employment Program of BC
- All refugees are eligible to receive:
 - Child Care Subsidy
 - BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit - up to \$55 per month per child under age 6.
 - BC Basic Family Bonus - up to \$111 per child per month when combined with the National Child Benefit Supplement
 - Student Aid
- All government-assisted refugees are eligible to apply for housing through the Housing Registry managed by BC Housing.

How does the province plan to meet the potentially large need for temporary and permanent housing for incoming refugees?

- We are waiting for the federal government to release its final plans on how many refugees will come to BC and where in the province they will settle.
- Government-Assisted Refugees will receive income support and assistance for finding accommodation through a federally-funded service provider. Privately Sponsored Refugees will have their housing arranged by their sponsors prior to arrival.
- BC Housing is currently engaging with settlement service providers to better understand and address housing needs/gaps.

When will the numbers of incoming refugees and arrival timelines be confirmed?

- The Federal Government is still working out the number of Government-Assisted Refugees to be allocated to the provinces and have assured BC that it will share this information as soon as it becomes available.
- For Privately Sponsored Refugees, the Federal Government now has a website which provides information on communities where private sponsorship applications are currently in process. BC is expected to receive 213 privately sponsored refugees across 12 communities by the end of December 2015. Website link:
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/map.asp?_ga=1.266075727.1755002769.1423087176)

Where will these refugees be settled?

- Where the refugees will go once they arrive in B.C. is still being worked out.

- BC is exploring options across the province for resettlement.
- The province has tremendous economic opportunities in B.C. and that is why we want people to settle across the province, not just the Lower Mainland.

How many refugees does BC typically receive and where do they usually settle?

- BC typically receives 10% of refugee arrivals to Canada.
- Over the past five years, 98% Government-Assisted Refugees have been destined to the Lower Mainland where they receive settlement support through the federal Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) delivered by the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSo/BC).
- Approximately 94% of all Privately Sponsored Refugees are typically destined for the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.
- Of the 213 Privately-Sponsored Refugees expected to arrive in BC between now and by the end of 2015, the majority are destined for the lower Mainland:
 - Vancouver (54)
 - New Westminster (49)
 - Burnaby (27)
 - Coquitlam (20)
 - Surrey (20)
 - Victoria (10)
 - Richmond (10)
 - Kelowna (9)
 - Delta (6)
 - Prince George (5)
 - Langley (less than 5)
 - North Vancouver (less than 5)

Who are the Resettlement Assistant Program (RAP) providers in B.C?

- Immigration Services Society of BC (ISSo/BC) is the RAP in our province while S.U.C.C.E.S.S provides airport reception services to refugees.

PUBLIC CONCERNS

How is Canada selecting and screening refugees overseas?

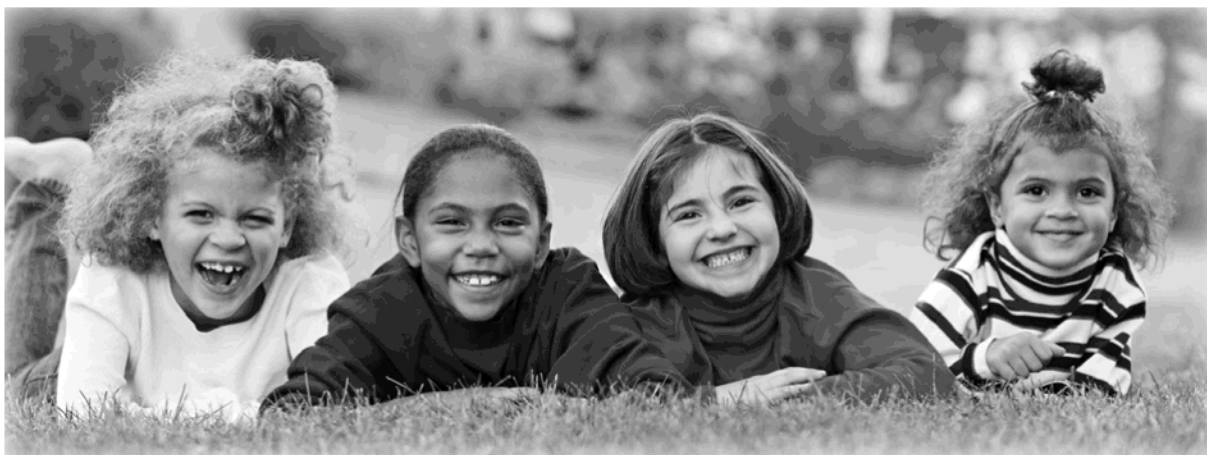
- This work is already underway and will continue for the next couple of months.
- Privately Sponsored Refugees are selected by the sponsoring group.
- To select Government-Assisted Refugees, the UN Refugee Agency and visa officers from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada will identify refugees.
- Vulnerable refugees, including women, children and families, will be prioritized.
- Overseas processing includes a full medical examination and security screening.
- Individuals who pass the screening will be issued a permanent resident visa and arrangements will be made for transportation to Canada.

Can refugees pose a threat to Canadian security?

- Under international and Canadian law, anyone who has committed a serious crime is excluded from refugee protection.
- All security screening will take place overseas following the usual screening protocols for refugees.
- Refugees are first screened by the UN before undergoing a series of rigorous security clearances by the Canadian government, which are carried out by Canadian visa officers, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
- This includes selecting the most vulnerable, conducting in-depth interviews, collecting biometrics, verifying identity, and checking individuals against international security databases.
- Canada has a strong record of conducting swift and comprehensive security screening for emergency evacuations.
- I am satisfied that the federal systems in place for security are robust and we can have the utmost confidence in the process.

Why is BC sponsoring refugees when there are many people already in BC who need our help?

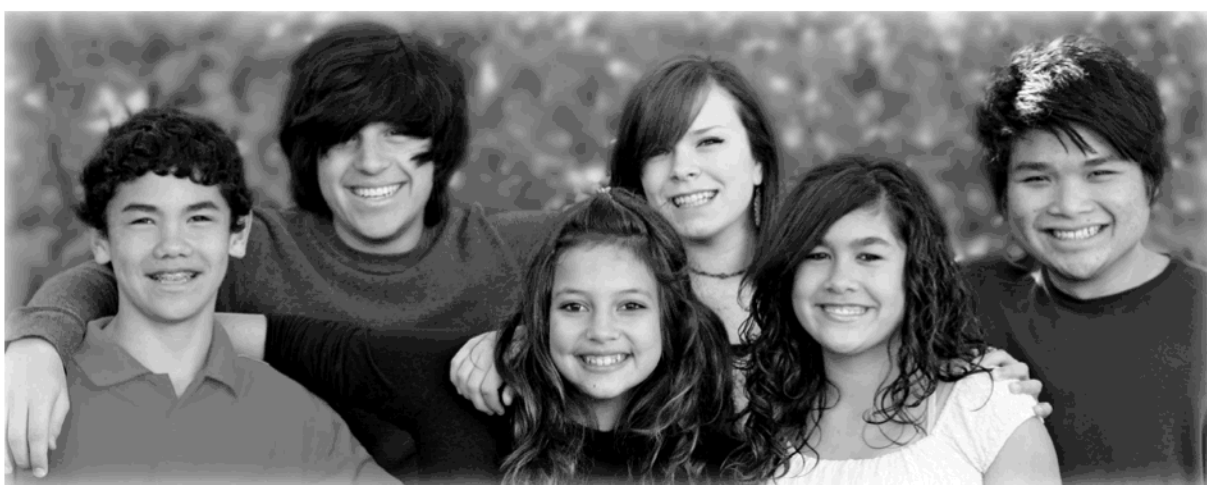
- BC wants to help alleviate the suffering of refugees. It is clear from what we are seeing on the news that there is a crisis requiring assistance from around the world to solve.
- The federal government, which controls the number of refugees entering Canada, has announced that it will increase the number of refugees from Syria. These refugees are going to arrive and BC must be ready to provide assistance.
- Once refugees arrive, they become permanent residents of British Columbia, and are on the path to citizenship. Refugees possess knowledge and skills that will benefit BC. Support for refugees is essential for them to settle in BC and realize their potential as new Canadians.



Students from Refugee Backgrounds



A Guide for Teachers and Schools



Students from Refugee Backgrounds

A Guide for Teachers and Schools

October 2009



Ministry of
Education

In general, refugees are persons who seek refuge or asylum outside their homeland to escape persecution. The following is the Geneva Convention definition recognized worldwide and signed by Canada:

Geneva Convention Definition of a Refugee, 1951, 1967

A refugee is a person who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence..., is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

Source: “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, August 2007.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Purpose..... | 3 |
| 1. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Context | 4 |
| International..... | 4 |
| Canada | 4 |
| Immigration and Refugee Protection Act | 4 |
| Policy..... | 4 |
| Refugees..... | 5 |
| Refugee Claimants..... | 6 |
| Resettlement Assistance | 6 |
| British Columbia | 6 |
| The Refugee Experience | 7 |
| Settlement Issues | 8 |
| Personal Adjustment Issues..... | 9 |
| 2. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The School..... | 10 |
| First Impressions..... | 10 |
| Roles of School Staff | 10 |
| Suggested Strategies for Orientation to the School | 11 |
| Key Points to Consider | 12 |
| Learning Environment Checklist: School..... | 13 |
| Adjusting to a New Culture..... | 13 |
| Stages of Adjustment..... | 14 |
| Emotional Considerations | 17 |
| Post Traumatic Stress | 17 |
| Trauma..... | 17 |
| Associated Behaviours..... | 18 |
| Triggers | 19 |
| Buffers..... | 19 |
| 3. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Classroom | 20 |
| Understanding Diversity | 20 |
| A Warm and Welcoming Environment..... | 20 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Setting the Stage for a Smooth Transition..... | 20 |
| Learning Environment Checklist: Classroom | 21 |
| Awareness of Cultural Differences..... | 22 |
| Cross-Cultural Communication | 23 |
| Some Cautions..... | 24 |
| Providing Opportunities for Peer Interaction and Learning..... | 25 |
| Instructional Strategies that Facilitate Classroom Interaction | 25 |
| Older Refugee Youth | 25 |
| Possibilities to Consider for Older Students | 26 |
| Grade to Grade Transitions | 26 |
| Community Connections | 27 |
| Resources | 28 |
| Services in the Greater Vancouver Region | 28 |
| Health..... | 28 |
| Refugee Claimants..... | 28 |
| Schools..... | 29 |
| Settlement..... | 30 |
| Trauma Support..... | 30 |
| Services Outside Greater Vancouver | 31 |
| General Information..... | 33 |
| International..... | 33 |
| National | 33 |
| Provincial..... | 34 |
| Municipal | 34 |
| Education Resources (Kindergarten to Grade 12)..... | 35 |
| Child and Youth Mental Health Publications..... | 36 |
| Bibliography..... | 37 |
| Acknowledgments | 40 |
| Appendix A – Profile of a Resilient Child..... | 41 |
| Appendix B – Overview of the Refugee Claim Process | 42 |
| Appendix C – Resettlement Assistance Program..... | 43 |
| Appendix D – Learning Environment Checklist..... | 44 |
| Appendix E – Preliterate Learners | 45 |

Students from Refugee Backgrounds

A Guide for Teachers and Schools

Introduction

Families who arrive in Canada as refugees have overcome great obstacles and adversity. They bring with them strengths, abilities, and qualities to share, with hope of thriving in their new home country.

Teacher awareness and understanding of the backgrounds and needs of children and youth with refugee experience, as well as the individual strengths and cultural differences of these students, are important factors in student progress and success.

While adversity will impact an individual's future experiences and outlook, the resiliency of children and youth to survive traumatic experiences should not be underestimated. Resilience refers to an individual's ability to bounce back from adversity. See Appendix A for an illustrative profile of a resilient child. A person may be able to recover from disruptions or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways. Sometimes difficulties can be used as a springboard to positive development. It is important to note that the recovery process may differ for individual children and youth, depending on their ages and experiences.

Purpose

This guide is for teachers and other school staff. It has three goals:

- to provide background information about those with refugee experience
- to support all school staff in their work with children and youth from refugee backgrounds
- to offer strategies for teachers working with these children and youth

1. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Context

This section provides information about the circumstances of individuals with a refugee experience.

New patterns of survival, new relations with neighbours, and new dependencies and alliances have to be established.

International

In general, refugees are persons who seek refuge or asylum outside their homeland to escape persecution.

In 1950, the United Nations General Assembly created the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as part of its recognition of the importance of refugee demographics in our modern world. This agency leads and coordinates international efforts to protect the rights and well being of refugees. It also provides advice and support to nations willing to help refugees.

Individuals seeking refuge or asylum are forced to flee from their home country into a life of uncertainty. A person may have no real sanctuary. The flight from their home country often leads to a difficult life in a camp, sometimes for many years. This may seem like the beginning of a long journey to nowhere. New patterns of survival, new relations with neighbours, and new dependencies and alliances have to be established. Refugee relief agencies work to bring a sense of normalcy to a new existence and stability in the face of uncertainty.

Canada

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) is Canada's legislation pertaining to immigration. Implemented on June 28, 2002, it replaces the *Immigration Act* of 1976.

The IRPA reflects current Canadian values and enables faster and fairer processes to welcome immigrants to Canada, including those needing protection and a safe haven. At the same time, the IRPA strongly enforces national security and public safety. The full document can be found at www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5.

Policy

Canada, in its humanitarian efforts, responds to global crises and UNHCR special requests regarding those needing refuge. Refugees come from different countries, depending on current global crises.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is the federal government department

responsible for immigration. Immigration policy is guided by three established, broad objectives:

- to reunite families
- to fulfill Canada's international obligations and humanitarian tradition with respect to refugees
- to foster a strong viable economy in the regions of Canada

Refugees

"Canada offers refugee protection to people in Canada who fear persecution or whose removal from Canada would subject them to a danger of torture, a risk to their life or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment."¹ Those needing refugee protection may obtain permanent resident status in Canada.

There are different types of refugees within Citizenship and Immigration Canada's refugee category. Some refugees are directly sponsored by the Government of Canada or private organizations and are afforded permanent resident status. Others apply for refugee status.

| Refugee Category | |
|---|--|
| Subcategory | Description |
| Government Assisted Refugees | Enter Canada as permanent residents and are supported by the federal government for up to one year from their arrival in Canada. |
| Privately Sponsored Refugees | Enter Canada as permanent residents and are sponsored by private citizens. Private sponsors commit to assisting and supporting these individuals throughout their first year of residence in Canada. |
| Refugee Dependants Abroad | Dependants (living abroad) of permanent resident refugees landed in Canada. |
| Asylum Refugees (includes private sponsorship, self-funded, and refugee claimants) | People in refugee-like situations who seek asylum in Canada because they cannot safely return to their home country. |
| Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-gov.asp www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp (in Canada Asylum) www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/asylum.asp (outside Canada Asylum) www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/communities/fact-refugees.pdf | |

¹ Source: "Refugees," Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009.

“Refugee claimants are not eligible for all government benefits and programs for newcomers. For example, refugee claimants may not have regular medical insurance, such as a BC CareCard. Refugee claimants can apply for a work permit and income assistance.”

Source: “British Columbia Newcomers’ Guide to Resources and Services,” BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2009.

Refugee Claimants

(In Canada Asylum Program)

Some refugees seeking asylum are living in Canada and have applied for refugee status. These persons, also known as refugee claimants, are awaiting decision by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. This board examines claims for refugee protection and decides if refugee claimants will be granted permanent residence.

The process of transition into Canadian society may be more difficult or confusing for refugee claimants than for other persons from refugee backgrounds who have already been granted refugee status. Claimants may be unsure of legal processes and their rights. The claim process may take years and the outcome is often uncertain.

The refugee claim process is illustrated in Appendix B.

Resettlement Assistance

The Government of Canada directly assists some refugees in becoming residents of Canada. Government provides resettlement assistance to these Government-Assisted Refugees to help them start a new life in Canada.

Under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), Government-Assisted Refugees are provided with financial assistance that includes loans for their transportation to Canada, a start-up allowance, monthly support allowance, and a bus pass allowance. They are also provided with a basic household goods package. Transportation loans are repayable.²

The Resettlement Assistance Program process is illustrated in Appendix C.

British Columbia

British Columbia welcomes refugee immigrants to the province every year. Currently, refugees are more likely to settle in the Greater Vancouver area. Detailed immigration trends and facts about refugee immigrants in British Columbia can be found at www.welcomebc.ca/en/communities/facts_trends/facts.html.

² Source: “Faces of Refugees,” Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, 2007.

The Refugee Experience

Through the years, educators in British Columbia have worked both with immigrant children and youth and those from refugee backgrounds. While there may seem to be similarities between the two groups – they are new to the country, they must go through a process of adjustment – immigrants and refugees are different. The following provides general observations of differences and may not apply to all students:

| Refugees and Immigrants: Observation of Different Experiences | |
|---|---|
| Immigrants | Refugees |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal business is taken care of before leaving home country. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal business in the home country is left unsettled after leaving in a hurry. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education usually continues uninterrupted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education may be interrupted or postponed due to strife in home country or a wait in a refugee camp. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time to prepare for the transition allows for development of an awareness of their new country and its culture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden transition to a new culture/country creates difficulties, confusion, or uncertainty. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of loss and trauma is not necessarily present. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of loss and trauma may be profound; losses may include family members or personal property, and may have psychological impacts. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Returning home is a personal choice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Returning home is not an option unless the crisis situation has stabilized or ended. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families are often intact, including parents and children, or other family members who are also caregivers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children may be without parents, or even family guardians. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrangements likely have been made for basic requirements, such as food, housing, and medical and dental care. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic requirements, such as food, housing, and immediate medical and dental care, may be urgently needed. |

Settlement Issues

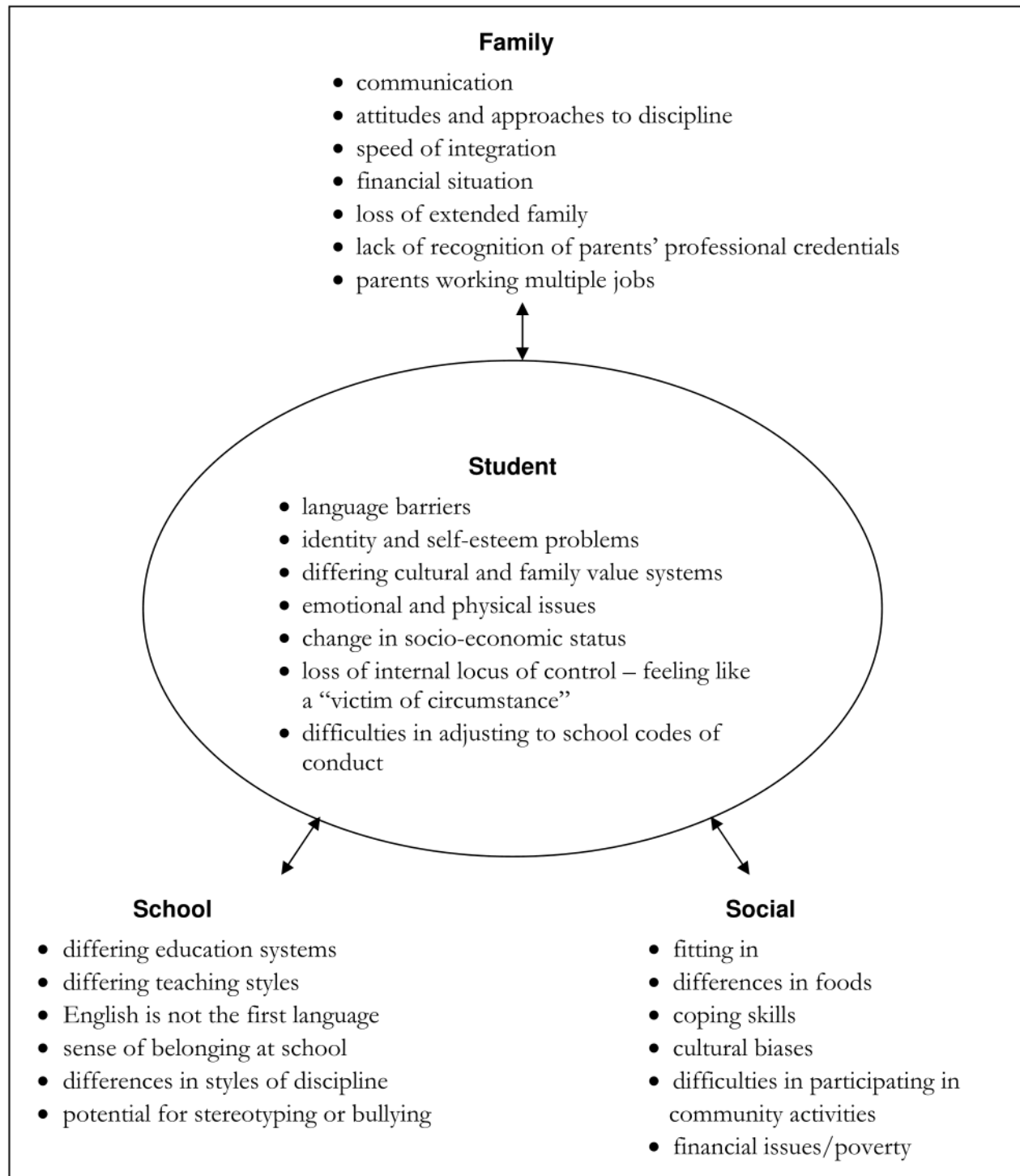
Many children, youth and families from refugee backgrounds who settle in British Columbia are grappling with significant settlement issues. In recent years, changes in refugee characteristics and trends are a direct result of the humanitarian provisions in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and its emphasis on refugee protection and policy. The following table illustrates some general situations observed over the last decade:

Challenges for Children, Youth and Families from Refugee Backgrounds

- more delays and prolonged time periods in refugee camps for individuals and families
- little or no formal schooling (sometimes for generations) resulting in innumeracy and illiteracy in the first language as well as in English or French
- limited labour market skills, including those needed in a technology-based society
- limited access to resources to address health issues in their countries of origin or in refugee camps
- larger family sizes
- families sometimes composed of several blended families because adults have been lost
- use of less common languages that are difficult to identify, causing communication barriers
- serious and multiple physical and mental health concerns as consequences of war or torture
- inhibited emotional development due to exposure to violence
- limited income, resulting in poor nutrition and health
- lack of awareness of the dangers of city life, such as traffic or strangers
- families with parents lost in conflict or war
- families, accustomed to different cultural norms, who struggle with role reversals, such as a woman as head of a family as opposed to a man, or children taking on adult responsibilities for their parents (from translation to employment responsibilities)
- isolation and loneliness for adults and children
- different parenting styles arising from cultural norms
- negative emotions and stress that have a detrimental effect on children and youth
- loss of identity and self-esteem

Personal Adjustment Issues

Along with overall settlement issues, students with refugee experience are grappling with many aspects of adjustment when they come to a new country, including those associated with self, family, school, and society.



Source: “Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Settlement and Immigration,” British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 8-11.

2. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The School

This section provides information for all school staff working with children and youth from refugee backgrounds.

First Impressions

School staff has the opportunity to make positive first impressions on families and set up students for early success.

Many cultures in the world are represented in the population of British Columbia. In each cultural group, traditional beliefs, values, and customs may be retained to varying degrees by different individuals. Factors such as social class, religion, level of education, and rural or urban region of origin in the home country contribute to differences within immigrant groups. These factors influence:

- the beliefs of the student and the student's family about teaching and learning
- their expectations of teachers and school staff
- their willingness to seek help

While learning the English language is essential, children and youth from refugee backgrounds have additional needs that may impact their ability to benefit from our school system. Coming to a new country and adjusting to a new way of life can be difficult and frightening. Older immigrant youth may be particularly challenged by starting life in a new country. The first year or two are very important. Schools can smooth the adjustment process by providing suitable services and programs for these students. School staff has the opportunity to make positive first impressions on families and set up students for early success.

Roles of School Staff

Teachers can begin to have a positive impact as soon as children and youth with refugee experience arrive by establishing and maintaining a positive, welcoming climate. Much of the children's introduction to school life and early relationship building may take place in the classroom with the support of the teacher, other school staff, and peers. It is important to recognize that teachers may not have all the necessary training to help the child deal with traumatic experiences. To best support the child, teachers should be one part of a team made up of various professionals:

- the principal
- counsellors and/or other student support staff who may be accessed through the district's support services department, school administrators, or existing school based teams
- English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers
- settlement workers
- integration support teachers

It is important for school staff to be presented with professional development and in-service opportunities geared toward understanding and addressing the unique needs of immigrants from refugee backgrounds.

Principals have a leadership role to play, ensuring that students are provided with the support they need and that the school is a welcoming place for all students. Counsellors can assist with information and support in understanding the emotional needs of the student and can assist with referral to youth mental health services and other community support agencies.

The ESL specialist teachers, along with classroom teachers, can play significant roles in helping refugee children and youth learn English, adjust to a new way of life in a new country, and achieve success in school. As well, settlement workers offer information and support services to immigrant students and their families, helping to smooth their transition into a new school and community. Integration support teachers can provide classroom teachers with teaching strategies, behaviour management support, and assistance with adaptation and modification of materials.

It is important for school staff to be presented with professional development and in-service opportunities geared toward understanding and addressing the unique needs of immigrants from refugee backgrounds. Local immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies have expertise that may help (see “Resources” starting on page 28).

Working toward the goal of providing specialized and additional services to students from refugee backgrounds, keep in mind that the majority will eventually integrate into grade-level classes. When integrated, they will follow the prescribed curriculum of the Ministry of Education, and they will be expected to perform to the same standards as their English-speaking peers.

Suggested Strategies for Orientation to the School

For students:

- introduce the school system gradually
- provide a tour of the school and grounds, possibly supported by a visual aid, such as a map
- provide accessible information on the school, such as information in the student’s first language where available
- provide an introduction to the surrounding neighbourhood, and a map
- consider using a translator during initial contact
- get to know parents and siblings
- ensure that support services are in place
- provide a buddy for the new student
- minimize the number of teachers for the student, if possible
- provide an assigned locker or compartment storage space
- provide a smaller class in at least one circumstance where possible
- keep students informed about events at school so they feel included
- use consistent messaging about appropriate behaviour

For parents:

- introduce parents to the classroom teacher, settlement worker and/or multicultural worker, or principal
- consider using a translator during initial contact
- plan first language forums for parents, with helpful school and community information
- provide accessible information on cultural and school orientation, including some in the parents' first language where available

Key Points to Consider

Many children and youth from refugee backgrounds were born and/or raised in refugee camps and have had little or no formal schooling. They need extensive orientation. There are a number of things we take for granted that may be foreign for these students. The starting point for learning may be as fundamental as coping with the expectations of performing a task, or behaving in a set way. The box below includes examples of things with which children and youth from refugee backgrounds may be unfamiliar; school staff may need to help and mentor students so the students understand and become accustomed to these conventions:

- using North American bathroom facilities
- opening and closing doors
- waiting in line
- waiting one's turn
- sitting still
- speaking one person at a time
- staying in one room for long periods of time
- staying in school for long periods of time
- understanding common non-verbal cues
- recognizing the letters of the alphabet in any language
- recognizing that information in English is organized left to right, top to bottom
- holding a writing instrument
- using a book; copying passages from an original source
- using technology, such as cell phones and computers
- understanding the concept of mathematics
- accomplishing simple arithmetic

Learning Environment Checklist: School

The following considerations for introducing students to their new school are offered as a checklist to help with planning. There is a second checklist for teachers in Section 3 (see page 21). See also the complete Learning Environment Checklist in Appendix D (consider these in combination with “Cross-Cultural Communication” on page 23):

Social and School Adjustment

- ☐ program assignment/placement
- ☐ introduction to classroom teacher
- ☐ introduction to layout of the school and classroom
- ☐ assignment of mentor or buddy
- ☐ language assistance if needed
- ☐ consistent routine or schedule

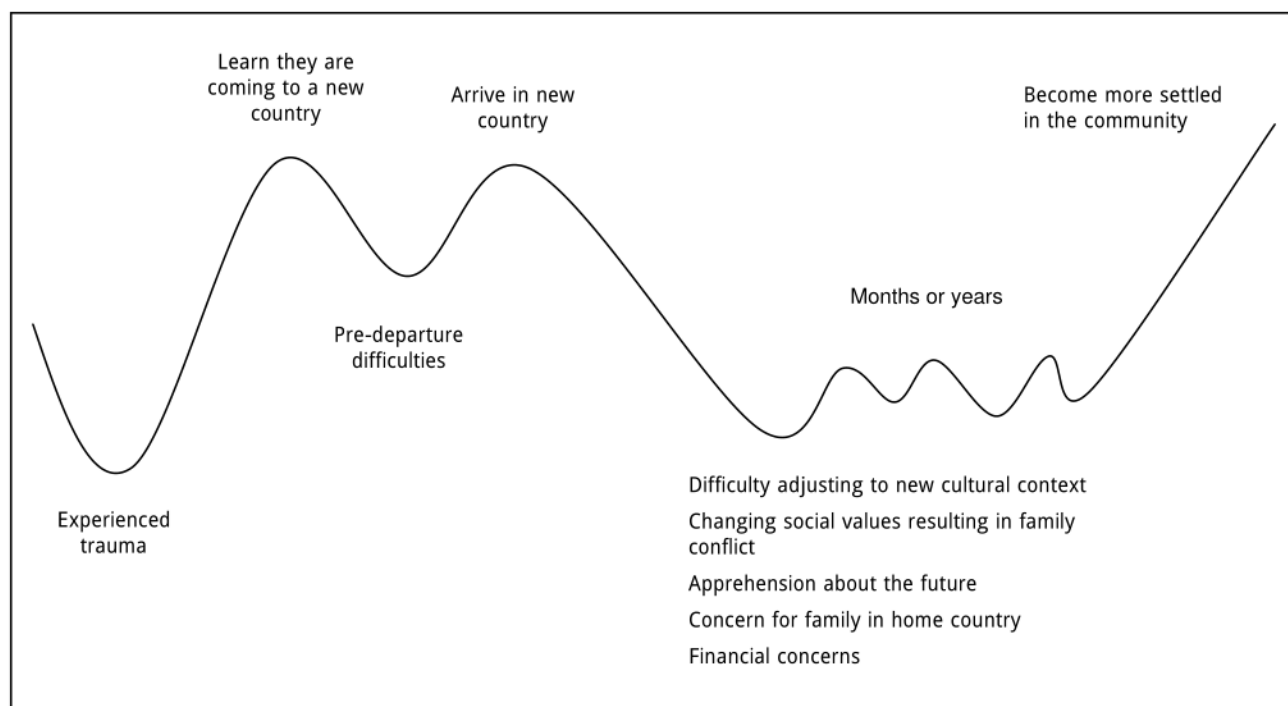
Physical Needs

- ☐ school supplies
- ☐ textbooks/resource materials
- ☐ lunch/snack
- ☐ orientation to bell schedule
- ☐ access to a quiet area or place of refuge
- ☐ assessment of any medical needs, such as hearing and vision

Adjusting to a New Culture

Students and their families new to British Columbia’s culture and schools and with a limited command of English will go through a period of adjustment and settlement. This may impact students’ learning. A sense of dislocation, or the trauma that new arrivals sometimes experience upon leaving their homeland, can cause them to appear withdrawn, fatigued, or uninterested.

The course of adjustment can be challenging, filled with a series of highs and lows:



Source: “Count me in!: A resource to support ESL students with refugee experience in schools,” Minister for Education, Literacy Secretariat, Government of South Australia, 2007.

Stages of Adjustment

While individual circumstances and personal responses will vary enormously, it is common for new arrivals to go through four stages of adjustment. Within all stages there will be periods of ‘silence’. During the early stages of settlement and adjustment, this ‘silent time’ may be due to a lack of vocabulary to respond in English. Later on, this silent period may be due to emotional transitioning. This is a time when students are trying to make sense of their new world.

Parents may also be silent for a variety of reasons:

- lack of English
- translating between the first and second languages
- feelings of inadequacy about knowing the communication norms when talking with English-speaking adults or persons in positions of authority
- embarrassment at having to rely on their children as interpreters and communicators
- different cultural views of the role of parents in relation to teachers and school
- unfamiliarity with the social or school context

The following is one model of the stages of adjustment, and includes four stages:

1. The Honeymoon Stage

This takes place when people first arrive. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- enthusiasm, fascination, curiosity
- optimism, excitement, and hope for a new life
- unmistakable foreignness
- little identification with British Columbia
- fatigue
- anxiety regarding the future
- superficial attempts to adjust

To help the students, school staff can find out as much as possible about students' backgrounds and cultural differences (see pages 20 to 22) and inform the parents or guardians about schooling and programs.

2. The Hostility Stage

After about four to six months, reality can set in. This is most often the time when culture shock becomes evident. Newcomers know a bit about getting around and have begun to learn how to manage, but where they are now is not like their home: the food, appearance of things, life, places, faces, and ways of doing things are different. Gradually they begin to feel that they hate their new country and want to go back home. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- culture shock
- feeling the 'strangeness' of BC schools
- little verbal communication, except with others who speak their language
- slow second language retention
- distraction by unsettled family life or growing family problems
- confusion over Canadian social norms and expectations
- frustration and possible withdrawal or depression
- inexplicable or erratic behaviours
- difficulty sitting still
- possible cultural disorientation and misunderstandings, both verbal and non-verbal

At this stage, school staff can: help the students and families to set realistic goals and expectations; create opportunities to build students' self-esteem; encourage students to take pride in their heritage and language; show compassion and understanding; and highlight student success.

3. The Humour Stage (or Coming to Terms)

Gradually, newcomers work toward resolution of their feelings and their sense of being torn between the old and the new. They begin to accept their new home and to find friends. They begin to discover that there are good things about where they are living and come to terms with both the old and new ways of life. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- proficiency in conversational English
- disengagement from English as a Second Language classes
- peer influence at its greatest
- some attitudinal and value changes
- parent-teen conflict at its worst
- behavioural problems
- improvements in economic situation as at least one parent finds acceptable employment

During this time, school staff can: help students to see the value in their original culture as well as in their new culture; present opportunities for students to communicate about their past; and offer students the opportunity to become role models and peer supporters.

4. The Home Stage (Integration)

This is the stage at which students and families realize they are here to stay. This last stage may take years, and for some will never fully take place. Students may still respond in unexpected ways to particular classroom situations or events, due to cultural conditioning or because their cultural values and beliefs differ from those of other students. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- proficiency with both their first language and with English
- appreciation of cultural symbols of original and adopted countries
- viewing him or herself as an integral part of a multicultural society
- friendships with individuals from different ethnic origins
- participation in school and community activities
- acceptance and identification with host culture, without giving up on original identity

School staff can take pride in the role of supporting each student's unique process of adjustment and integration.

Source: "Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Settlement and Integration," British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 2-5.

"Post traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder caused by exposure to a traumatic event that threatened or caused death or grave physical harm."

Source: "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," Canadian Mental Health Association, 2009.

"There is no cure for trauma. However, there is a need for victims to learn to care for themselves and move on."

Source: "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder," Dr. Y. de Andrade, lecture notes, April 28, 1995.

Emotional Considerations

Post Traumatic Stress

Those who have been victims of war, violence, torture, or crime may suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Not everyone in a war environment, however, will experience stress in the same way, nor will they react the same way to the same experiences. Some may be able to deal with their experiences and move on with their lives. Others may no longer be able to deal with their lives in meaningful ways because the horror of their experiences is too much to bear. Most adults and children fall somewhere in the middle, exhibiting post traumatic stress in a variety of ways and at different times in their lives.

Trauma

The role of the educator does not include the provision of therapy; however, school staff will likely need to deal with some of the behaviours and associated feelings related to trauma and PTSD in students. Understanding and patience could be tested to the highest degree.

Trauma may lie hidden or may manifest in seemingly unrelated behaviours. These behaviours may be emotional, cognitive, physical and/or interpersonal. There may be delayed onset of the symptoms of trauma and grief, which may occur in response to unrelated stressful situations or reminders of traumatic events. It may be months, or even years, before symptoms occur.

Traumatic experiences may also have an indirect effect on other immigrant and refugee children, children whose relatives have been or are refugees, children with relatives unable to leave war-torn regions, school staff, or other students in the school.

Recognizing when to refer children or youth for additional services is critical. If you are concerned about a student, connect with your school counsellor or school-based team regarding school and district services that are available to help students who have experienced trauma. These may include the services of a school psychologist or mental health clinician. Refer to page 28 for a list of resources, including immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies that provide trauma support for refugees.

Associated Behaviours

The following are possible behaviours manifested by refugee children and youth who have experienced trauma:

- difficulty in concentrating and completing tasks
- tiredness because of lack of sleep
- avoidance of particular activities and situations
- physical ailments, such as headaches, vomiting or stomach aches
- irritability or hyper-alertness
- impaired memory
- exaggerated startle responses
- preoccupation with violent events (conversations, drawings)
- unrealistic worries about possible harm to self and others
- excessive distress upon separation or when anticipating separation from parent
- recollection of traumatic events

Students who manifest the above behaviours may be experiencing

- violent nightmares or flashbacks
- disturbing memories
- feelings of being in danger
- feelings of betrayal
- anger
- denial
- pervasive or generalized anxiety

Source: “PTSD in Children and Adolescents” and “Survivors of Natural Disasters and Mass Violence,” National Center for PTSD, August 11, 2009.

Triggers

For children and youth from refugee backgrounds in particular, occurrences in their new school-based environment may remind them of negative experiences in their homeland or of leaving their homeland and may have detrimental effects. The following are some of these school-based triggers:

- dark hallways
- uniformed policeman coming to or being in school
- sound of boot-like footsteps
- harsh language
- bells
- earthquake drills or any evacuation procedures
- groups of children talking loudly
- situations that may seem out of control, like children “horsing around”
- other children staring at them
- not understanding English, or some of the other languages children speak outside the classroom
- body language that may be misinterpreted
- unfamiliar festivals and celebrations, such as Halloween with masks or firecrackers

Source: Dr. Y. de Andrade, personal communication, July 26, 1999.

Buffers

One way to counteract or avoid an unwanted trigger experience is to create predictive experiences, or buffers:

- following a schedule
- classroom routines
- knowing that dismissal bells go off at the same times every day
- providing a sense of community
- minimizing changes in courses and teachers
- cooperative learning, facilitating peer connections
- learning through games

Source: Dr. Y. de Andrade, personal communication, July 26, 1999.

3. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Classroom

This section provides information for teachers working with children and youth from refugee backgrounds.

Understanding Diversity

Teachers, students, and families all bring their beliefs, expectations, and practices to the education process. When the process involves a student from another cultural background, it may be important to explore the student's cultural experiences, values and attitudes in order to effectively assess the student's learning needs.

Every culture is dynamic, with shared beliefs, values, and experiences among people from a given cultural group as well as widespread diversity within the group. This diversity prohibits generalized assumptions about individual beliefs and responses to specific circumstances. The degree of adaptation to a new life in Canada does not necessarily compare with the length of residence in the country, and integration in aspects of Canadian life does not imply a rejection of traditional ways.

Knowing some of the key characteristics in the traditional cultures among us may improve mutual understanding and ability to work effectively with students from different cultures.

"The most important thing for refugees is safety. They need a safety net. Canada, by definition, is a safety net."

Source: Dr. Y. de Andrade, personal communication, July 26, 1999.

To help understand the backgrounds of immigrant students, this website from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada has very useful information about almost every country in the world:

www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp.

A Warm and Welcoming Environment

Teachers have the opportunity to create a warm, friendly, and safe environment with an appropriate educational program and opportunities for interaction and understanding.

Setting the Stage for a Smooth Transition

A child's first impression of the learning environment is affected by the way they are welcomed and introduced to their new life. This can be a very vulnerable period for students. For example, this is a time when some adolescents and youth may be particularly susceptible to gang recruitment. Teachers can help by carefully monitoring students' social, emotional, and cognitive development.

A predictable routine and stability are very important for students who have experienced many challenges as refugees and are starting a new life in a new school environment, all the while dealing with the trials of growing up.

For the first few days at school, especially for those unaccustomed to the North American school setting, it may be difficult for some students to stay in school or one classroom for long periods of time. While keeping safety in mind, it may be necessary for flexibility in some students' daily timetables.

The Ministry of Education *ESL Standards* (2001) document provides information about preliterate learners who may have received very little formal schooling. This particular information can be found in Appendix E. The full document is available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/standards.pdf.

Learning Environment Checklist: Classroom

The following are considerations for introducing students to their classroom and educational program, offered as a checklist to help with planning. This is a continuation of the checklist for the school in Section 2 (see page 13). See also the complete Learning Environment Checklist in Appendix D (consider these in combination with tips for “Cross-Cultural Communication” on page 23):

Tips for Teachers

- ☐ become familiar with refugee background
- ☐ be aware of adjustments of children and youth
- ☐ speak slowly
- ☐ pay attention to non-verbal cues
- ☐ become aware of the cultural background
- ☐ be aware of cultural differences in mannerisms and responses, e.g., eye contact
- ☐ consider different cultural norms associated with gender
- ☐ contact settlement worker for support

Instruction

- ☐ assess educational background – essential for placement
- ☐ assess need for pre-literacy and pre-numeracy instruction
- ☐ assess need for language assistance
- ☐ determine any learning disabilities
- ☐ use age-appropriate resources
- ☐ use direct, explicit instruction
- ☐ offer a variety of activities to start
- ☐ use visual aids
- ☐ use repetition, or find opportunities for multiple exposures to information, if needed

Awareness of Cultural Differences

It is important to be aware of cultural differences that can arise in the school and in classrooms. The following chart presents some North American education practices, behaviours, and expectations that may differ from other cultural norms. Students from other cultures may need assistance with understanding and adapting to the new customs.

| North American | Some Other Possibilities |
|--|--|
| Praise is overt. | Praise is embarrassing. |
| Eye contact is expected. | Eye contact may be seen as rude. |
| Physical contact is usual, especially with younger children. | Physical contact is taboo, especially between genders. |
| A polite or acceptable physical distance between people is 40-70 cm. | Physical distance is either much closer or much further apart. |
| Silence is never prolonged; an instant answer is expected. | Silence is comfortable and can imply thought. |
| Most feelings may be displayed but not necessarily acted upon. | Feelings must be hidden, or, in other cases, displayed with gusto. |
| Some personal topics can be discussed openly. | Taboo topics are highly variable and culturally defined. |
| Punctuality is prized. | Time is flexible. |
| Relative status is not emphasized. | Status is very important. |
| Roles are loosely defined. | Role expectations are strict. |
| Competition is desirable. | Group harmony is desired. |
| Politeness is routine; lapses occur and are forgiven. Thank you is enough. | Politeness and proper conduct are paramount, especially in children. |
| Education is for everyone. | Education is for males first. |
| Girls and boys are educated together. | Girls and boys are educated separately. |

Source: "Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Cross-Cultural Communication," British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, p. 12.

Cross-Cultural Communication

Newcomers are trying to adapt but may not yet share Canadian cultural values. We have to help them understand these values and provide an educational program that will meet students' needs. To do that, we may need to increase our understanding of their values. Our body language may confuse those who do not understand its meaning in the new cultural context, so it is necessary to be aware of reactions to body language and make adjustments accordingly.

The following are some tips to help facilitate communication:

Communication Tips

- Speak slowly.
- Speak clearly.
- Write down key information (points, details).
- Keep your vocabulary and sentences direct and simple.
- Avoid the use of metaphors, jargon or popular sayings.
- Allow time for a response.
- Acknowledge and support the student's efforts to communicate.
- Check for comprehension frequently.
- Repeat and paraphrase patiently.
- Link verbal and visual cues.
- Use visuals (diagrams, photographs, etc.) whenever possible.
- Use examples to illustrate your point.
- Avoid making assumptions about people and resist stereotyping.
- Make sessions short and concise since communicating across languages is demanding and tiring.
- Be patient.

Source: "Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Cross-Cultural Communication," British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 14-16.

Some Cautions

As noted earlier, children from refugee backgrounds often have experienced extremely traumatic or chaotic situations. Therefore, some typical school tasks may not be appropriate for them in the beginning stages of their adjustment:

Show and Tell

This activity may prove to be a painful reminder of what they no longer have.

Current Events Discussions

Current events are a part of daily work in many classrooms. However, it would be ill advised to ask students from refugee backgrounds to share their experiences in refugee camps, discuss their views of the war in their homeland, or comment on refugees in general. When students are prepared to discuss the more sensitive areas of their past, they will do so.

Detentions

Giving detentions may be an alien concept, both to the students and their parents. It may also be construed as a form of arrest. It is important to explain clearly to both students and parents (translators may be needed) the normal routine of consequences and expectations in Canadian schools.

Busy Work

Giving work to students that simply has them filling in worksheets is not recommended. All work should clearly relate to the subject area and language needs of the lesson.

Seating

Many refugees have little or no school experiences. They need to be placed next to a good role model and close to the teacher so these students can learn how to conduct themselves in schools and classrooms and so comprehension can be monitored.

Field Trips

Using the word “camp” in any school field trip may create apprehension and bring up a host of bad memories. An explanation needs to be provided about all field trips, especially “camps”.

Families may not understand the need for field trips, and it may be a challenge to have permission forms signed and returned to the school. An explanation about the value of field trips may be needed.

Cultural Views on Gender

There are different cultural views on gender. Some students from refugee backgrounds may not want to participate in activities that include both genders (e.g., physical education and group projects).

Clubs

There may be a misunderstanding with the word “club”. Parents’ understanding of the word may only apply to a night club. An explanation about school clubs such as “drama club” or “chess club” may be needed.

Providing Opportunities for Peer Interaction and Learning

Children and youth learn best by interacting with their peers and practising what they have learned. Classroom interaction also helps teachers ascertain the level of need of individual students. This is an area that will help teachers to discern how well the children and youth from refugee backgrounds are managing their adjustment to Canadian society, and can provide an opportunity for helping these children and youth begin to cope with their traumatic experiences.

Children and youth who are shy need to be encouraged to participate in the context of an accepting, safe learning environment, in which class members can confidently express themselves. Children and youth who are reluctant to interact with others need to be encouraged to work in situations where they have a significant role to play in the success of the group. It is through meaningful interactions that children and youth develop friendships.

Instructional Strategies that Facilitate Classroom Interaction

- Vary group size: pairs, triads, small groups, circle of knowledge.
- Use cooperative learning strategies: brainstorming, role playing, jigsaw, think-pair-share.
- Use questioning strategies.
- Provide opportunities to practise conflict resolution techniques.
- Focus on similarities among children and cultures; as children learn about the things they have in common with others, they develop a sense of belonging and overall comfort in the classroom.
- Communicate that school-wide rules and behavioural expectations apply to all children equally and equitably.
- Be explicit about classroom rules, and post them.

Sources: “The Multiple Intelligences Handbook,” B. Campbell, 1994, p. 50; “Educating Everybody’s Children,” R. Cole, 1995, pp. 24, 38, 65, 146, 149, 152; and “Teaching to Diversity,” M. Meyers, 1993, pp. 72-82.

Older Refugee Youth

Older youth who immigrate to Canada in their mid to late-teens or early adulthood with little or no English and limited formal or interrupted education and/or work experience in their home country may need help with the following issues:

- ambitious academic goals and aspirations as they arrive as well as the frustrations that may follow if these are not immediately achieved
- inability to meet BC graduation requirements within the expected time
- social isolation
- lack of knowledge about BC learning, vocational training, and recreational opportunities
- need or desire to enter the work force before they are able to acquire adequate BC education or orientation

- vulnerability in the labour market (e.g., with little opportunity to move beyond minimum wage employment)
- in some cases, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, negative outlook for the future or vulnerability to problematic behaviour, including violence, gang membership, criminal activities, and substance abuse

Possibilities to Consider for Older Students

- Encourage and support students to stay in school as long as possible.
- Connect students with adult education programs and clearly explain opportunities for school completion as an adult – see www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe.
- Provide time for students to complete all work in class, rather than assigning homework.
- Offer support blocks where necessary.
- Consider work experience programs as appropriate.
- Focus on literacy and work skills programs for those not able or not intending to graduate.
- Provide translated information where possible.
- Discover and nurture student interests.
- Display posters and signs reflective of the diversity of students.
- Offer interpreter-supported clubs, e.g., homework or computer.
- Recognize efforts or accomplishments, formally and informally.
- Encourage peer supports and buddy systems.

“Transitions almost always involve changes in locations, expectations, rules, services as well as peer groups, staff, jurisdiction, and/or lifestyle.”

Source:
“Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools,” BC Ministry of Education, 2001.

Grade to Grade Transitions

In addition to the challenging adjustments that immigrant students face, like all students, they will experience significant transition points throughout their education. Transitions from home or daycare to kindergarten, from class to class, school to school, from school district to school district, and from school to post-secondary or work situations are all time in which students may need support.

In establishing procedures for transition points, school district personnel should keep in mind that the transition process:

- is continuous
- should occur as part of a planned education program
- requires preparation, implementation of supportive strategies and evaluation
- benefits from awareness and use of support services by school teams

Transition planning involves individual transition plan development, follow-up with students, and long-range planning. It is essential that school districts and individual

schools establish procedures to support collaborative consultation in the transition into, within, and from the school system. Planning should involve school personnel, district staff, and representatives from community services, such as pre-schools and post-secondary institutions, professionals from other ministries, parents, and students.³

The Ministry of Education document *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools* offers information about transitions for students learning English (pages 43 to 51) at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf.

Community Connections

Making these community connections can be of great benefit to students, their families, and the school.

Many communities have immigrant-serving agencies that offer various supports for immigrant and refugee families (for a complete list refer to www.amssa.org). Making these community connections can be of great benefit to students, their families, and the school. Your school or school district may already be closely associated with these organizations or may be involved in special projects to promote the settlement and immigration of families new to Canada.

The following are examples of services offered by immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations:

- out of school transition programs for youth
- programs for youth at risk
- pilot projects and initiatives to promote welcoming communities
- early childhood development programs for young siblings of school-aged immigrants
- youth buddy programs

³ Source: “Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools,” British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001.

Resources

The following is a list of agencies, resources, and websites that provide information and assistance to students from refugee backgrounds. Please note that possible services for immigrants may be provided in your community by organizations not listed below, such as church groups or cultural centres. Information Services Vancouver – www.communityinfo.bc.ca/index.html – offers the *Red Book* containing a list of agencies in the lower mainland that may be able to support schools.

WelcomeBC

WelcomeBC is the Province of British Columbia's main website for immigration and settlement, and includes helpful information for immigrants, service providers, and those wishing to find out more about immigration and settlement in the province.

www.welcomebc.ca/en/index.html

Services in the Greater Vancouver Region

Health

- **Bridge Community Health Clinic**

Located in Vancouver, this health clinic provides primary health care services for refugees with or without legal status and within their first three to five years in Canada.

www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/community_health.pdf

Telephone: (604) 709-6540

- **Health Regional Offices**

This website provides contact information for all of British Columbia's health authorities:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/contacts.html

- **New Canadian Clinic**

Located in Burnaby and Surrey, these clinics provide health care services for newcomers to Canada who have difficulties accessing the regular medical system. A referral is required from health or social service providers. These are not walk-in clinics; service is by appointment only.

Burnaby – Telephone: (604) 412-6580

Surrey – Telephone: (604) 953-5030

Refugee Claimants

Many settlement service organizations provide a variety of services for refugee claimants in Metro Vancouver and in British Columbia. For details please check with settlement organizations in your community.

- **First Contact – Canadian Red Cross, BC Lower Mainland Region**

First Contact provides refugee claimants with one place to access assistance, on arrival, through a 24/7 multilingual information and referral phone line and an accompaniment service.

Multilingual Assistance includes:

- accurate, timely information
- referral to immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies; legal, paralegal and health services; housing; and other settlement services such as English classes and employment services
- accompaniment to appointments

www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=27715&tid=078

Telephone: (604) 787-8858 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-866-771-8858 Toll free outside Vancouver area.

- **Legal Services Society of British Columbia**

The Legal Services Society provides a guide explaining the process of requesting refugee protection in Canada. Called *Your Guide to the Refugee Claim Process*, this handbook includes information on starting a claim in BC, filling out the required forms for the process, and getting legal help. An overview of the refugee claim process found in this guide is provided in Appendix B. The complete guide can be found at:

www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=286

- **Vancouver Refugee Services Alliance**

An alliance of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies formed to provide a continuum of services for refugee claimants:

www.vrsa.ca

Schools

- **Settlement Workers in Schools**

Many school districts in British Columbia employ settlement workers in schools to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant students and their families. These specialists can be of great assistance to families and school staff, helping to ease the transition of newcomers to school:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.html

Contact numbers for school district Settlement Workers in Schools programs are included on this link from the WelcomeBC website:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_agencies.html

- **Student Support Services**

Find out from the school district counselling or student services department who the team members are and be prepared to work with them. These may include critical incidence response teams or trauma support teams.

Settlement

- **Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)**

An affiliation of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies throughout British Columbia, their website provides a complete listing of all associated refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia communities:

www.amssa.org

Telephone: (604) 718-2780 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-888-355-5560 outside Vancouver area

- **Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services**

Along with a wealth of useful information for newcomers to BC, the *British Columbia Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services* includes a listing of all the immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia. This information is found on pages 15 to 20:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/publications_and_reports/publications/newcomers_guide.html

- **Settlement Workers in Communities**

Throughout BC are immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies that employ settlement workers to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant families. Many of these community agencies have relationships with schools and can provide information to families in schools where settlement workers are not on staff. They can also be of assistance to families outside of school. Links to the community agencies can be found at:

www.amssa.org

Trauma Support

- **DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society**

Located in Surrey, this agency offers a wide range of services and programs to immigrant and refugee communities, including grief and trauma counselling:

www.dcrs.ca/index.php

Telephone: (604) 597-0205

- **Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC**

With offices in Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Richmond, Surrey, and Vancouver, this multicultural immigrant-serving agency provides a variety of services to Lower Mainland immigrant and refugee communities. These services include trauma support services for government-assisted refugees and refugee claimants residing in Vancouver and Burnaby. ISS of BC is also the contracted service provider for all immediate support services, including first language services and housing, for all Government-Assisted Refugees destined to British Columbia:

www.issbc.org

www.issbc.org/refugeeservices

Telephone: (604) 684-7498

- **Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture**

This organization provides support services for and promotes the well-being of people who have survived torture and violence:

www.vast-vancouver.ca

Phone: (604) 299-3539

Services Outside Greater Vancouver

- **Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)**

An affiliation of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies throughout British Columbia, their website provides a complete listing of all associated refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia communities:

www.amssa.org

Telephone: (604) 718-2780 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-888-355-5560 outside Vancouver area

- **Health Regional Offices**

This website provides contact information for all of British Columbia's health authorities:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/contacts.html

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www.amssa.org

- **Settlement Workers in Schools**

Many school districts in British Columbia employ settlement workers in schools to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant students and their families. These specialists can be of great assistance to families and school staff, helping to ease the transition of newcomers to school:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.html

Contact numbers for school district Settlement Workers in Schools programs are included on this link from the WelcomeBC website:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_agencies.html

- **Student Support Services**

Find out from the school district counselling or student services department who the team members are and be prepared to work with them. These may include critical incidence response teams or trauma support teams.

- **Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture**

In Victoria, a coalition of agencies and individuals responding to the needs of survivors of torture:

www.vcst.ca

General Information

International

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

The federal government department responsible for immigration, their website provides links to a wealth of information about immigrating to Canada:

www.cic.gc.ca

Telephone: 1-888-242-2100 (in Canada only)

Deaf and hearing-impaired: 1-888-576-8502 (in Canada only) 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. your local time

- **Country Information from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada**

The Centre for Intercultural Learning in Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada offers useful information about almost every country in the world:

www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp

- **International Organization for Migration**

An inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and working with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners:

www.iom.int

- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Since 1950, this office has been mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide, and to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. The website provides detailed information about refugees throughout the world:

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

National

- **Canadian Council for Refugees**

An umbrella organization for refugees and immigrants focused on the rights and protection of refugees and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada:

www.ccrweb.ca

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Refugees**

The federal government department responsible for immigration provides detailed information about refugee settlement in Canada, found on this website:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/help.asp

- **Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada**

The independent administrative tribunal that makes decisions on immigration and refugee matters. Details can be found at:

www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/ENG/Pages/index.aspx

- **Immigration and Refugee Protection Act**

The federal legislation regarding immigration and the protection of refugees in Canada:

www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5

- **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)**

This national humanitarian program provides funding to agencies to support Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) in their first year in Canada. The program also provides income support to GARs in their first year in Canada. Information about Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program can be found at:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-assist.asp

Provincial

- **Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services**

The Province of British Columbia provides a guide for newcomers that includes comprehensive information to help newcomers settle in BC in the first few months after they arrive:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/publications_and_reports/publications/newcomers_guide.html

- **Statistics from British Columbia**

Specific data and information about refugee immigrants to British Columbia is available through the WelcomeBC website at:

www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/communities/fact-refugees.pdf

- **WelcomeBC**

WelcomeBC is the Province of British Columbia's main website for immigration and settlement, and includes helpful information for immigrants, service providers, and those wishing to find out more about immigration and settlement in BC.

www.welcomebc.ca/en/index.html

Municipal

You may find helpful information in your local town or city, accessible at community centres, public libraries or on municipal government websites.

For example, Vancouver offers a *Newcomer's Guide to the City of Vancouver* in five languages at:

www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver

- **Union of British Columbia Municipalities**

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities provides links to the web pages of local governments in BC through:

www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/about/ubcm-members.html

Education Resources (Kindergarten to Grade 12)

- **Career/Life Transitions**

The Ministry of Education document *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools* offers information about transitions for English language learners (pages 43 to 51):

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf

- **Diversity**

This Ministry of Education document provides a framework to assist the school system in its ongoing efforts to create and maintain learning and working environments that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities it serves:

Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf

Website:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity

- **English as a Second Language**

The following Ministry of Education documents pertain to policy and guidelines for English as a Second Language programs in British Columbia's public schools:

English as a Second Language Policy and Guidelines

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/policy/guidelines.pdf

English as a Second Language Standards

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/standards.pdf

English as a Second Language Learners: A Guide for Classroom Teachers

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/policy/classroom.pdf

English as a Second Language Learners: A Guide for ESL Specialists

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/policy/special.pdf

Website:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl

- **Safe Schools**

The Ministry of Education's *Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide* provides provincial standards for codes of conduct and identifies attributes of and outlines strategies for safe, caring, and orderly schools. The guide was developed to support boards of education and schools as they strive to make the schools of our province as safe, caring, and orderly as possible:

Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/guide/scoguide.pdf

Website:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/

- **Special Education**

This Ministry of Education document provides policies, procedures, and guidelines that support the delivery of special education services in British Columbia's public schools:

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

Website:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed

Child and Youth Mental Health Publications

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides a number of guides and information sheets about mental health issues for children and adolescents. These publications, along with information about programs and services, are available at:

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/publications.htm

Website:

www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health

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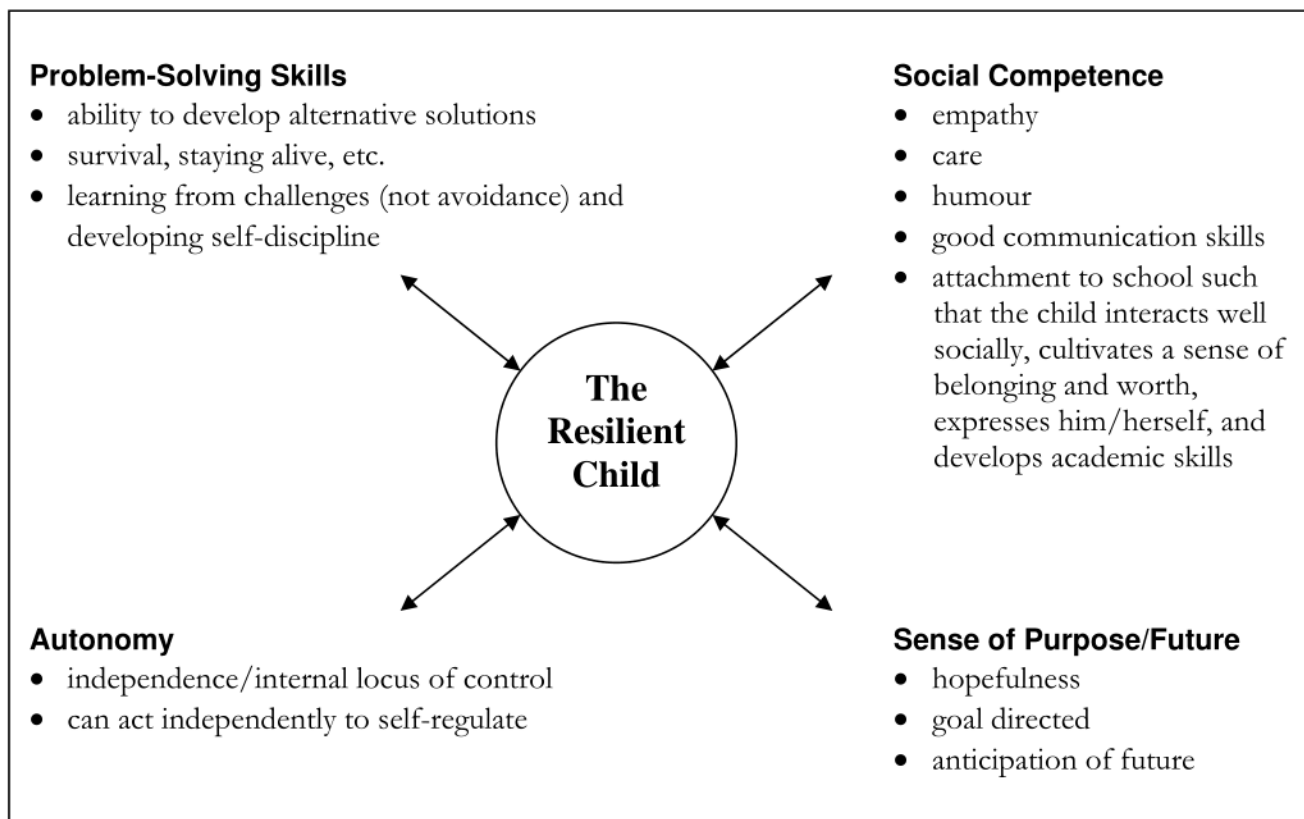
Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Education would like to acknowledge all who have participated in the development of *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools*.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
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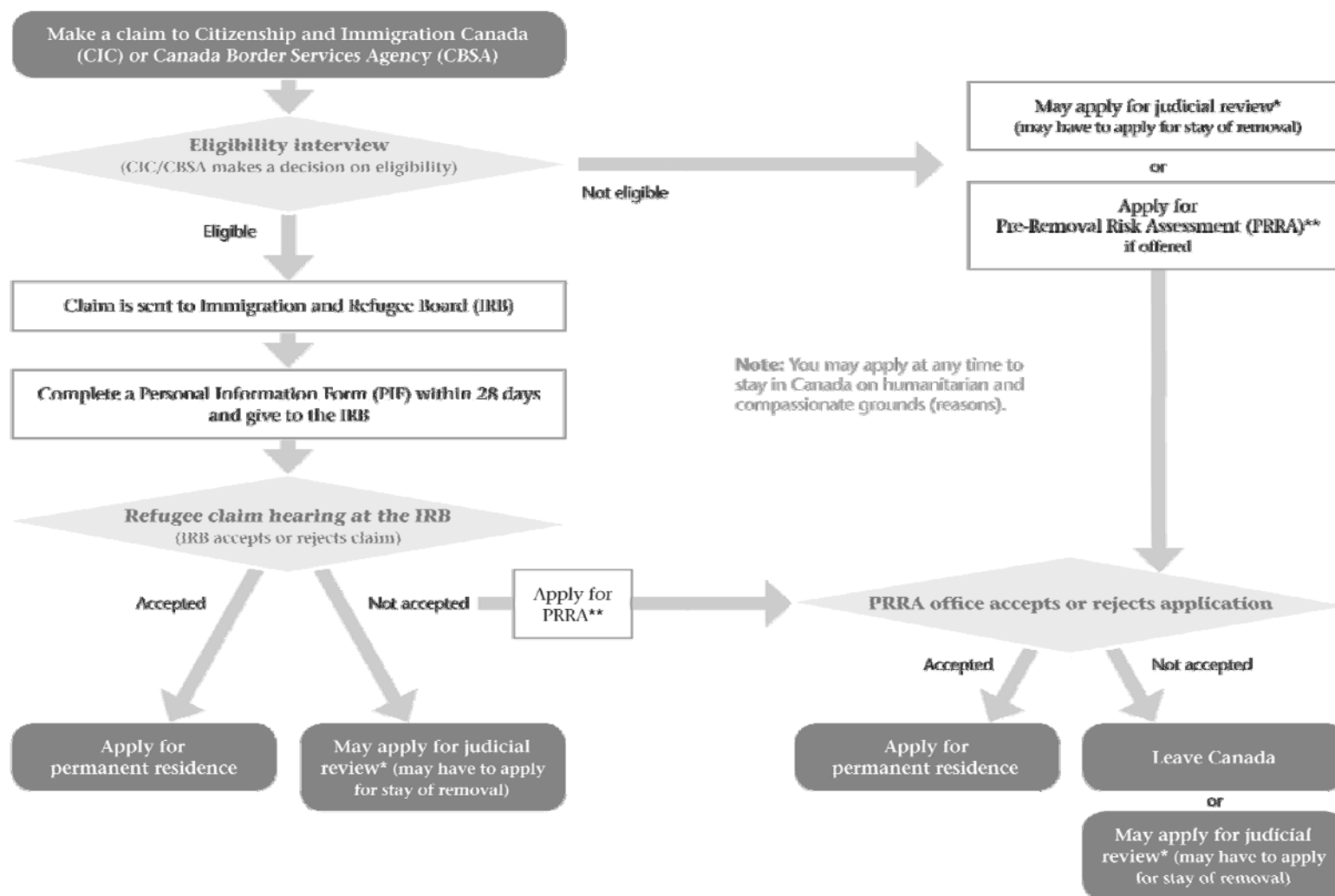
Appendix A – Profile of a Resilient Child

Resilience is fostered by protective factors: the personal attributes and social supports that shape and affect a person's ability to trust, grow, and learn. Young people develop a world view and positive habits and attitudes in response to family support, school attachment, and a sense of personal relevance and significance in the community.



Source: Adapted with permission from Dr. Y. de Andrade, lecture notes, 1999.

Appendix B – Overview of the Refugee Claim Process



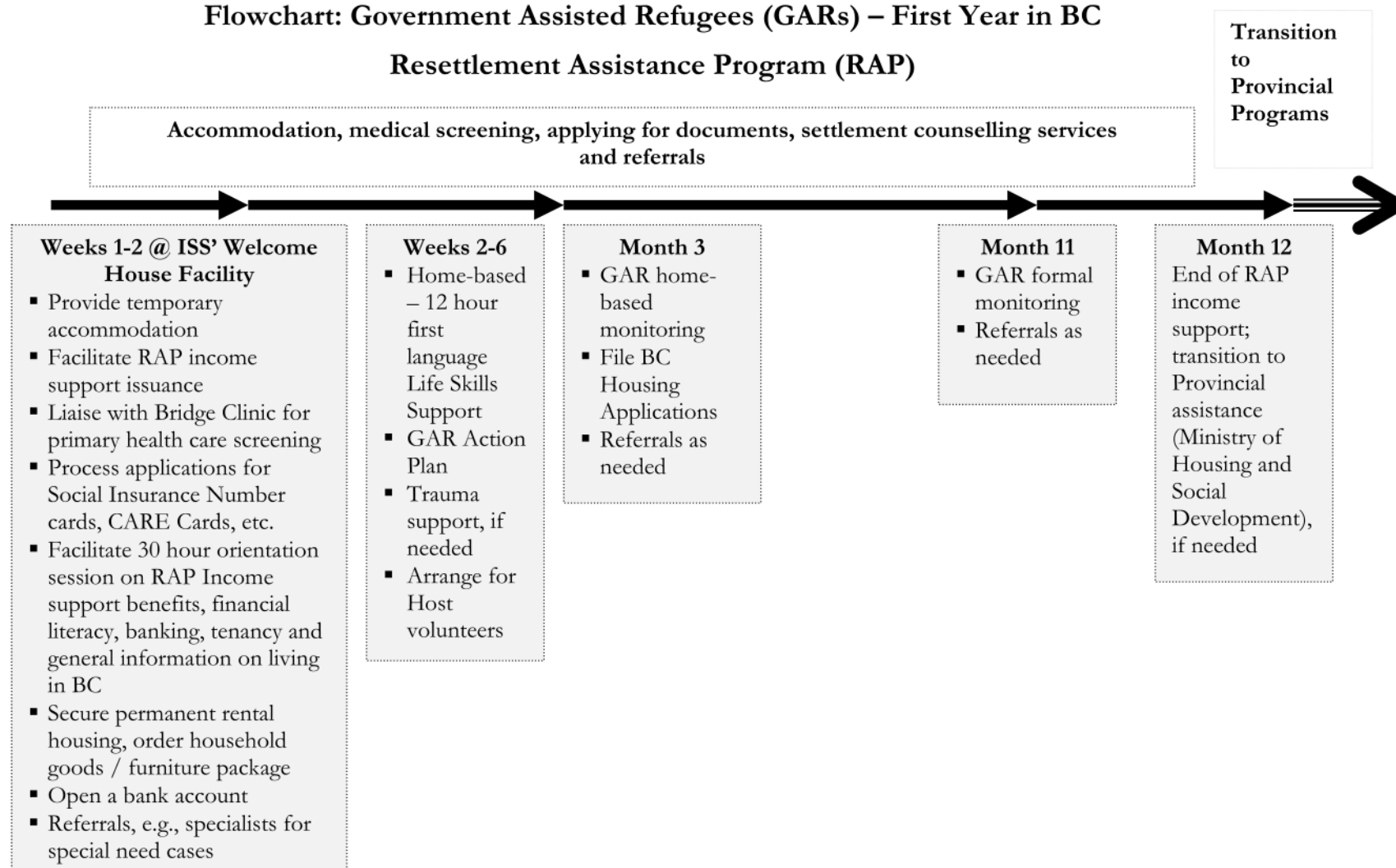
* Must apply to Federal Court of Canada within 15 days of receiving written decision.

** Must apply within 15 days of receiving PRRA application form.

Source: Used with permission from Legal Services Society of British Columbia.

Appendix C – Resettlement Assistance Program

Flowchart: Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) – First Year in BC Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)



Source: Used with permission from Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC.

Appendix D – Learning Environment Checklist

Social and School Adjustment

- ☐ program assignment/placement
- ☐ introduction to classroom teacher
- ☐ introduction to layout of the school and classroom
- ☐ assignment of mentor or buddy
- ☐ language assistance if needed
- ☐ consistent routine or schedule

Physical Needs

- ☐ school supplies
- ☐ textbooks/resource materials
- ☐ lunch/snack
- ☐ orientation to bell schedule
- ☐ access to a quiet area or place of refuge
- ☐ assessment of any medical needs, such as hearing and vision

Tips for Teachers

- ☐ become familiar with refugee background
- ☐ be aware of adjustments of children and youth
- ☐ speak slowly
- ☐ pay attention to non-verbal cues
- ☐ become aware of the cultural background
- ☐ be aware of cultural differences in mannerisms and responses, e.g., eye contact
- ☐ consider different cultural norms associated with gender
- ☐ contact settlement worker for support

Instruction

- ☐ assess educational background – essential for placement
- ☐ assess need for pre-literacy and pre-numeracy instruction
- ☐ assess need for language assistance
- ☐ determine any learning disabilities
- ☐ use age-appropriate resources
- ☐ use direct, explicit instruction
- ☐ offer a variety of activities to start
- ☐ use visual aids
- ☐ use repetition, or find opportunities for multiple exposures to information, if needed

Appendix E – Preliterate Learners

At any grade level (Primary, Intermediate, or Secondary), there may be new students who can be characterized as preliterate learners. The age and level of developmental maturity of these students make them part of a particular school population (whether Primary, Intermediate, or Secondary), but they will have received limited formal schooling or pre-schooling. These students are generally recent arrivals to Canada, whose backgrounds differ significantly from the school environment they are entering. Some may have received schooling that was interrupted for various reasons, including war, poverty, or migration. Some may come from a remote rural setting with little prior opportunity for sequential schooling.

Preliterate students may have:

- little or no experience with print
- semi-literacy in native language
- minimal understanding of the function of literacy
- limited awareness of school organization or culture
- performance significantly below grade level
- insufficient English to attempt tasks.

Although many such students are at the beginning level of oral proficiency in English, some may have more developed proficiency levels. Yet, even the standards for Level 1 (on the Primary, Intermediate, or Secondary matrices – see the full document at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/standards.pdf) may not yield a helpful description of their level of performance. These students typically require some intensive, customized support (including cultural bridging experiences) before they can gain from participation in “mainstream” classes. Although not fully skilled in the academic domain, these students possess valuable life skills that can serve as a basis for academic learning.

In terms of language skills, the preliterate student may:

- use pictures to express ideas (meaning)
- be able to copy letters, words, and phrases (style)
- begin to write strings of words (style)
- show little awareness of spelling, capitalization, or punctuation (convention)
- use single words (convention).

Source: “ESL Standards,” British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, page 10.

Ministry of Education

**REFUGEE READINESS AND
RESPONSE
Working Group**

Terms of Reference

November 2016

1. Background

The newly elected federal government has committed to bringing in 25,000 Syrian refugees by December 31, 2015. It is expected that approximately 3,000 of those will be destined for BC. The Canadian federal government has committed to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of 2015. Of the 25,000, up to 3,000 are anticipated to come to British Columbia. About 810 of the 3,000 (27 per cent) will be of school age and will mostly reside in Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminster and Vancouver through government assistance.

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC) has advised government on November 16th that refugee families will begin to arrive in BC on Dec. 1 and should all be in the province by Dec. 25. The refugee families have overcome great obstacles and adversity. They bring with them strengths, abilities and qualities to share as they settle into their new home.

Most Syrians have attended at least primary school and have basic literacy in Arabic. According to World Bank, 72% of Syrians of secondary school age were enrolled in school before the uprising. Prior to conflict, Syria had a government goal of free public education and post-secondary education was highly subsidized to meet country's development goals

High rates of primary school attendance for both boys and girls however, attendance in rural areas remained below national average and dropout rates high at secondary level especially among girls. According to UNICEF, in 2013, many schools severely damaged or were used for armed groups or shelter and school attendance down to 6% in some places

2. Scope

Lead and coordinated by the Ministry, the scope of the Working Group's activities is to proactively share information and work with ministry staff and external stakeholders like the Metro Vancouver Superintendents to collaboratively respond to the resettlement of refugees from Syria to BC. This includes looking at the alignment of existing services and ensuring non-duplication across the ministry and with our education partners. This will ensure that both Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and privately sponsored refugee families have a smooth transition to their new home and new school.

The objectives and scope of the Refugee Readiness and Response Working Group is to:

- ensure a holistic and coordinated approach in preparation to enroll and students in the public school system,
- ensure there is an effective process and system to communicate information from the federal government, premiers office of BC and Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSBC) about arrival dates and settlement locations, number of families with students expected to enroll in K-12
- gather information about current processes and supports available in the Metro Vancouver area, where refugees are expected to settle
- working with the school districts to identify gaps in services or identify issues that require resolution
- establish an sector-based implementation plan to accept refugee students

3. Responsibilities of the Working Group

The function of the Working Group is to proactively provide subject matter expertise, and oversight. The group will also function as a key recommendation body to help ensure the successful settlement and enrolment of refugee students to communities in BC. The working group will provide recommendations to the ADM of Partner Relations and the Deputy Minister of Education in the areas of:

- A. Information Sharing** — Based on federal information and ISSBC with regard to the numbers of refugees expected, resettlement timelines and geographic locations. The Working Group will share information on partnerships to ensure non-duplication of services while sharing questions raised by their stakeholders to ensure coordinated responses.
- B. Program and policy alignment** –Share details of the Refugee Readiness Fund, eligible federal settlement services and provincial 1701 funding procedures.
- C. Community capacity assessment** – External facing Working Group members will provide input into capacity assessment of district resources to support the settlement and integration of refugees from Syria for both Metro Vancouver and throughout the province.
- D. Gap identification and analysis** – Where gaps emerge, members will discuss options, provide analysis on impacts and determine integrated approach to enrollment and integration.
- E. Implementation** – Provide governance for the implementation of the recommended federal or cross-ministry strategies.

4. Term

The working group shall remain in operation until the substantial completion of the enrollment and settlement of refugee students is complete. This is expected to be a three month term.

5. Critical Success Factors

- The working group shall be considered a success if there is a demonstrated and cohesive approach to enrollment of students across the sector and with other Ministry service and supports
- The working group can identify gaps and issues with recommended solutions with lead time to mitigate

6. Meeting Frequency

The working group will be chaired by the ADM or designate (Director, Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs). The working group will meet weekly in person and/or by conference call. Ad hoc meetings may be called at the decision of the chair. Sub-committees may be formed with other representatives of the member organizations as determined by the Working Group.

7. Composition and Operations

The Working Group shall comprise representatives from each education branch and from School Districts.

Initially, our working group will be comprised of Ministry representatives including:

- Chair
 - Ramona Soares – ADM
 - Alternate - Erin Kelly – Director (liaison with School Districts and ISSBC)
- Partner and Intergovernmental Affairs
 - Kevena Bamford – Executive Director
- Learning Division – Nell Ross
- Knowledge Management and Accountability Division – Brian Jonker
- Planning and Major Projects – Renee Mounteney
- Resource Management – Rebekah John
- Services and Technology – Emilie Hillier
- GCPE – Craig Sorochoan
- JTST – TBD

Partners

Education partners will also be engaged and include:

- ISSBC Education Representative - TBC
- Surrey School District – Jordan Tinney (lead)
- Coquitlam School District- TBC
- Burnaby School District – TBC
- New Westminster School District - TBC
- Vancouver School District - TBC

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

DATE: November 25, 2015
CLIFF: 185067

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Mike Bernier, Minister, for **Information**

SUBJECT: Syrian Refugees Immigrating to School District 43, SD 43 Pension Solvency; Burke Mountain Schools

DISCUSSION:

Syrian Refugees

School District 43 is expecting a number of Syrian refugee students to enroll in their district after the September 30 count.

Refugees and Funding

The Ministry provides funding in the K-12 system for refugee students, as it does for any student enrolled in September. The Ministry will count students in February for refugee students enrolled after September and will provide districts with the basic funding allocation for refugee students, as well as supplemental funding for English and French Language Learning supports for those who are eligible

According to Ministry of Education policy, school-age students who are refugees and enroll in a British Columbia public school for the first time after September 30 and by the February enrolment date are eligible for 50 per cent of the Basic Allocation. For comparison, in 2014/15, an additional \$258,000 was provided for 63 refugee students who enrolled mid-year.

A student who has made a claim for refugee status in Canada and whose claim has not yet been determined is eligible for operating grant funding. Districts will also provide supplemental funding for English Language Learning (ELL) supports.

Adults are not eligible for February newcomer refugee funding.

Refugees and Mental Health Issues

The Ministry of Education is committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of all British Columbia's children and youth. The Ministry of Education plays a role in the areas of mental health promotion, prevention and intervention and is committed to working with school district, education partners and child/youth servicing social service agencies like Ministry of Children and Family Development to improve cross sector information sharing practices and to increase access and services for students with mental health issues.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION BRIEFING NOTE

Refugees and Students with Special Needs

Eligible students enrolled after the September 30th are counted in the February count and the district receives 50 per cent additional funding for students with special needs. In each of Levels 1, 2 and 3, enrolment is greater in February than it was the previous September, 50 per cent of the supplemental special needs per FTE funding amount is provided.

Pension Solvency

The District is proceeding with its attempts to satisfy the Financial Institutions Commission funding requirements for their defined benefit pension plan for non-teaching staff. At November 23, 2015, SD43 held approximately \$55 million in cash in the Central Deposit Program and continues to claim that their cash is 'encumbered' due to offsetting liabilities.

EDUC has reviewed legislation with legal counsel to determine if the Minister of Education could provide approval to the district to pledge real estate to secure the line of credit. This was not recommended due to the precedent that would be set in the K-12 and Advanced Education sectors. The ultimate solution to the solvency funding issue is not known at this time. See attached appendix for more information.

Burke Mountain Schools

In the last 10 years, elementary student enrolment has risen almost 20% in the Burke Mountain area of Northeast Coquitlam. Currently, there is no elementary school located on Burke Mountain and nearby elementary schools (Leigh, Irvine, and Coquitlam River) provide space for students who live in the Burke Mountain neighborhood.

The Ministry has included Smiling Creek Elementary and Burke Mountain Secondary in its' 10-Year Capital Plan. The Ministry received Treasury Board approval on November 20, 2015 for the requested capital funding to construct a new elementary school on the site jointly acquired by the Coquitlam Board of Education and City of Coquitlam in April 2015. See attached appendix for more information.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BRIEFING NOTE**

CONCLUSION:

APPENDIX 1: Briefing Note 183289 with Map of Coquitlam and local area map

APPENDIX 2: Briefing Note 185104

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <u>Contact Information</u> | | Approved | Approved |
| Partner Relations Department Phone #250-812-5297 Department File | ADM initial | Dave Byng Deputy Minister | Honourable Mike Bernier Minister |
| | | Date signed: | Date signed: |

| APPROVALS | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Contact Info | | Comments | Date |
| Drafted by: | <i>Michele Irvine</i> | | November 25, 2015 |
| In Consultation with: | Learning Division, Resource Management Division and Planning and Major Projects Division | | |
| Manager and/or Director | <i>Kevena Bamford</i> | Content good. Not approved until confirmation that program ADMs have given their approval. | November 25, 2015 |
| ADM | | | |
| MCO | | | |
| DM | | | |
| MO | | | |

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

Trauma-informed practice means integrating an understanding of past and current experiences of violence and trauma into all aspects of service delivery. The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing.

Trauma Awareness

Trauma awareness is the foundation for trauma informed practice. Being 'trauma aware' means that individuals understand the high prevalence of trauma in society, the wide range of responses, effects and adaptations that people make to cope with trauma, and how this may influence service delivery (e.g., difficulty building relationships, missing appointments).

Safety and Trustworthiness

Physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural safety are important to trauma-informed practice. Safety is a necessary first step for building strong and trustworthy relationships and service engagement and healing. Developing safety within trauma-informed services requires an awareness of secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma, and self-care for all staff in an organization.

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

Trauma informed services encourage opportunities for working collaboratively with children, youth and families. They emphasize creating opportunities for choice and connection within the parameters of services provided. This experience of choice, collaboration, and connection often involves inviting involvement in evaluating the services, and forming service user advisory councils that provide advice on service design as well as service users' rights and grievances.

Strengths Based and Skill Building

Promoting resiliency and coping skills can help individuals manage triggers related to past experiences of trauma and support healing and self-advocacy. A strengths-based approach to service delivery recognizes the abilities and resilience of trauma survivors, fosters empowerment, and supports an organizational culture of 'emotional learning' and 'social learning.'

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

EARLY YEARS SERVICES

Getting Started: Trauma-Informed Principles ‘In Action’

The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing. The following discussion questions are intended for small groups to consider and reflect on their work and to ask “What are we doing well? What else can we be doing?”

Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects?
2. What kind of information about trauma is available to the families you work with?
3. Are there staff or programs within your service area that may be able to provide trauma-specific services if a child, parent or caregiver asks for additional support with healing from trauma?
4. Are there community Elders/traditional knowledge keepers that can speak to resilience and healing in Aboriginal communities?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. What is the first point of contact with your program for the families you work with, e.g., phone message, outreach worker, receptionist? What strategies for creating a welcoming and safe environment already exist?
2. Take a walk through the waiting areas, the reception area, group spaces, and interview rooms at your organization. Do they increase feelings of safety for both service users and staff?
3. What steps have been taken that reflect a holistic and engaged process to support cultural safety?

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. When working with families, do you encourage open communication? Provide choices in care and support whenever possible?
2. How are mistakes or uncertainties handled in your program or organization? Are they viewed as opportunities for learning?
3. How do you support inclusion and family, children, and community voice?
4. What are some of your strengths in working with people, e.g., friendly, creative, and how do you use them to build relationships with others?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. To what extent are you aware of and using ‘person-first’ language, e.g., “children with special needs”?
2. How is education and support related to vicarious or secondary trauma provided within your organization?
3. How do children and families in your organization influence program delivery? Are there opportunities for peer support, participation in program planning, participatory evaluation methods?

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects?
2. Are direct service staff able to provide information to caregivers about behavioral effects of trauma for children with different special needs?
3. How does the Aboriginal family and community define a child with special needs? What are the beliefs and values about disability/ability?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. What is the first point of contact with your program for the families you work with, e.g., phone message, outreach worker, receptionist? What strategies for creating a welcoming and safe environment already exist?
2. Take a walk through the waiting areas, the reception area, group spaces, and interview rooms at your organization. Do they increase feelings of safety for both service users and staff?
3. What steps have been taken that reflect a holistic and engaged process to support cultural safety?

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. When working with families, do you encourage open communication? Provide choices in care and support whenever possible?
2. When engaging with children with special needs, do you consider strategies for minimizing anxiety and building relationships (e.g., slowing down speech, using visuals, and presenting one idea at a time)?
3. While participating in your program, what opportunities are there for families to provide feedback?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. To what extent are you aware of and using 'person-first' language, e.g., "children with special needs"?
2. How is education and support related to vicarious or secondary trauma provided within your organization?
3. Are there opportunities within your particular program to teach coping and self-regulation skills specific to children with special needs (e.g., focus on increasing self-soothing rather than enhancing insight)?

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Getting Started: Trauma-Informed Principles ‘In Action’

The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing. The following discussion questions are intended for small groups to consider and reflect on their work and to ask “What are we doing well? What else can we be doing?”

Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects?
2. Do staff in specific program areas understand how trauma may intersect and affect diagnosis, symptomatology and recovery from other mental health issues?
3. Are there staff or programs within your service area that may be able to provide trauma-specific services (e.g., EMDR) if a child, parent or caregiver asks for additional support with healing from trauma?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. What is the first point of contact with your program for the families you work with, e.g., phone message, outreach worker, receptionist? What strategies for creating a welcoming and safe environment already exist?
2. Take a walk through the waiting areas, the reception area, group spaces, and interview rooms at your organization. Do they increase feelings of safety for both service users and staff?
3. What steps have been taken that reflect a holistic and engaged process to support cultural safety?

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. When working with families, do you encourage open communication? Provide choices in care and support whenever possible?
2. While participating in your program, what opportunities are there for families to provide feedback, ask questions, or express their concerns? How is this feedback responded to and by whom?
3. What opportunities are there in your organization for staff to provide feedback, ask questions or express their concerns?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. To what extent are you aware of and using ‘person-first’ language, e.g., “children with special needs”?
2. How is education and support related to vicarious or secondary trauma provided within your organization?
3. Can your program shift away from an emphasis on client deficits to strengths? Do you ask about people’s interests, goals, coping skills, community connections, survival strategies, spirituality, etc?

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

CHILD SAFETY, FAMILY SUPPORT & CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICES

Getting Started: Trauma-Informed Principles ‘In Action’

The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing. The following discussion questions are intended for small groups to consider and reflect on their work and to ask “What are we doing well? What else can we be doing?”

Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects?
2. Are you able to recognize the effects of intergenerational and childhood trauma in the families you work with?
3. What kind of information about trauma is available to the families you work with? Is it accessible, up-to-date, tailored to the population you work with (e.g., age, language, culture)? Can you offer self-help resources for supporting healing from trauma?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. What triggers might there be for your clients while interacting with your service? How do the effects of trauma influence their ability to engage with your service (e.g., attend appointments, ask questions, respond appropriately to decisions)?
2. Physical, cultural, and emotional safety for both service users and staff should be considered together. For example, what are your program’s policies about lights and locks? What might be comfortable and safe for one person might feel restrictive or triggering for another.

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. How do you promote partnerships in decision making? What does reciprocity mean in terms of sharing the collective responsibility?
2. When working with families, do you allow them the freedom to express their feelings without judging or censoring? Can there be flexibility in the structure of meetings and appointments – available times, length, or style?
3. How are mistakes or uncertainties handled in your program or organization? Are they viewed as opportunities for learning?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. Are there opportunities to help children, youth, and caregivers develop coping skills? Are you comfortable creating safety plans where there might be concerns about grief and suicide risk?
2. Are you able to provide information to caregivers about how separation, anxiety and fear, and adversity affect child behavior? Can you provide caregivers with suggestions for promoting self-regulation and coping with difficult circumstances? How can you support their self-care as well as your own?

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

ADOPTION SERVICES

Getting Started: Trauma-Informed Principles ‘In Action’

The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing. The following discussion questions are intended for small groups to consider and reflect on their work and to ask “What are we doing well? What else can we be doing?”

Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects?
2. What kind of information about trauma is available to the families you work with? Is it accessible, up-to-date, tailored to the population you work with (e.g., age, language, culture)?
3. Are there opportunities within your particular service area to share information about trauma related to adoption? Strategies for fostering attachment?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. What is the first point of contact with your program for the families you work with, e.g., phone message, outreach worker, receptionist? What strategies for creating a welcoming and safe environment already exist?
2. Take a walk through the waiting areas, the reception area, group spaces, and interview rooms at your organization. Do they increase feelings of safety for both service users and staff?

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. What are you already doing to encourage collaboration with families, with other programs and organizations, and with other systems of care? What else could you be doing?
2. While participating in your program, what opportunities are there for families to provide feedback, ask questions, or express their concerns?
3. How are mistakes or uncertainties handled in your program or organization? Are they viewed as opportunities for learning?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. To what extent are you aware of and using ‘person-first’ language, e.g., “children with special needs”, “youth with substance use problems”, “fathers who have trauma histories”, etc? Are there ways to role model this type of language for others?
2. Do you ask about people’s interests, goals, coping skills, community connections, survival strategies, spirituality, etc.?

Trauma-Informed Practice Principles

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

Getting Started: Trauma-Informed Principles ‘In Action’

The goal of trauma-informed systems is to avoid re-traumatizing individuals and support safety, choice, and control in order to promote healing. The following discussion questions are intended for small groups to consider and reflect on their work and to ask “What are we doing well? What else can we be doing?”

Trauma Awareness

1. Do all staff in your program or organization have a basic understanding of the causes of trauma and possible effects? What topics or issues would you benefit from learning more about?
2. Are there staff or programs within your service area that may be able to provide trauma-specific services if a child, parent or caregiver asks for additional support with healing from trauma? What is the referral process like for these services, is there is waitlist, who is eligible?

Safety and Trustworthiness

1. Physical, cultural, and emotional safety for both service users and staff should be considered together. For example, what are your program’s policies about lights and locks? What might be comfortable and safe for one person might feel restrictive or triggering for another - what can you do to find a balance?
2. Review rules, expectations, and consequences. Are they clearly displayed, stated, predictable and consistent?
3. Is there a plan for reducing and handling critical incidents? Is there routine debriefing?

Choice, Collaboration And Connection

1. While participating in your program, what opportunities are there for youth to provide feedback, ask questions, or express their concerns?
2. What opportunities are there in your organization for staff to provide feedback?
3. When working with youth, do you encourage open communication; allow them the freedom to express their feelings without judging or censoring; provide choices in care and support whenever possible?

Strengths Based and Skill Building

1. Can your program shift away from an emphasis on client deficits to strengths? E.g., Do you ask about people’s interests, goals, coping skills, survival strategies, spirituality, etc.?
2. How is education and support related to vicarious or secondary trauma provided within your organization?
3. Are there opportunities within your program delivery to focus on skill-building, e.g., self-regulation, awareness of triggers, coping skills?