TOGETHER PROJECT
FILLING THE GAP

Volunteer & Settlement Sector Interactions In Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

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ABOUT TOGETHER PROJECT

Together Project, a project of Tides Canada Initiatives, believes that access to social networks can lead to more rapid and durable integration. Connecting Canadians and refugee newcomers leads to inclusive, safer, and more resilient communities.

Together Project currently operates in four Canadian cities: Toronto, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, and London.

Learn more at www.TogetherProject.ca, and follow us on Twitter @Together_hello.

For more information or to contact the Research Team please email research@togetherproject.ca.

Matching

Building on Canada's unique private sponsorship model, Together Project matches Government-Assisted Refugees with Welcome Groups of five or more volunteers. Newcomer families are supported in their settlement as they find housing and work, access healthcare, enroll in school, and navigate daily life.

Over time, we believe the development of these networks will lead to a better, more equal Canada.

Community

Together Project works with partners to host community events and programs to orient refugee newcomers to life in Canada.

Refugee newcomers and volunteers explore urban nature and culture through monthly field trips

Research

Integration of displaced populations into destination societies is a politically challenging and complex topic. We believe Canada has much to contribute in this dialogue.

We partner with universities and organizations in Canada and abroad to strengthen analysis and inform policy.

We are building a dynamic research team of academics and practitioners with significant experience in the field.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BVOR	Blended Visa Office-Referred
CCMP	Community Connections Mentorship Program
ESL	English as Second Language
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugee
GBNN	Grey Bruce Newcomers' Network
IDRF	International Development and Relief Foundation
IFHP	Interim Federal Health Program
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers
NCC	New Canadians Centre
PSG	Private Sponsorship Groups
PSR	Privately-Sponsored Refugee
RAP SPO	Resettlement Assistance Program Service-Providing Organizations
RCJP	Refugee Career Jumpstart Project
RSTP	Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holders
TBMA	Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
OCASI	Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The arrival of 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015 and 2016 generated a massive amount of support from volunteers and volunteer initiatives. Volunteers encountered an established settlement sector, which, on top of dealing with more than double the number of resettled refugees, often struggled with what one settlement sector respondent interviewed for the report called "too much help" from volunteers.

While coordination improved over time, many volunteers lost interest or were not effectively mobilized. On the other hand, new volunteer initiatives have successfully filled gaps in service provision.

Focusing on Ontario, our research sought to understand these dynamics in order to identify successful, collaborative models of volunteer mobilization and identify best practices for volunteer initiatives. Our findings are based on three months of research from January through March 2017.

We sought a balance between coverage of geographical regions and in-depth case studies in rural areas, mid-sized cities, and large cities. Our analytical framing seeks to offer a degree of generalization and framework for future research. Omissions should be seen as a reflection of the diversity of volunteer initiatives and the project schedule.

Some caveats are in order. First, a distinction should be made between volunteers and volunteer initiatives. We argue below that the settlement sector and the Government of Canada should work together to offer more space for volunteer engagement. One of the central concerns of volunteers heard by the researchers was that the settlement sector at times acted as a gatekeeper to engaging directly with newcomers. Conversely, settlement sector actors almost universally spoke of capacity challenges in responding to the overwhelming desire for volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer coordinator positions can help bridge these gaps. However, relating all volunteer initiatives to the settlement sector might increase the perception, and indeed the reality, of settlement agencies as gatekeepers. Novel volunteer initiatives are an important source of innovation, and neither the settlement sector nor government provide for all settlement needs. Innovation often requires disruption, and some of the discomfort, for lack of a better word, that settlement sector actors experienced during the Syrian resettlement should be seen as a source of opportunity.

Second, we focused specifically on Resettlement Assistance Program Service Providing Organizations and Sponsorship Agreement Holders. The myriad settlement sector actors from large-scale organizations, to faith groups, to community offices are not represented in this report. They are nonetheless a crucial part of the settlement sector.

Third, our analytic framework examines "success" in terms of interactions between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. This is an artefact of the research design. More longitudinal research is necessary to gauge "success" in terms of integration as a result of volunteer / settlement sector interactions. Our hope is that our findings might serve as a starting point for future research.

Fourth, we do not address the role of provincial or municipal governments in settlement support.

Fifth, our framework somewhat obscures the fact that resettlement to rural areas was entirely comprised of Privately-Sponsored Refugees, while mid-sized and large cities received a mix of Privately-Sponsored and Government-Assisted Refugees. Future research should explore the outcomes of these dynamics.

Sixth, and finally, our policy recommendations should not be construed as suggesting a single model for volunteer engagement with the settlement sector. While we are concerned with potential service duplication, our view is that some degree of overlap can create valuable learning opportunities.

We would like to thank the IRCC's Social Innovation Policy Branch and the expert reviewers for their comments. Our sincere thanks go to personnel from settlement agencies that took time out of busy schedules to complete our surveys, as well as the many committed and wonderful volunteer initiatives that took the time to speak with our field researchers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Methodology

Data was accumulated through desk research, as well as primary research which included online surveys and in-person interviews conducted in rural areas, mid-sized and large cities across Ontario.

Analytic Framework

The research team was interested in the interactions between volunteers and the settlement sector. We categorize volunteer initiatives as novel / grassroots, pre-existing / repurposed, and organized / devoted. We categorize the settlement sector as non-existent / minimal, small & centralized, and large & complex. We measure the quality of interaction across three variables: complimentarity, sustainability, and scalability. These variables were ranked along a high, medium, low spectrum based on our research. We explore interactions through qualitative case studies. Fieldwork was conducted in Owen Sound / Grey Bruce, Thunder Bay, Peterborough, Guelph, Hamilton, Toronto, and Ottawa.

Summary of Findings

- Most volunteer initiatives cited the singular and tragic death of Aylan Kurdi, often referred to as "the boy on the beach", as the primary catalyst for action.

- Rural areas were characterized by the absence of the settlement sector, with self-organized volunteers.

- Mid-sized cities represented a "sweet spot" of tight-knit communities, coordinated volunteer mobilization, and a centralized settlement sector. Interactions in these locales were characterized by high complimentarity, high sustainability, and medium to high scalability.

- Findings from large cities are difficult to generalize given the high variability of volunteer initiatives. The size and complexity of the settlement sector meant mixed results with volunteer initiatives, but with some notably high potential for scalability.

- Across the majority of cases, the surge of public interest can be characterized by what one settlement sector respondent called "too much help". Volunteer interest often overwhelmed the capacities of the settlement sector, sometimes leading to significant tensions.

- Many would-be volunteers lost interest given the lack of clearly defined tasks and the low capacity of settlement agencies to field the scale of requests.

- In large cities, many volunteer initiatives were frustrated by what they perceived as a gatekeeper mentality among the settlement sector. The complex nature of the sector meant they lacked a focal point for engagement.

- The most successful volunteer initiatives were those which acted as a hub for volunteer engagement with the settlement sector and lowered barriers to entry for supporting Syrian newcomers.

- There is a difference between volunteers and volunteer initiatives. The settlement sector and all levels of government should consider volunteer initiatives as partners and accept novel practices as a source of innovation.

- Private sponsorship groups often have little training and little to no oversight after the arrival of sponsored families. In some cases this can lead to paternalistic behaviour.

- The potential for burnout among private sponsors and volunteers is high, particularly since they serve as de facto social workers, therapists, and employment counselors – roles for which they are often insufficiently trained or altogether unprepared. Many sponsors are not aware that newcomers should be registered with settlement agencies.

- The bureaucratic and legal distinction between Privately-Sponsored Refugees and Government-Assisted Refugees might obscure the functional overlap in service provision for both groups.

- Private sponsorship groups and the support networks they mobilized often cited persistent cultural differences as a concern for future interactions.

- Privately-Sponsored Refugees received more support than Government-Assisted Refugees. In almost every location we found volunteers, civil society, and settlement agencies cooperating to match under-supported Government-Assisted Refugees. Actively including citizens in integration is thus not limited to private sponsorship and its attendant financial and legal responsibilities.

Best Practices

We identified best practices as those which foster collaboration between settlement sector actors, harness volunteer capacity to fill real gaps in service provision, and build volunteer capacity for working with vulnerable populations. Additionally, those which serve to foster refugee newcomers' social networks offer low barriers to entry for volunteers to play active roles in integration. Finally new volunteer initiatives are a crucial source of innovation.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada

- The IRCC should fund **dedicated volunteer coordinator positions** within the settlement sector, particularly in RAP SPOs. While the precise responsibilities of the role would be specific to the different agency actors, one of the most common findings is the sector has heretofore lacked the capacity to manage and empower volunteers.

  The lack of volunteer coordination capacities often led to tensions both within specific settlement agencies and between would-be volunteers and the settlement sector. With relatively minimal funding the Federal Government could ameliorate tensions and foster durable integration between civil society, the settlement sector, and newly-arrived refugees.

  Importantly, this position should expressly service newcomers from all countries of origin given the global scope of the refugee crisis. This represents an opportunity for public education that the global refugee crisis is not limited to Syria or the Middle East.

- The IRCC should differentiate between **volunteers and volunteer initiatives** and develop a mechanism for monitoring successful instances of the latter outside of the framework of their interaction with the settlement sector. One way of doing so would be to **establish an innovation fund for successful volunteer initiatives coordinated with different levels of government**.

  Indeed, the Federal Government can use funding mechanisms to overcome gate-keeping. Exclusively funding volunteer initiatives through existing settlement sector actors will likely exacerbate gate-keeper dynamics.

■ Recognize the persistence of cultural differences and attendant difficulties in volunteer / newcomer relationships. Concretely, the IRCC should take pains to ensure that **volunteer coordinator positions include training on cultural sensitivity and engage with faith, ethnic, or national community groups** in direct support or in some capacity of supervisory or consultant role.

■ The IRCC should **conduct public consultations** with grassroots volunteer initiatives to understand best practices and develop an authoritative institutional memory of the types of volunteer initiatives which emerged from the period of Syrian refugee resettlement.

The civic momentum and outpouring of support should not be squandered, and the government should take a bottom-up approach to harnessing the lessons learned over the past two years. It is important these public consultations include all regions.

It is advisable that these public consultations be contracted to a trusted third party on a limited timescale and with clear deliverables. This contract should include a partnership with IRCC and relevant Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels of government to disseminate findings.

An **innovation fund** would mean findings from public consultations have the opportunity for support and scaling.

■ The IRCC should strongly **consider more active training and oversight for Private Sponsorship Groups**. Across a number of cases respondents of all types noted a lack of clear training and oversight meant private sponsors were more often than not left to their own devices.

While SAHs undertake training and vetting activities, the overwhelming need to immediately resettle Syrian refugees meant this was not done in a sustained manner in the case at hand. The IRCC should develop clear training manuals, codes of conduct, and best practices for interacting with vulnerable populations. This should include training around trauma-informed care, Canadian resettlement policy, RAP and IFHP services, education, employment, and ESL training.

The IRCC should acknowledge that Private Resettlement is not a substitute for state oversight over integration and resettlement. Sponsors and resettled refugees should be made aware of their rights and duties under Federal and Provincial law, with clear lessons around individual autonomy, with particular reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To Settlement Sector Actors

- The Settlement Sector should take the opportunity to help **educate the general public** on its role in the process of refugee resettlement. The vast majority of volunteers were completely unaware of the settlement sector or its mandate.

- Concurrently, the settlement sector should **explain perceived gate-keeping** as the necessary response to its duties of care and protection to vulnerable clients. We found that the majority of volunteers responded favorably to this rationale.

- Perhaps more importantly, settlement sector actors should **rethink the practices and organizational cultures which result in gate-keeping in the first place**. Volunteer initiatives are an important source of innovation, and the resettlement of Syrian refugees to Canada represents an important opportunity for evaluating existing practices.

  Settlement sector actors should thus **consider enlisting outside auditors to consider organizational practices**.

  At a more philosophical level, settlement sector actors should **embrace innovation as a mode of fostering and harnessing the goodwill of Canadians**.

- As with the recommendations to the IRCC, the settlement sector should **differentiate between volunteers and volunteer initiatives and consider the latter as potential partners rather than a pool of people requiring management**. Many novel volunteer initiatives were (and are) comprised of high-capacity professionals and experienced service-provision personnel. The settlement sector should consider the criticism of volunteer initiatives as an opportunity for innovation and creative partnerships. Many of the volunteer initiatives would not have flourished if settlement sector approval were a necessary criteria for engagement.

- The settlement sector must **develop best practices** to differentiate between a stable pool of committed volunteers who should receive significant training, and pools of volunteers who can be mobilized for ad-hoc tasks.

- Settlement sector actors working with GARs, as well as PSRs past "Month 13" should understand the need for access to social networks as an important source of support. More specifically, **RAP SPOs should take full advantage of matching programs and create mechanisms for taking into account the feedback and advocacy of those who create relationships with GAR newcomers**.

To Volunteer Initiatives

■ Volunteer initiatives must understand **resettled refugees are uniquely vulnerable**, and that settlement sector actors have legal and ethical responsibilities. Rapid access to resettled refugees must be subordinate to ensuring vulnerable newcomers are not exposed to undue risk.

■ Volunteer initiatives should **understand that the settlement sector has traditionally not had to respond to large-scale volunteer initiatives**. Priority is generally given to serving clients over mobilizing volunteers.

■ Novel volunteer initiatives should **consider some degree of service overlap and duplication as a source of learning and engage the settlement sector and all levels of government with policy learning**.

■ Volunteer initiatives should do their best to **maintain and disseminate the knowledge and expertise** they developed in aiding in Syrian refugee resettlement. The lessons learned and knowledge acquired in mobilizing to help newly resettled Syrians is invaluable to future cohorts of volunteers and resettled refugees regardless of the country of origin.

INTRODUCTION

The response to the 2015 Syrian refugee resettlement is often compared with Operation Lifeline (1979-1981) during the refugee crisis at the end of the American war in Vietnam. At that time Employment and Immigration Canada provided centrally organized services. By 2015 reception, settlement, and integration services had been replaced by organizations at the provincial and municipal levels, along with new civil society organizations and NGOs. While devolving oversight to localized actors means more direct engagement, consistency of service and volunteer support and monitoring are more diffuse.

The arrival of 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada in 2015 and 2016 generated a massive amount of support from volunteers and volunteer initiatives. **Almost 20,000 were resettled in Ontario**. Volunteers encountered an established settlement sector, which, on top of dealing with more than double the number of resettled refugees, often struggled to accommodate and mobilize volunteers.

The "settlement sector" is now comprised of a diverse range of actors from faith groups to community organizations to large agencies. Settlement support includes all levels of government and serves all types of newcomers to Canada. Resettled refugees and asylum seekers are a particularly vulnerable group, and while they access some of the same services as other new immigrants, they also receive specialized assistance and are served by a unique subset of the sector with specific funding streams from government.

Syrian Refugees by Province: Nov 2015 - April 2017

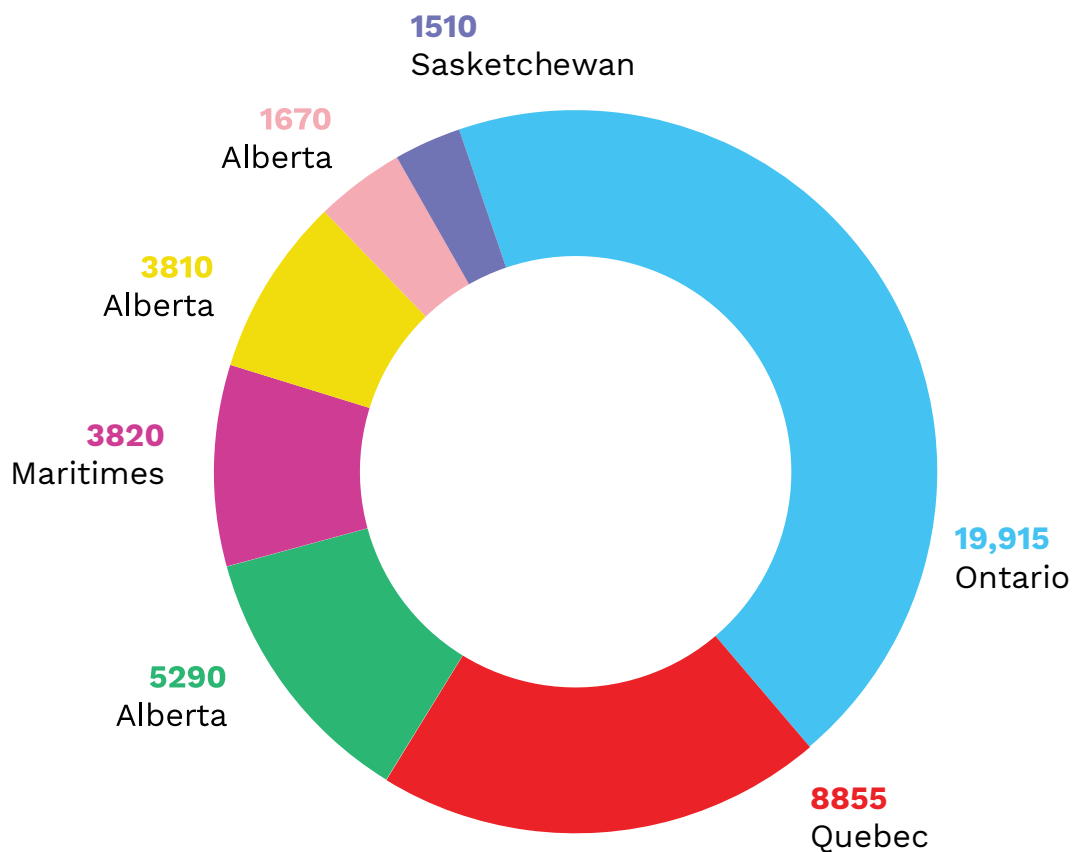|	Government Assisted Refugees	Privately Sponsorship Refugees	Blended Sponsorship Refugees
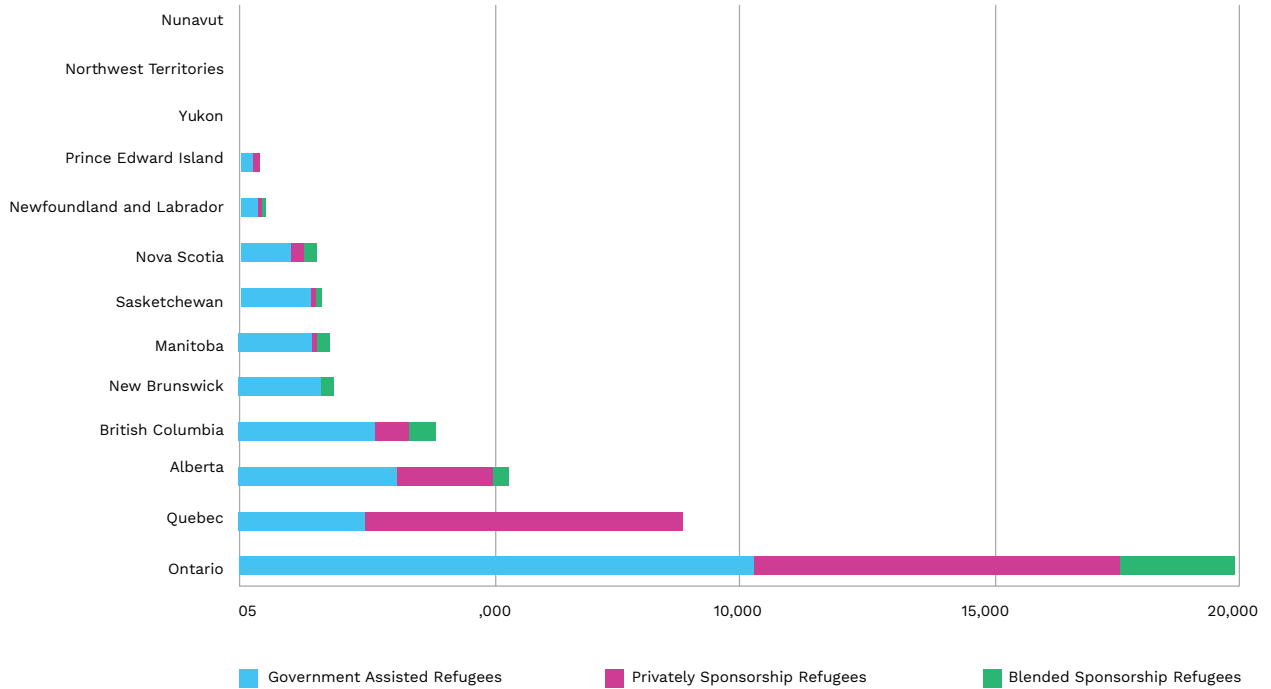
At the outset volunteer overtures often overwhelmed the capacity of the settlement sector to manage and direct volunteers given that on the whole refugee-specific agencies have not actively engaged large cohorts of volunteers. While volunteer management and coordination with the settlement sector improved over time, many volunteers lost interest, were not properly mobilized, or provided support that overlapped or conflicted with settlement sector service provision.

Engaging volunteers is cumbersome because organizations have to match capacity with service demands. While the volume of volunteers was, and still is, often difficult to manage, volunteers have successfully filled gaps in service provision. In the absence of a central governing body, networks of agencies and organizations need a system of agreed-upon best practices to facilitate coordination and collaboration with volunteer initiatives.

Syrian Refugee Arrivals by Province:
Nov. 2015 - Apr. 2017

1510
Sasketchewan

1670
Alberta

3810
Alberta

3820
Maritimes

5290
Alberta

19,915
Ontario

8855
Quebec

* Source: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/01c85d28-2a81-4295-9c06-4af792a7c209?

Our research sought to understand these dynamics at a micro-level in order to identify and scale successful, collaborative models of volunteer mobilization. We explore in depth case studies and highlight the work of volunteers and volunteer initiatives in order to shed some light on people's experiences in supporting newly-arrived refugees from Syria.

Methodology

The project sought to answer several research questions:

1. What are the most common forms of coordinated volunteer mobilization and how were volunteers mobilized and managed?

2. What are the most successful examples of coordinated volunteer mobilization?

3. To what degree were volunteer mobilization efforts a response to gaps in service provision?

    a. Were volunteers and volunteer coordinators in contact with RAP service providers or aware of RAP service provision?
    b. To what degree did volunteer efforts mirror, duplicate, or make existing RAP service provision more difficult?

4. How can existing and future volunteer coordination efforts best communicate and best understand the needs of, and services available to Syrian refugee newcomers to develop best practices and scalable models?

Research progressed in four stages: desk research, online surveys, field research, and analysis. Desk research identified volunteer initiatives throughout Ontario, and compiled a list of all Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and Resettlement Assistance Program Service Providing Organizations (RAP SPOs). A full roster of SAHs and RAP SPOs is underlined publicly available.

We then conducted two independent online surveys, the details and findings of which are listed below. In general, the surveys sought information on types of engagement between the settlement sector, mobilization of volunteer initiatives, services provided, catalysts for volunteering, and metrics of success. The surveys concluded with requests for more in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The Resettlement Assistance Program
The Federal Government offers assistance to Government-Assisted Refugees through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), funded through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Newly-arrived refugees receive twelve months of financial and settlement support, including rent, basic household items, and a monthly budget for support.

Field work was scheduled on the dual criteria of representative data from across Ontario, coupled with interesting findings from surveys. We selected rural areas, small cities, and large cities. We conducted field visits in the Grey Bruce / Owen Sound area, Thunder Bay, and throughout Toronto. We conducted phone interviews with respondents in Toronto, Peterborough, Ottawa, Hamilton, and Guelph, for a total of 36 semi-structured interviews.

RESULTS OF ONLINE SURVEYS

Our surveys targeted all RAP SPOs and SAHs in Ontario (82 total), as well as some settlement agencies, and 67 provincial volunteer initiatives. We identified volunteer initiatives via desk research, as well as through survey respondents recommending outstanding initiatives they were aware of, targeting the leaders of volunteer groups. We asked questions to understand main volunteer motivations and areas of intervention, as well as interactions between the settlement sector and volunteers.

The response rate for RAP SPOs was nearly 100%, while 22% of SAHs replied. For volunteers, the response rate was 47%. Our sample of 28 respondents from the settlement sector and 32 from volunteer initiatives was geographically representative of the province, including major cities as well as rural areas.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders

Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) can sponsor refugees themselves, or can match privately-sponsored refugees with a group of five or more Canadians or another capable organization. Many SAHs are community, religious, ethnic, or service-based organizations.

The highest number of respondents came from Toronto, the GTA (including Burlington and Newmarket), and Ottawa, while others included larger towns in Northern Ontario (Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, North Bay) as well as Southern Ontario (Kitchener, Hamilton, London, Windsor, St. Catharine's), and Eastern Ontario (Peterborough, Kingston).

The most consistent survey findings were that most volunteers were new to the issue area and generally unaware of Federal programing available to resettled refugees, particularly the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) or Interim Federal Healthcare Program (IFHP). Indeed, many did not interact with the settlement sector at all. Those who interacted with local SAHs or RAP SPOs received screening and training. Otherwise there were significant variations between respondents.

Interim Federal Healthcare Program

Resettled refugees are entitled to OHIP as well as 12 months of supplementary benefits under the Interim Federal Health Program, which covers basic pharmaceutical, dental, vision, and paramedical care. Through this program, GARs can also receive mobility devices and extended physical therapy.

Common areas of volunteer intervention were access to household goods, housing, clothing, and services related to education and employment access. Most volunteers interacted directly with Syrian refugee newcomers.

Though many settlement sector organizations had worked with volunteers in the past, the majority worked with new volunteers and volunteer initiatives organized specifically to help resettled Syrian refugees (on average 14 initiatives per organization). Most organizations managed volunteers directly, and suggested that they were more likely to work with individual volunteers than with self-managed, independently-organized volunteer initiatives.

Most volunteers contacted SAHs or RAP SPOs on their own initiative and were not recruited. The settlement sector directly solicited volunteers for more specialized tasks, particularly translation. Most organizations also facilitated and managed access to Syrian newcomers on an ongoing basis. The majority of volunteers required training or vulnerable sector screening.

The primary motivations for volunteers were humanitarian concern, concern over the Syrian civil war, and commitment to multiculturalism. The main catalyst to action was an awareness of the Syrian civil war and the European migration crisis through media reports.

Canada's Unique Resettlement Model
Canada has a unique resettlement model, made up of three programs: Government-Assisted, Private Sponsorship, and Blended Visa Office Referral. Canada resettles an average of 20,000 refugees per year, in coordination with the UNHCR and other international organizations. More than half of these refugees are Government Assisted Refugees, who are referred on the basis of vulnerability.

A large number of volunteers specifically mentioned the images of Aylan Kurdi (dubbed "the boy on the beach") as a transformative moment in their decision to act. The fact that this event coincided with the Liberal government's commitment to resettle large numbers of Syrian newcomers meant that volunteer interest peaked at precisely the moment when settlement agencies and sponsor groups began announcing the impending arrival of Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Privately-Sponsored Refugees (PSRs).

The size of initiatives varied greatly—from under 10 people to over 1000. The majority of volunteer initiatives are still active, though some have noticed a decline in volunteer interest, which they attributed to declining media attention.

Relationship between Volunteer Initiatives & Settlement Sector

On average, both the settlement sector and volunteers responded that their relationship was mutually beneficial. Organizations believed that overall volunteer efforts helped rather than hindered service provision, however many reported that the initial outpourings of support sapped organizational capacity. One medium-sized RAP SPO stated that the sheer numbers of volunteer requests were overwhelming, and that the organization's lack of capacity to organize volunteers "greatly affected service provision".

The main services that settlement agencies provided to volunteers were translation, training on working with vulnerable populations, and volunteer management. Volunteers noted 'turf wars' between settlement sector actors competing for program provision, and the 'large caseloads' of settlement caseworkers as obstacles to efficient service provision.

Some initiatives were formed as a direct response to perceived service gaps in service provision or insufficient presence of the settlement sector. Most volunteer initiatives lacked translation capacity and training, and had no resources for effective volunteer management. Most reported they would have benefited from more rigorous volunteer management from the settlement sector.

Large caseloads meant some volunteers found it difficult to forge relationships with settlement sector actors, which diminished volunteer interest as well as the ability to coordinate activities. However, the majority reported positive experiences despite these obstacles.

Some settlement workers complained of misinformation and duplication of efforts by volunteers, but most found that volunteer initiatives were responsive to best practices and guidance from the sector. Their main concerns were volunteers' lack of knowledge about the settlement sector, a lack of cultural sensitivity, and a lack of organizational capacity to coordinate volunteers.

Most organizations cited occasional instances where volunteer initiatives breached or disregarded norms of service provision to refugee newcomers, for example by not respecting the autonomy of newcomers or maintaining clear boundaries. In sum, however, the majority of settlement workers found that partnerships with volunteers and community initiatives were successful and aided service provision to newcomers.

Improving future volunteer coordination

Settlement sector actors reported that resources for volunteer coordination would mean better social support to newcomers. They reported that volunteers should be trained on respect for autonomy and boundaries, and working with the settlement sector to avoid duplicating service provision. The majority of settlement workers suggested that additional funding to coordinate volunteers would be welcome, as would standardized volunteer training.

Volunteers mainly reported the lack of communication and information-sharing as a barrier to successful cooperation, and several suggested that a volunteer mentor or coordinator within the settlement agencies would be crucial for their future engagement with the sector.

ANALYTIC FRAMING

We analyze the relationship between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector, and apply a ranking of success across each dyadic relationship. Surveys and fieldwork yielded data to inform a 3 x 3 analysis of ideal types of the two actors. The remainder of this report applies the analytic framing to case studies. As described in "Fig. 1" below, we present a typology of variation among both volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. Though there is not a discrete, causal relationship, the relationships reveal common and interesting results.

Fig. 1: Volunteer / Sector Typology

		Settlement Sector		
		Non-Existent / Minimal	**Small & Centralized**	**Large & Complex**
Volunteer Initiatives	**Pre-existing / Devoted**			Toronto
	Pre-existing / repurposed		Thunder Bay Peterborough	Toronto, Ottawa
	Novel / Grassroots	Owen Sound / Grey Bruce	Guelph, Peterborough, Hamilton	Toronto, Ottawa

We order volunteer initiatives along an axis from novel / grassroots, through pre-existing / repurposed, to pre-existing / devoted. Novel / grassroots initiatives developed from among strangers to address immediate perceived needs of resettled Syrian refugees. Pre-existing / repurposed volunteer initiatives were comprised of people who were already active in another issue area or were active in issues with refugees, but refocused their efforts to support newly-arrived Syrian refugees. Organized / devoted volunteer initiatives were already focused and ready for Syrian refugee arrivals.

We order the settlement sector along an axis running from non-existent / minimal, through small and centralized, to large & complex. These differences correspond directly with location size. As described in our case studies, in rural areas the settlement sector was virtually non-existent, and the majority of initiatives were grassroots and completely novel to the Syrian situation. As described in "Fig. 1" above, the situation is mixed in mid-sized cities and the larger cities of Toronto and Ottawa, where a number of different volunteer initiatives existed in parallel with one another, with varying degrees of overlap and communication.

Quantifying and measuring the "success" of integration is complicated. Integration indexes generally employ metrics around income levels, labour market participation, language skills, home ownership, health, and residential distribution. Other, more complicated metrics like civic participation, sense of belonging, and social networks require more qualitative research. Welcoming societies play a key role in integration.

Measuring Integration

In "Fig. 2" we rank the different dyadic relationships on three metrics corresponding with our research questions: complimentarity, sustainability, and scalability. While qualitative and subjective, these metrics reveal some general trends. Our case studies and summary of findings below expand on the relationships.

Fig. 2: High-Level Observations

		Settlement Sector		
		Non-Existent / Minimal	**Small & Centralized**	**Large & Complex**
Volunteer Initiatives	**Organized / Devoted**	✕	✕	M-H Complimentarity M Sustainability L Scalability
	Pre-existing / repurposed	✕	H Complimentarity H Sustainability M-H Scalability	H Complimentarity M Sustainability L Scalability
	Novel / Grassroots	All Volunteer M Sustainability L Scalability	H Complimentarity M-H Sustainability M-H Scalability	L-M Complimentarity M-H Sustainability M-H Scalability

We define complimentarity as the degree of cooperation between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector resulting in enhanced service provision for resettled Syrians, the degree of service duplication, and the effectiveness of volunteer mobilization efforts in filling service gaps. Low complimentarity thus means weak cooperation, small impacts on service provision, and service duplication. High complimentarity means the opposite.

We define sustainability as the capacity for durable interactions between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector not only to persevere but to improve in terms of service provision and cooperation. In many cases volunteers were dissuaded by barriers to access and interest tapered off; and as such would be ranked as having low sustainability. In other cases collaboration grew into full partnerships with more oversight, training, and clear mandates for service provision, and are ranked as having high sustainability.

We define scalability as the capacity for interactions to grow within the given context or be transferred to other contexts. Scalability does not necessarily equate to success. For example, some initiatives were successful in building capacity but were context-specific, and thus would be considered as having low scalability. High scalability means opportunity for growth within context and transferrable to other contexts. In this case high scalability is generally associated with success given that the initiatives have persisted throughout the first year and present clear models for volunteer / settlement sector interaction.

Case Study Rationale

Our case studies give a representative and in-depth exploration of the analytic framework. The examples provided within each case present a thorough overview of our research findings. They do not represent an exhaustive picture of the volunteer initiatives in each context. The examples we provide are meant to offer examples for different types of settlement support, though we focus on success stories.

We look at rural areas, with a focus on the Grey Bruce / Owen Sound region, where the settlement sector is almost entirely absent and volunteer initiatives are self-organized and largely self-taught. Our case on medium-sized cities is focused primarily on Thunder Bay and Peterborough, which represents a "sweet spot" in terms of complimentarity, sustainability, and scalability. Our large city case is the most high-level given both the scale of volunteer initiatives and settlement sector complexity. We identify initiatives in big cities which are complimentary, sustainable, and scalable.

CASE I
RURAL SETTINGS: COMMUNITY-BUILDING IN THE ABSENCE OF A SETTLEMENT SECTOR

Grey Bruce County; Owen Sound; Collingwood

Approximately 75-100 refugees were resettled in Grey Bruce County (including Owen Sound, Meaford, Wiarton, Hanover, Lion's Head, Port Elgin, and Kincardine) since 2015, as well as additional newcomers in nearby Collingwood, Thornbury, and Saugeen Shores. All newcomers are Privately-Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) or Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees sponsored by faith institutions, "Groups of 5", or in partnership with SAHs, which were located in more populous locales such as Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo.

Fieldwork consisted of 14 semi-structured interviews: 11 with volunteers and sponsors, and 3 with local service providers (the United Way and the Arden Language Centre). The area has several private sponsorship groups and churches, all of whom engage ad-hoc volunteer support outside of their core sponsor groups. The local service providers were chosen because their programing is both unique and mobilized directly in response to Syrian resettlement.

ANALYTIC OVERVIEW

The rural case represents an instance of self-reliance and community organization in a geographic area that can be characterized as almost completely lacking settlement services or government oversight for refugee sponsorship. The case is uniquely interesting in that media attention on the 2015 Syrian refugee resettlement largely focused on big cities.

In rural areas we see low or non-existent complimentarity between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector given that the settlement sector is largely absent. The dyadic relationship is somewhat moot. However, this does not imply that volunteer initiatives would not have benefited from collaboration, nor does it imply that volunteer initiatives did not seek out best practices.

In rural areas we found medium sustainability around volunteer initiatives. Private sponsor groups coordinated wider social networks to provide settlement support for Syrian newcomers for tasks ranging from transportation to ESL instruction to employment services. These were largely self-taught and self-organized. Sustainability is aided by close-knit communities, but also hindered by the fact that these support networks relied on a few individuals as hubs for translation and cultural sensitivity, among other aspects of settlement support. The initiatives are thus somewhat fragile and vulnerable in the event that these people were to cease activities.

In rural areas we found low scalability given many of the reasons above. Initiatives found innovative ways to share practices and knowledge with other rural areas and among their networks. However, there is little oversight over practices and norms of conduct, significant variation among empowerment of Syrian newcomers based on the competences of sponsorship groups, and the types of initiatives were arguably idiosyncratic to their particular contexts.

While Owen Sound had some experience hosting refugees, the region of Grey Bruce has no settlement services in the common sense of the word. The nearest SAH is in Kitchener-Waterloo, a two-hour drive away. The community had no ESL, LINC classes, reception services, dedicated psychosocial support, or other types of services one would associate with the settlement sector in medium and large cities.

Language Training
After completing a Language Assessment, GARs have access to Language Instructors for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), funded by IRCC, and English as Second Language (ESL) education, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. These programs are a crucial resource for refugee integration.

Community members reported that the influx of PSRs gave rise to unprecedented support and interest in refugee issues across the community. Indeed, the lack of settlement services arguably resulted in a more rigorous response by community members and local services.

"Most of us don't even use those words up here because we are so far removed from where the heaviest settlement occurs. 'Settlement sector' – not a thing. 'RAP providers' – again, we never use that word because refugee resettlement is very new in this area."

— David Foster, Arden Language Centre, Owen Sound

Some community members suggested that a culture of rural self-reliance may have contributed to the community's willingness to 'take matters into their own hands'. Our research suggests that the relatively small community meant that coordination between people, services, volunteers, employers, and sponsors could be done efficiently on a personal basis. Though all respondents stressed that the lack of funding for ESL, translation, and mental health services was a significant issue, many were happy with the community response. They pointed to the fact that in coming together to support Syrian newcomers, social bonds were able to flourish in ways formal service provision might not have allowed.

Most respondents pointed to the composition of the community, affordability of housing, and labour market to argue that many PSRs would opt to stay in Owen Sound after the initial twelve month sponsorship. Many PSRs had found part-time work, particularly in skilled and semi-skilled labour, reported being pleased with the size and availability of housing, and were discussing sponsoring further family members.

Communities Supporting Private Sponsors

In rural areas core groups of sponsors were supported by large peripheral spheres of volunteers, drawing on congregants from church groups or social networks to fulfill ad-hoc volunteer roles, such as transportation and childcare. The burden was thus distributed across the community. For example, Dana Benson, Pastor at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church and Chair of the Owen Sound and Community Refugee Initiative stated that prior to the arrival of PSRs, the Grey Bruce Newcomers' Network (GBBN) engaged volunteer support informally via email, Facebook, or word of mouth.

"I'm always torn. I think that the government should be offering more services, but in some ways we think: 'look how efficient we're being just on our own'… but I also think that's potentially harmful."

— Leslie Moskovits, Hanover Refugee Committee

As in many other communities, we found that sponsors overwhelmingly referred to the death of Aylan Kurdi as a 'transformative moment' which spurred sponsorship decisions. The first community meeting to discuss private sponsorship drew about 60 participants from the region. Early on, the Refugee Initiative recognized the need to meet with relevant stakeholders, services, and agencies, so as not to duplicate service provision.

They held a meeting with the local mental health organizations, Board of Education, Ministry of Health representatives, United Way, and others in an attempt to map available services. The Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force released a document entitled "Welcoming Newcomers: Talking Points January 2016," addressing possible concerns and questions about resettlement. Resettlement spurred these organizations to cooperate in novel ways given there was not a strong history of cross-sectoral partnership in the county.

The Owen Sound and Community Refugee Initiative grew into the GBNN, a hub which does not work with newcomers directly but supports private sponsorship groups. Their secretary, David Morris, described GBNN's activities as "just about anything any other resettlement agency does." Initially devised as information-sharing sessions, monthly meetings brought in representatives of 15 local sponsor groups including the Alliance Church, which had previous experience. While the groups mainly shared logistical knowledge, the GBNN's Steering Committee began to notice gaps in service provision and general cultural knowledge among members.

The GBNN invited organizations to take part in meetings and make presentations on topics including Syrian culture, Islam, access to healthcare, access to education, and trauma in children. They also invited a representative of the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) to speak at a meeting in the fall of 2016. They continue to host events and advertise online information sessions, such as a webinar on "Vulnerable sector settlement services: Best practices promoting resilience with Syrian refugee children & youth" by YMCA Dartmouth.

The GBNN's attempts to streamline information, collate it on their website, and host training sessions are entirely independent of the settlement sector. In fact, sponsorship groups have had minimal contact with anything associated with the IRCC or the settlement sector since resettlement.

In a nearby town outside of the Grey Bruce County, the Collingwood Syrian Family Sponsorship Fund set up sponsor and volunteer committees before PSRs' arrival, including a list of drivers, volunteer ESL teachers, and local Arabic-speakers for translation. The volunteer coordinator, Julie Buckley, said that all volunteer needs are quickly resolved by using social networks. The Collingwood Fund reported they were compiling information on sponsorship into a manual to provide future sponsors with key resources.

In Prince Edward County, sponsorship groups formed the <u>Prince Edward County Syrian Refugee Fund</u>,[1] which mobilized community volunteers to support sponsor groups. With a SAH far away in Toronto, the Committee set up volunteer 'pods' which consist of 35-40 people who volunteer in everything from administration, communication, fundraising, housing, community support (ESL, mental health, healthcare, employment, education), and childcare. Some volunteers do short-term, one-off tasks while others provide more long-term support.[2]

"The small town mentality has been crucial to integration. It's much more difficult for people to fall through the cracks here."

— Dana Benson, Pastor at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and Chair of the Owen Sound and Community Refugee Initiative.

The Downside of Small Communities & Absent Settlement Sector

Unclear roles and the small size of communities, however, also had negative effects. Respondents spoke of burnout among sponsors and volunteers. Community members would have to take over key roles throughout the year. Similar experiences were noted in other small areas with no settlement sector presence. On Manitoulin Island, where several privately-sponsored families were resettled, a head sponsor from the Missionary Church noted that rather than cash donations or funding they needed "people who can step up to provide support for the families in integrating them into the community."[3] The Church matched several Canadians with each PSR family for 'community support'.

In many cases, PSRs' access to services was determined by sponsors' personal knowledge and capacities. Differences between sponsorship group compositions can have substantial effects on the newcomers' access to services and possibly on integration potential. For example, the sponsors of a Syrian family in Wiarton had professional experience in the social work sector and found it easy to obtain information on available services simply by knowing how to make the right inquiries. On the other hand, many other respondents claimed that there was an utter lack of the same services because they lacked specialized knowledge. An absent settlement sector likely exacerbates these differences given that groups are self-reliant and have little oversight or guidance on best practices.

[1] "Prince Edward County Syrian Refugee Fund". PEC Syria. N.d. http://pecsyria.org/

[2] Keung, Nicholas. "Prince Edward County steps up to help Syrian refugees." Toronto Star. Nov. 2, 2016. "https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2015/11/02/prince-edward-county-steps-up-to-help-syrian-refugees.html

[3] "Island comes together for refugee sponsorship, sanctuary." The Manitoulin Expositor. Oct. 7, 2016. http://www.manitoulin.ca/2015/10/07/island-comes-together-for-refugee-sponsorship-sanctuary/

ESL as a Community Hub

ESL is one of the most glaring gaps in service provision. The only ESL school in a two-hour radius, the Owen Sound Arden Language Centre is run by Andrea and David Foster, Arabic-speaking ESL teachers who had previously spent several years teaching English in Egypt. The school was an entirely ad-hoc response to a new need. The Fosters had planned on returning to Egypt and were home on a short furlough which coincided with the arrival of Syrian newcomers in 2015. The school came to act as a hub for refugees, sponsors, and volunteers in Owen Sound and surrounding towns, demonstrating both the need for coordinated spaces in rural areas and the community dedication in the region. The Arden Centre is run by 40 volunteers who serve 27 students, many of whom are PSRs, though not all Syrian, and some are immigrants (from China and Albania).

The language centre emphasizes relationship-building outside of the formal program – for instance, they pair new students with volunteers based on shared hobbies and skills. The ESL program includes a daily potluck lunch, which seems to play a large role in the students' enthusiasm and volunteers' dedication. Indeed, the kind of social bonds struck in the language school tend to make volunteer teachers want to invest more, according to the Fosters. Not only do PSRs meet other newcomers, they expand their social networks of Canadians.

Respondents cited frustration at the lack of ESL services for children in elementary and high school, as well as a general lack of Arabic-speaking translators. Reliance on a few translators is unviable long-term and can lead to burnout. Accessible and affordable translation at the hospital was seen as a particularly acute shortcoming. When time comes for ESL testing, the closest LINC testing centre is in Barrie. Very few resources are available for literacy ESL, which is significant given that the language schools have an estimated 20-30% illiteracy rate.

While the Fosters stated that fundraising has never been a challenge, and that volunteer interest has also remained strong since 2015, other community members saw a lack of stable support as a stumbling block for the school. Many in local sponsor groups believed the lack of government funding limited schools' capacities.

Employment Services and Community Revitalization

Respondents spoke of the potential economic benefits of migration to rural areas. In November 2016, the United Way received a grant from Bruce Power (the main employer in the region) and the Ministry of Agricultural Affairs set up a Newcomer Employment Support Coordinator position. Moklass Hassan, originally from Iraq, took up the position. Hassan had significant advocacy experience and support

work for newcomers, and often lends his support outside of his official capacity, accompanying PSRs to doctor's appointments or taking them on grocery shopping trips to Toronto.

Our research found that people with cultural experience often become nodes for interactions and act outside of official capacities. Translators and people with experience often field questions from sponsors about Syrian culture, and the local police force had also requested a meeting to learn about potential concerns when interacting with newcomers.

For Hassan and many others in the community, the Newcomer Employment Support program has been a great success. Many of the resettled PSRs were tradespeople and farmers, and trades are in demand in the region. Many were hired, and Hassan says that businesses call him asking to hire newcomers. Many interlocutors stress that rural areas depend on incoming labour for their survival, suggesting that spending more resources on revitalizing the community and drawing newcomers with relevant skills would be a mutually beneficial scenario.
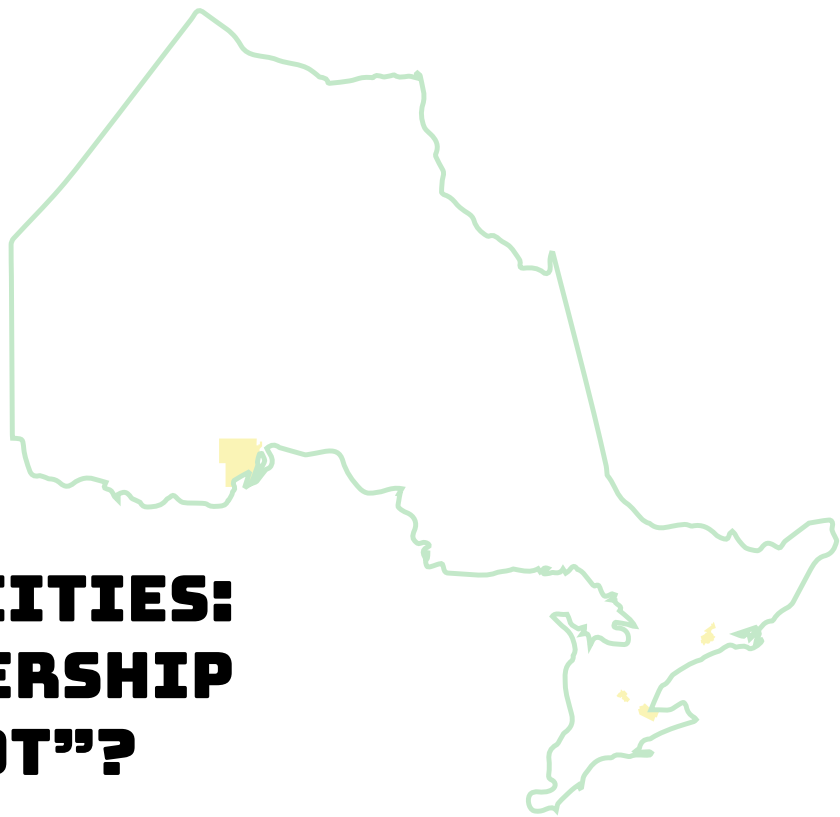
CASE II
MIDSIZED CITIES: THE PARTNERSHIP "SWEET SPOT"?

Thunder Bay; Peterborough; Guelph; Hamilton

In mid-sized cities we witnessed highly successful partnerships given a small but well-established settlement sector, which acted as a hub for all volunteer activity. Fieldwork consisted of nine in-person interviews in Thunder Bay, including a day spent at the <u>Thunder Bay Multicultural Association</u>, an in-person interview with a representative of the <u>New Canadians Centre Peterborough</u>, and phone interviews with other actors in Peterborough, and Guelph.

Peterborough and Thunder Bay were comparable across a range of indicators: mid-sized cities with some experience with immigration, where main settlement agencies transitioned to RAP SPOs in response to Syrian resettlement. Thunder Bay's RAP SPO had a fairly established volunteer program which was mobilized to support Syrian Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs). Volunteer mobilization was successful in both cities. In Guelph, partnerships were seen as crucial in supporting Syrian newcomers.

Analytic Overview

In mid-sized cities we found high complimentary between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. The tight-knit local community and a centralized settlement sector made it both easy and obvious as to where volunteer initiatives should focus their inquiries. The settlement sector actively facilitated volunteer initiatives and mobilized support to service gaps. Volunteer initiatives worked closely with the settlement sector and were open to expertise.

In mid-sized cities we found high sustainability given a ready pool of volunteers, tight-knit communities, and clear models for interaction which can persist over time despite changes in personnel. Sustainability is aided by the development of networks of expertise in which volunteers are considered key stakeholders.

Mid-sized cities were characterized by medium to high scalability given that initiatives developed clear models of interaction which can both be expanded within the context and are somewhat exportable to other contexts. Scalability was also aided by the fact that the settlement sector developed initiatives with low barriers to entry for volunteers to work directly with Syrian newcomers. As is the case with some initiatives in large cities, coordinated efforts emphasized social interactions between volunteers and refugees, characterized by close, sustained interactions for better integration.

Thunder Bay

Thunder Bay's only settlement agency and RAP provider, the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association (TBMA), was an active community hub for volunteering before Syrian resettlement. Its youth mentorship program is particularly popular, especially among indigenous youth. Syrian resettlement sparked unprecedented levels of community interest. However, many would-be volunteers lost interest given the lack of immediate tasks and the low capacity of the agency to field the scale of requests. Volunteer Coordinator Paul Wojda recounted how he spent three days answering the phone after the Federal government announced resettlement efforts in the autumn 2015. Some early volunteers were "interested in helping welcome people as they arrived, but not necessarily in long-term engagement." However, many settlement workers reiterated that volunteers who remained were both committed and high capacity.

Centralized Volunteer Management

Volunteers at the TBMA are put in a larger pool for their two main programs: Youth Mentorship, and the Community Connections program, both of which are now attended by Syrian newcomers in large numbers. Youth Mentorship focuses on matching at-risk youth with mentors on education, career development, community engagement, or pursuing a hobby or interest. The Community Connections runs ESL

conversation circles and women's events, among others. The LINC School, which is part of the TBMA, is run by paid teachers and supported by volunteers, many from Lakehead University.

"In Thunder Bay everyone's connected. A new family is coming in and I'll get a call asking for a connection to the mosque or the university and we can make it happen. It's a very integrated approach.

– Farhan Yousaf, Racialized Young Professionals, Lakehead University

As the sole settlement actor in Thunder Bay, the TBMA is a hub for volunteers and community partnerships. In 2016, the Youth Mentorship program alone registered over a hundred new volunteers. Most approach TBMA as individuals. As Wojda notes, "there's nowhere else around here that they could go." Nearly all interested community members are aware of the settlement sector and almost always consulted before intervening with newcomers.

TBMA runs screening programs and training is fairly rigorous, covering respect for boundaries, time commitments, setting goals and expectations, and handling crises. The TBMA maintains thorough oversight over youth mentors and other volunteers.

Michelle McKenzie Lander, RAP Coordinator, drew on the TBMA's pool of volunteers when GARs began arriving in 2016. Volunteers were a mix of those with a long-standing relationship and those who clambered to find an avenue for supporting Syrian refugees. TBMA relied on tested and trained volunteers for more intensive or sensitive roles, while other activities such as fundraising or outdoor events could be left to newer volunteers. Finding volunteers to attend GARs' medical appointments, for example, has been more difficult.

ESL in high schools is cited as a major gap in service provision. There is only one qualified secondary school ESL teacher in Thunder Bay, who teaches at five high schools. The teacher, Sari Johnston, also facilitated a program with TBMA to meet newcomer parents and talk about the school system and how to help students adjust. Johnston 'buddies up' newcomer students with English-speaking peers in an attempt to increase their conversational English skills and forge social bonds.

Support within Faith Communities

Thunder Bay's Muslim community plays a significant role in coordinating volunteer support for government and privately sponsored refugees. While previous contacts were informal and took place at the Thunder Bay Masjid, the creation of a Syrian Family Support Group Committee attempts to address volunteer engagement in a more coordinated fashion. The Committee was formed in January 2017 to ensure that PSRs and GARs will receive support after "Month 13".The Committee identifies newcomers' needs and skills, and seeks to develop individualized career and education plans.

Thunder Bay Refugee Arrivals, Nov. 2015 - Apr. 2017

40
10
105
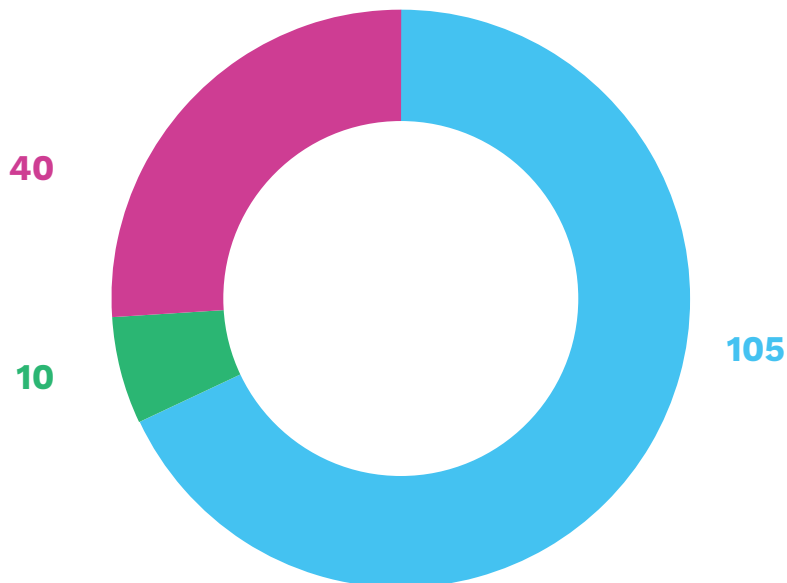
"We would be lost without our volunteers in the Community Connections Program. Volunteers are an integral part in program delivery.

–Linda Woodbeck, Community Connection Program Coordinator, Thunder Bay Multicultural Association.

Manal Alzghoul, Registered Nurse and Assistant Professor at the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences at Lakehead University, is one of the five members of the Masjid's Syrian Family Support Group Committee. A Jordanian immigrant, Dr. Alzghoul spoke of the Committee's desire to structure the informal and individualized social contacts that were born in the Masjid to ensure that all newcomer families receive information and support from the community. They offer services including familiarization with the Canadian educational, legal, and medical systems. Like Michelle Lander of the TBMA, Dr. Alzghoul underscored the need for further volunteer development, stating much of the Committee's knowledge is based on individual experience and research.

Imam Hikmatullah Sherzad described the Muslim community pre-resettlement as diverse, consisting mostly of upper-middle class professionals, many of whom are employed at the local university. Since the earliest arrivals, the Masjid has been involved in joint efforts between various church groups and the TBMA for fundraising, volunteering, and translation. Farhan Yousaf, Executive Director of the Racialized Young Professionals Group at Lakehead University, is also a Masjid member and a youth mentor at TBMA. He holds training sessions on race issues at TBMA as well as workshops with Syrian youth.

The Role of PSR Groups

A common insight from members of the Masjid was that newcomers often had little conception of their rights within both private sponsor groups and society at large. In some instances the community believed that sponsorship groups treated PSRs poorly, while in other situations newcomers felt uneasy about practicing their religion. Imam Sherzad believes that it is a community responsibility to teach newcomers about their fundamental rights, as well as tolerance. He noted that many newcomers came from places where they constituted a majority ethnic or religious community, and thus required sometimes sensitive discussions on tolerance towards other groups – particularly other newcomers and indigenous communities. The Masjid's programing speaks to intersecting issues of rights and tolerance – for example, holding talks on Malcolm X during Black History Month, honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and "How to be treaty conscious".

"Integration isn't just assimilation. [Newcomers] can be in their own communities and still be 'integrated'.

— Giovannina Rubero, Office Administrator, Roman Catholic Diocese of Thunder Bay Office of Refugee Services

Right to Refuge, a grassroots church group, privately sponsored the first resettled family from Syria. Sandy Taddeo, group member, recounted how the tight-knit congregation of about 200 mostly young families provided a dense web of social support. Fundraising had never been a problem, and drives to buy the family winter tires, or obtain industrial sewing machines for a newcomer who was a former seamstress, were quick and successful. The group's Facebook page made ad-hoc volunteering easy – messages were responded to quickly and needs met almost immediately.

Peterborough

20
Blended Sponsored
Refugee

45
Privately Sponsored
Refugee

175
Government-Assisted
Refugee
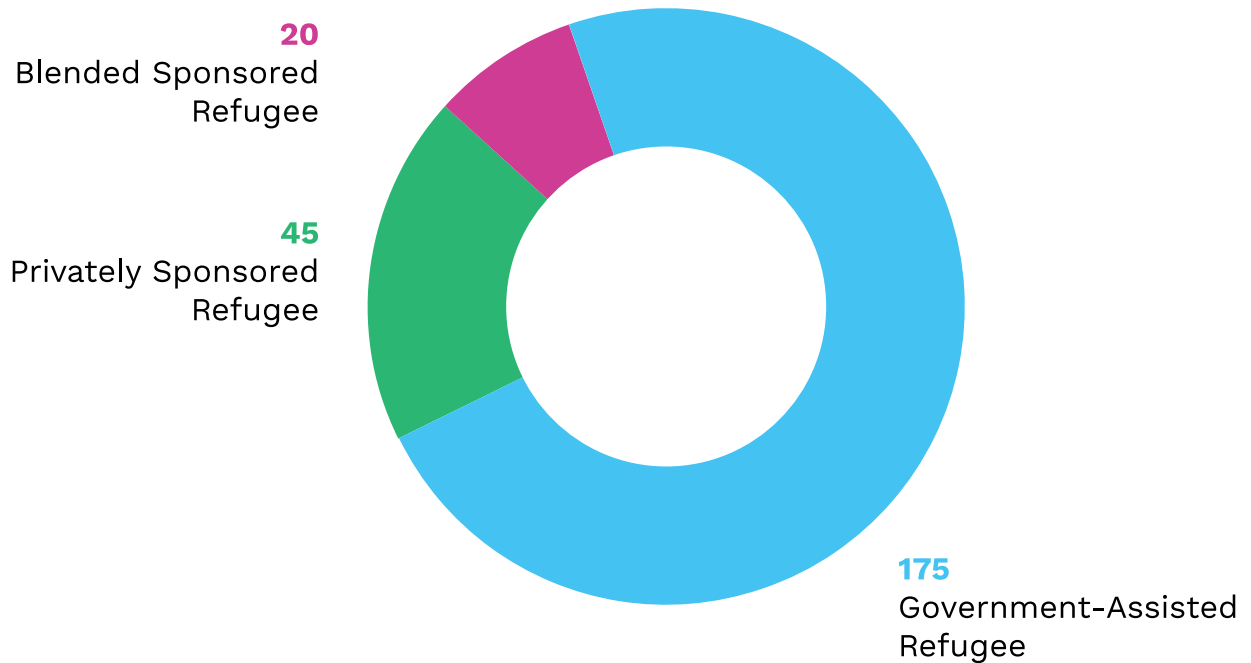
Approximately 230 Syrian refugees arrived in Peterborough since April 2015. Peterborough's only settlement agency is the New Canadians Centre, a RAP SPO as of April 2016. Other key players are the volunteer group Peterborough Refugee Network and the Kawartha Muslim Religious Association (KMRA). The KMRA has taken the lead on organizing Arabic-speaking volunteer interpreters in partnership with the New Canadians Centre (NCC) and the Trent Muslim Students Association. The local Synagogue has also been active in community-building events, in addition to sponsoring a family.

As in other smaller cities, community interest first coalesced around private sponsorship. Charlotte Forstner, founder of Peterborough Refugee Network, helped coordinate an information session on sponsorship in early November 2015, along with the NCC, several SAHs and Salaam Peterborough. These initial sessions were spurred mainly in response to the growing awareness of the Syrian refugee crisis in the media. Forstner described the picture of Aylan Kurdi as "transformative for a lot of people."

While the first meeting had a strong turnout, far greater interest in sponsorship and volunteering was sparked by the arson of the Peterborough mosque, a few days after the Paris Attacks.[4] The NCC was inundated with calls they were unable to field given limited staff. Those early days were characterized by what Forstner called "too much help" – a pattern we found across most cases.

Coordination with the NCC led the Network to start an extraordinarily useful website collating information for sponsors, volunteers, and community members. The site is increasingly visited by people from other communities in Ontario, as well as British Columbia and Nova Scotia, looking for a comprehensive information source for supporting refugee newcomers.

The volunteer relationship with the NCC is characterized by clear cooperation and delineated roles. Forstner said that the most significant impact of the close relationship was to ensure coordination and avoid service overlap and duplication. The settlement sector was "quick to shed responsibilities that were not in their core mandate" and early coordination problems were addressed quickly. The latter achievement was made possible when the NCC hired an experienced volunteer coordinator, Michael VanDerHerberg.

The KMRA also found that coordination with the NCC was marked by good communication and NCC's willingness to mobilize community resources. The KMRA provided much-needed volunteer support, particularly translation services and cultural support between sponsor groups and PSR families. Magdy Kamar, KMRA President, emphasized that his approach to volunteering was driven by enabling personal connections. As in Grey Bruce, individuals with personal knowledge and language skills become hubs for support. The ease with which KMRA was able to coordinate with the NCC and individually with GARs is, according to Kamar, a function of Peterborough's size. An immigrant himself, he stated that Peterborough "is an ideal sized town for integration" in that it is small enough to breed a sense of community and coordinate services, but large enough to have services such as a hospital, university, and wide array of available goods, including Middle-Eastern grocery stores.

[4] Chowdhry, Affan. "Faith manages: Peterborough rebuilds as mosque fire deemed a hate crime." The Globe and Mail. Jan. 5, 2017. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/after-mosque-fire-in-peterborough-ont-community-rallies-torebuild/article27272714/

Centralized Settlement & Mobilizing Social Networks for GARs

The NCC's Michael VanDerHerberg had worked in refugee resettlement since 2005, and joined the NCC as they applied for RAP SPO status. Given his expertise and personal experience in refugee camps in Jordan, he was able to anticipate needs of incoming GARs, and learned from GAR resettlement in Toronto and other cities. A notable lesson here is that the NCC ensured that incoming GARs had the ability to cook in temporary housing situations – mainly placing them in student dorms in a local college.

Lessons learned from other resettlement centres and academic research on newcomer integration appears to have spurred the NCC's robust response to the arrival of GARs. Noting integration gaps between GARs and PSRs, the NCC concluded that due to the lack of a broader, Arabic-speaking community in Peterborough, many GARs risked social isolation. The NCC set to disseminate the lesson to volunteers. As a headline of a local paper announced, it was "Social, not financial help, now needed for Syrian refugees in Peterborough."[5] NCC offered a venue for those who weren't able to privately sponsor refugees but wished to be involved.

The first meeting in February of 2016 drew a crowd of 400, and marked the creation of the first 16 "GAR Support Groups". Modeled after private sponsorship, each groups had a Team Lead, several members in charge of education, housing, healthcare, employment, and ESL, and other volunteers for ad-hoc needs such as transportation, childcare, and housing set-up. A second meeting later in February drew 90 people, who formed 3 more Support Groups.[6]

The model appears to work well. Before GAR families arrive, the Group meets with the family's NCC caseworker. Due to the relatively small number of GARs and Support Groups, the NCC is able to match them 'by hand' based on needs and the relative strength of the volunteer group. For example, GARs with acute health needs are matched with a strong volunteer group with links to the health sector. The NCC has identified the need for more direct training for Support Group volunteers, as well as for private sponsors.

The NCC's pioneering GAR support model led to efficient volunteer engagement. Because NCC is the only settlement agency, there were no "turf" issues between agencies, and the NCC was able to forge local partnerships, such as with the Housing Resource Centre in Peterborough. The Refugee Sponsorship Network took over many questions about private sponsorship, leaving the NCC with their core mandate.

[5] Anderson, Lance. "Social, not financial help, now needed for Syrian refugees in Peterborough," MyKawartha. Jan. 26, 2016. http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/6249590-social-not-financial-help-now-needed-for-syrian-refugees-in-peterborough/

[6] It should be noted that this model almost exactly mirrors Together Project's matching model. The research team and Together Project in general were not aware of the model before the outset of this research project.

While the NCC saw the positive effects of the GAR support model, they had less contact with PSRs, though many access services through NCC. In VanDerHerberg's view, the private sponsorship model can lead to paternalistic attitudes and unhealthy relationships with little to no settlement sector oversight. GAR Support Groups had the potential to pick up the best aspects of private sponsorship while avoiding common pitfalls. The absence of financial ties between newcomers and volunteers and the focused training were particularly obvious.

The NCC defined a successful partnership as one that leads to an ongoing relationship between newcomers and the community, with a healthy balance of power, which the settlement sector no longer has to mediate. The important role of the settlement sector in screening and training volunteers and managing access to vulnerable newcomers is clear in Peterborough.

One particularly encouraging indicator is that in the third round of GAR Support Group recruitment some of the volunteers were recently-arrived GARs themselves, who had seen the model in action. However, volunteer interest is lower than it was in early 2016, which VanDerHerberg ascribes to the fact that the Syrian war and refugee crisis no longer dominate the news cycle.

Guelph

In Guelph, where there are no RAP SPOs, volunteer engagement burgeoned around private sponsorship, much of it in response to local entrepreneur Jim Estill's very public promise to sponsor 50 Syrian families. Although Guelph had immigration services (Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington), the First Baptist Church saw the need for additional support, and created an advisory team and an organization called the Guelph Refugee Sponsorship Forum. A local campaign raised money for the Forum's administrative costs.

The Forum brought together about 800 community members interested in private sponsorship, as well as other volunteers. Early on, Estill held a meeting with local faith institutions. The Muslim Society of Guelph took on a major role in directly supporting PSRs, while the Guelph Refugee Sponsorship Forum coordination support groups, mentors, fundraising, and training sessions.

"Our job continues to be supporting the sponsorship groups. Preparing them, helping them with logistics, helping them develop the social network that families will need [for integration]."

— Naomi Klaas, Guelph Refugee Sponsorship Forum

Guelph Refugee Arrivals, Nov. 2015 - Apr. 2017

45
Blended Sponsorship
Refugees

0
Government-Assisted
Refugee

135
Privately Sponsored
Refugees

> *"I really cannot imagine what would have happened if the Refugee Support Forum or the Muslim Society weren't here."*
>
> *— Ishita Ghose, Guelph Refugee Sponsorship Forum*

The Forum also coordinates volunteers for ad-hoc tasks such as setting up bank accounts or providing interpretation services. They also coordinate a group of ESL volunteers who run informal conversation groups over specific issues. For example, the Forum hopes to introduce women's conversation circles over knitting. According to Ishita Ghose of the Forum, these personalized sessions are often preferred by PSRs over formal LINC classes.

> *"It is tough to break the momentum [of not working for the first months after settlement]. They arrive eager to work then get used to not working so continue not working.*
>
> *— Jim Estill, CEO, Danby*

The Forum provides the kind of oversight often lacking in private sponsorship since SAHs are not obliged to provide clear benchmarks or oversight. They hold monthly meetings with sponsor groups and families to discuss challenges and successes. The Forum organizes workshops with the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program to discuss 'Month 13' and to evaluate PSR settlement progress. It also brings together community groups and organizations working with newcomers including Jim Estill's program, the Muslim Society, Students Offering Welcome, the local Immigration Services, and others.

For many, employment is a key part of integration. Jim Estill's program is informally called "Ease into Canada" – Estill offers newcomers a three month engagement in his factory, with ESL lessons during off time. One of the obstacles barring newcomers from seeking employment is that most formal training, including ESL, was organized during work hours. In Estill's view, it was crucial to engage newcomers in the labour force in order to maintain enthusiasm in working, build ESL confidence, and structurally enable newcomers to seek work through on the job training and early access to labour markets.
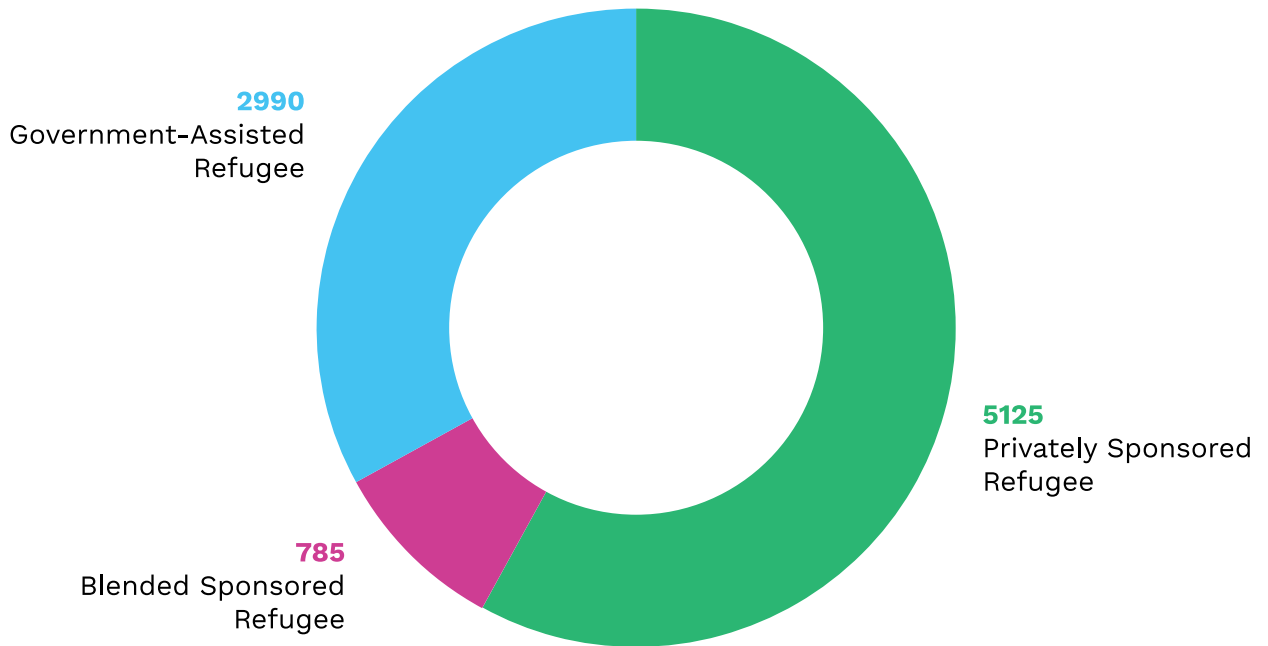
CASE III - LARGE CITIES: MYRIAD VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES & COMPLEX SETTLEMENT SECTOR

Toronto; Ottawa

Toronto received more resettled Syrians than any other urban centre in Canada. We identified more than 20 volunteer initiatives, though this is not at all a representative sample of the myriad different initiatives. Many were grassroots and had little interaction with the settlement sector; many stemmed from pre-established services, agencies, and community centres which repurposed volunteer engagement to respond to resettlement. Other volunteers were managed directly by well-established settlement agencies such as COSTI Immigrant Services and CultureLink, which have a strong history and presence in the city. The lack of a centralized hub made it difficult to map the entire landscape of volunteering in the city. While many in the settlement sector were aware of volunteer groups (often through direct partnership with them), no one had a grasp on the entire breadth of activities in Toronto.

The case of Ottawa presents an interesting dynamic of volunteer engagement with the settlement sector. Refugees613 developed an innovative and highly scalable model of a hub for connecting a range of settlement agencies with volunteer initiatives to ensure effective mobilization of available resources.

Toronto Refugee Arrivals, Nov. 2015 - Apr. 2017

2990
Government-Assisted
Refugee

5125
Privately Sponsored
Refugee

785
Blended Sponsored
Refugee

Ottawa Refugee Arrivals, Nov. 2015 - Apr. 2017

300
Blended Sponsored
Refugee

1610
Government-Assisted
Refugee

525
Privately Sponsored
Refugee

Analytic Overview

One of the main findings across both Ottawa and Toronto was that settlement service providers are entrenched in a complex web of sometimes overlapping and even competitive programing. Capacity was overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from volunteers, which often had little to no understanding of the settlement sector. In large cities there are myriad volunteer initiatives which range across the spectrum of the variable, and so developing a clear typology as in other cases is not possible.

In large cities we found a range of complimentarity, which was largely dependent on the type of volunteer initiative. We found medium to high complimentarity between organized / devoted volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector, and high complimentarity between pre-existing volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector given that both Ottawa and Toronto had significant newcomer, ethnic, and religious civil society initiatives experienced in working with the settlement sector and with a good knowledge of available services. We found varied complimentarity with grassroots initiatives given that some were often adversarial with the settlement sector and saw it as a gatekeeper. However, some worked closely with the settlement sector and refined their processes over time.

We found medium sustainability between both organized / devoted and pre-existing / repurposed volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. As the case describes, the complex nature of the settlement sector and the fact that it has been traditionally closed to volunteer initiatives meant that some volunteer initiatives were not able to sustainably engage. We found varied sustainability between novel / grassroots initiatives and the settlement sector. Some initiatives folded given waning interest of volunteers and the lack of mobilization capacity of the settlement sector. However, some initiatives, particularly those which acted as a hub for connecting volunteers and the settlement sector, and those which provided matching opportunities between Canadians and newcomers show high sustainability given that one of their prime functions is to liaise with the settlement sector.

We found low scalability between organized / devoted initiatives given that these have reached a peak of engagement and given their place in the complex settlement sector in these cities are not transferrable to other contexts. Pre-existing and grassroots initiatives showed medium to high scalability and present interesting examples for other contexts. In the case of Ottawa, Refugees613 presents a highly interesting hub model, and in both Toronto and Ottawa we saw cases where services to match GARs with Canadians, in cooperation with the settlement sector, can both grow over time and be exported to other contexts.

Grassroots: Toronto

Many grassroots volunteer initiatives in Toronto sprung up without prior consultation or interaction with the settlement sector. Popular areas of intervention were ESL, clothing and furniture donations, and employment opportunities. Frustration with the lack of adequate ESL instruction was encountered throughout our research. Most often it was referenced as a barrier to employment and integration. The Syrian Canadian Foundation, a volunteer-run non-profit, partnered with the University of Toronto Mississauga to launch its English Tutoring Program for Newcomers to help overcome service gaps.

The Near East Civilizations-Cultural Exchange Support Initiative grew from the observation that Syrian newcomer youth face barriers in language and education. Cofounder Rasha El-Endari noted that 18-27-year-olds are at a "very risky age" because they are too old to attend regular high school but do not yet have the language skills to attend college or university. Funded by an initial grant from the University of Toronto, El-Endari and her colleagues from the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies bring undergraduates eager to learn Arabic together with young Syrian newcomers equally eager to learn English.

The volunteer initiative reflects a more general and significant frustration at the structural processes necessary for educational advancement for Syrian newcomer youth: those wishing to attend college or university require more intensive language training than that provided by RAP ESL or LINC classes. Students often lose momentum working toward academic goals because of inadequate language instruction. El-Endari noted the lack of sufficient information and guidance regarding admissions processes for newcomers whose degrees and certificates from countries of origin are difficult to verify.

Mes Amis Canada, one of the most reported-on initiatives, began as a clothing drive and has now runs a successful employment training program, Darzee. The Mes Amis Facebook group became a hub of volunteer activity. The initiative began with The Clothing Drive, which garnered so many donations that they filled a store in a Scarborough strip mall. Originally for PSRs, the drive also ran pop-up shops for GARs in temporary housing.[7] In 2016, the group ran eye clinics for newcomers, put together Ramadan Food and Toy Baskets, and became a registered non-profit. Now a grassroots organization "that helps refugees in the areas of education, social integration, health, employment and assimilation,"[8] Mes Amis launched Darzee, a women's training program aimed at giving newcomer women the tools to launch successful businesses.[9] According to Executive Director Julie Mahfouz Rezvani, Mes Amis began to focus on employment as crucial given that for many GARs and PSRs, financial support had ended after "Month 13". Mes Amis now facilitates community

[7] "Woman began donating clothes, now runs store for Syrian refugees." CBC News. Jan. 7, 2016. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/woman-began-donating-clothes-now-runs-store-for-syrian-newcomers-1.3392568

[8] Keung, Nicholas. "Sewing program helps make entrepreneurs of GTA refugees." Toronto Star. Mar. 3, 2017. https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2017/03/03/sewing-program-helps-make-entrepreneurs-of-gta-refugees.html

[9] D'Amours, Jillian. "Refugee women embrace entrepreneurial spirit in Toronto". Middle East Eye. Mar. 8, 2017. http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/refugee-women-embrace-entrepreneurial-spirit-toronto-1358707470

interactions with newcomers with a focus on integration and has a network of 3000 refugee newcomers throughout Ontario.

The case of Lifeline Syria represents an instance where media attention might have been a detriment to volunteer mobilization. Respondents, who preferred not to be identified, reported that much of their time was spent simply trying to find the capacity to respond to volunteers and overtures to help. Many would-be volunteers were frustrated at the lack of access.

Like many other volunteer initiatives, Refugee Career Jumpstart Project began with casual interactions between its cofounders and GAR newcomers temporarily housed in hotels. The group noted that there was a gap in employment assistance service—Employment Consultants at settlement agencies often had heavy caseloads and did not provide holistic capacity building. RCJP pays particular attention to language and capacity building for newcomers to acquire and refine skills to move out of low-wage work.

Mustafa Alio, cofounder and lead of the organization, says private-sponsorship showed that community and grassroots work is important, however financial support in these areas have been lacking. He added that the government could be using the energy and momentum of civil society to enhance the settlement sector. While agreeing that it would not be wise to allocate funding to every volunteer initiative, he noted that settlement agencies, through experience and interaction, have a good sense of effective and capable volunteer initiatives.

Other groups attempted to address social isolation for GARs in particular given the increasing visibility of the integration gap between PSRs and those who relied on caseworkers and government assistance. Syrian Welcome Dinners, run by Melissa Jones, calls for Canadian families to invite newcomers to their home for a meal. In an attempt to bridge the 'information' gap, Syrian Active Volunteers, in Mississauga, run a hotline that newcomers can call with questions.

The Welcome Project was an informal initiative begun by private sponsors whose PSR families had not yet arrived – instead, volunteers responded to the many GARs who were living in temporary housing in the city. Founders Kate Bate and Virginia Johnson[10] found that GARs were at risk of becoming 'second class refugees' and went to work on identifying their needs and finding willing Canadian volunteers.[11] For the most part, this meant drawing on personal social networks to find volunteers. Welcome Project activities, including public space activities like sporting events and trips to cultural institutions, focused on providing venues for social interactions between Canadians and Syrian GARs. Welcome Project eventually developed into Together Project.

Many other groups were formed around private sponsorship but broadened these

[10] Kate Bate is the Co-Chair of the Together Project Steering Committee.

[11] "Syrians feel 'hopeless' as government-sponsored refugees in Toronto, mother says." CBC News. Jan. 25, 2016. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/syrian-refugees-hotel-toronto-1.3418220

activities since. <u>Toronto Friends of Refugees</u> and <u>Roncesvalles Refugee Relief</u> began as groups of private sponsors. The latter partners with CultureLink and has also been part of the Newcomer Family Cinema series at a local movie theatre. Toronto Friends of Refugees volunteers focus on fundraising, graphic design, and Arabic interpretation to support their activities.

We spoke to several members of private sponsorship groups in Toronto who shared their experiences with resettlement, particularly in regards to their experiences accessing settlement services and training. <u>The Ripple Refugee Project</u> stands out as a particularly scalable and sustainable example. The group was comprised of professionals, including a number of personnel from Doctors Without Borders (MSF), the communications sector, and public health professionals with experience with program evaluation who came together in response to media reports about refugee flows around the world.

"It really surprises me that the private sponsorship program operates with such little oversight. Sponsorship groups are dealing with money, sensitive situations, and vulnerable people. For example there can be people who need intensive therapy, or domestic violence, and the sponsors feel like they're in over their heads. There are volunteers without a lot of training and cross-cultural understanding. In my view there should really be case workers checking in with the families at least once a month. Sponsorship groups can end up playing the roles of social workers or psychologists and they're not prepared for it.

– Andrew FitzGerald, Chair of the Ripple Refugee Project

In October 2015 the group sponsored a BVOR Syrian family of eight through Lifeline Syria. The family arrived in December 2015. The group started with the desire to become "serial sponsors" and from the outset sought to empower the family in decision-making by developing resources and building in an iterated self-evaluation and service evaluation from their sponsored family. They found that the SAHs offered very little oversight and training, and so wanted to share resources and lessons-learned with other sponsorship groups. Ripple Project publishes all their resources as a public Google Drive folder, as well as <u>information on their self-evaluation procedures</u>, the goal of which is to enhance service provision to their newly sponsored family, who arrived in 2016. Their blog is visited by about 200 people per day.

Grassroots: Ottawa

The Ottawa Centre for Refugee Action started as a small group of family and friends and grew to several hundred people. They mobilized to offer basic support in direct coordination with the First United Church of Ottawa and Jewish Family Services. They noted the settlement sector was "too overwhelmed to help" but generally supportive. They noted that the major impediment was that the settlement sector "could not manage the huge volunteer interest," which would have helped given that the organizers were all volunteers with full-time jobs. Ottawa Centre Refugee Action also noted that for the first several months the sector was largely unavailable, and that while churches were overwhelmed, they "did their best to help." Official settlement agencies and NGOs were "very 'turf' conscious and often disappointing in terms of actual service to needy arrivals."

Refugee 613 has become an important and effective hub for mobilizing the community and connecting different players, including volunteers, sponsors, settlement and government in Ottawa. Acting in face of what Sally Dimachki calls "existing gaps in information and lack of clear pathways to involvement in refugee integration," the organization sees itself as a hub that bridges would-be volunteers and sponsors with the settlement sector and the broad spectrum of service providers for newcomers. They see their main value in helping leverage the energy of the wider community in support of integration services, and channeling volunteers to organizations that require volunteer support but lack recruitment capacity.

The level of duplication and overlap has really gone down over the past year. People who work in the field know what's out there. In terms of the public there are a lot of people with really good intentions and they want to start a new initiative. It turns out if you play the role of connector you can effectively channel that good will and desire.

— Sally Dimachki, Project Coordinator, Refugees 613.

Refugee 613 presents a complimentary, sustainable and scalable model for volunteer mobilization and collaboration with settlement actors. Their coalition model helps ensure that settlement sector agencies collaborate, which if sometimes fraught or hindered by 'turf', Dimachki considers a success. Service overlap has decreased over the past year as volunteers, caseworkers, and service providers have become aware of each other's work. In a response that speaks to our findings in rural areas, Dimachki says that private sponsors "are not experts and shouldn't be expected to carry all that weight. It's really all about connecting people." Apart from connecting volunteers and the settlement sector, one of Refugee 613's chief activities is to provide training and support to private sponsor groups. The organization's training and connections help ensure that sponsors do not take on added settlement burdens and thereby mitigate burnout.

Pre-existing/Repurposed: Toronto

Other volunteer initiatives repurposed pre-existing volunteer capacity to respond to Syrian resettlement. Many of these, including SAHs, settlement agencies, community centres, and faith communities, had previously worked with volunteers and created new, Syrian-specific programing. Volunteer Toronto directed interested volunteers to initiatives that had previously worked on resettlement and were looking for more capacity to support Syrian refugees, including WoodGreen Community Services, the Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto, the Halton Multicultural Council, the Arab Community Centre of Toronto, the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto, and Central Neighbourhood House. Thus a pre-existing volunteer hub was used to channel volunteer capacity to an organization which could effectively manage it.

Other programs gave newcomers access to existing services, particularly no-cost household goods and clothing. New Circles Community Services offered access to free second hand clothing; the Furniture Bank's services were also available to them. The Muslim Welfare Centre provided Syrian Welcome Kits to families moving into their own housing. Many existing programs experienced higher volumes of volunteer interest in their activities. The Peer Project, which links at-risk youth with mentors, had a very high volume of Syrian children join the program, and a high response from Arabic-speaking volunteer mentors to help children navigate Canadian schools. The Turtle House Art/Play Centre has offered volunteer arts programing to children and parents from conflict regions since 2008. Their 2016 Syrian Refugee Pilot Project offered art sessions for Syrian newcomer children temporarily housed in hotels.

Pre-existing/Repurposed: Ottawa

Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) piloted several new integration projects beginning in the winter of 2016. The 'Friends of the Family' project seeks to match newcomers who arrived as refugees with groups of Canadians "to help them build social capital, facilitate their integration process, and reduce social isolation."[12] The project entails a three month commitment of three hours per week, and focuses exclusively on social and recreational activities. GARs who participate have been in the country for at least six months, meaning that immediate settlement needs have often been resolved. OCISO has a pre-existing volunteer database, and additional volunteers were recruited via media outreach. As with the Welcome Project in Toronto, some were sponsorship groups whose families had not yet arrived but who sought immediate engagement in newcomer support.

The screening and training aspects of the Friends of the Family matching represent a scalable and complimentary mode of volunteer engagement, though as with other projects, it is not clear if sustainability is limited to the media attention around Syrian refugee resettlement.

[12] Thornington, Bonnie. "Friends of the Family Project Orientation Session for Volunteers." Ontario Community Immigrant Services Organization. N.d. https://ociso.org/event/friends-of-the-family-project-orientation-session-for-volunteers-2/

Bonnie Thornington of the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization told us that the aim of the project is for volunteers to fill gaps in social support not traditionally associated with the settlement sector. Volunteers are discouraged from helping their matched families with housing, employment, education, and health, primarily to prevent service duplication. According to Thornington, though most volunteers are well-intentioned, many are unaware of existing services and assume gaps.

Other OCISO pilot projects seek to do a similar sort of 'matching' which does not replace but augments existing services. One project seeks to link up Syrian GARs who have been flagged for mental health risks with Arabic-speaking peers for social and emotional support. Another matches newcomer women with women arrived in Canada as refugees in previous waves of resettlement; a third matches GAR youth with other newcomer youth. Though success is difficult to measure, there has been sustained volunteer interest in the project – though as of late the number GAR newcomers in need has grown. Thornington hopes that the project will outlive the Syrian resettlement crisis.

Established: Toronto

Many of the most effective forms of collaboration came from volunteer movements working with established settlement agencies, which received significant volunteer interest based on their public profile and access to newcomers. However, there was often insufficient capacity among settlement agencies to directly harness volunteer interest. COSTI Immigrant Services, one of the city's largest settlement agencies and the GTA's RAP SPO, experienced a huge uptick in volunteer interest in late 2015. COSTI became a prominent feature in the media in the early days of GAR resettlement, and were presented as "overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the clients and unanticipated difficulties in securing housing for large families."[13] Many volunteers thus focused on COSTI to address these gaps, but reported being frustrated at what was often perceived as a gatekeeper role of the settlement sector in general.

[13] Keung, Nicholas "Last Syrian newcomes leave Toronto's hotel for refugees." Toronto Star. May 20, 2016. https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/05/20/last-syrian-newcomers-leave-torontos-hotel-for-refugees.html

Josie Di Zio, Senior Director of Planning and Program Development recalls that volunteer initiatives ranging from individuals, informal civic groups of volunteers, and mosques approached COSTI. COSTI developed a two-tier system whereby each civic group (such as the Syrian Canadian Foundation, Syrian Active Volunteers, Muslim Association of Canada, Islam Institute of Toronto, Welcome Project, and small groups and mosque councils) would recruit and screen volunteers, who would then collaborate with COSTI. Volunteer initiatives focused on immediate needs of newly-arrived GARs: housing, health, and social support. According to Di Zio, the enormous level of need meant that duplication of service provision was rare. However, volunteer initiatives stressed it was often difficult to liaise with settlement caseworkers, and some service duplication occurred at the operational level.

Di Zio lamented that in many instances RAP providers lack the infrastructure and history to fully develop volunteer management capacity. While volunteers were invaluable, coordination entails a significant workload. She emphasized the need to develop a cohesive standard of volunteer coordination across all COSTI programs (50 in total). Though government funding is welcome, Di Zio believed that best practices in building volunteer infrastructure would be a crucial step in developing long-term volunteer engagement. Volunteer initiatives echoed the sentiment, and argued that the complexity of the settlement sector made it somewhat challenging to know where to focus energies.

Respondents from the settlement sector, who did not fall under either the RAP SPO or SAH framework, but nonetheless work on the frontline of service provision to Syrian newcomers, argued that the scale of resettlement meant RAP SPOs were unable to find housing for GARs in a timely manner. Though these respondents preferred to remain confidential, they argued that the result was that many GARs lost valuable time in their first months of settlement when they could have accessed first year RAP programing and extended services under the Interim Federal Healthcare Program.

Some settlement sector actors had deep experience in mobilizing volunteers. CultureLink, which has a 27-year history of engaging volunteers with newcomers, has over 500 screened and trained volunteers in its Community Connections Mentorship Program (CCMP). Stemming from the now-defunct Host Program, the CCMP considers the long-term integration needs of newcomers and engages local communities. They run English Conversation Circles, Citizenship Mentoring, Career Mentoring, Walking Circles, and sports clubs. CultureLink also partners with local theatres to provide outings and mentorships. The CCMP introduced a new program in December 2016 to focus on refugee employment support. The program, coordinated by Nadwa Nimer, partners with the Labour Education Centre and Hospitality Group to theme ESL classes to the labour market, where volunteer discuss sector-specific terminology. Nimer also saw the need to address cultural sensitivity issues among both volunteers and Syrian newcomers.

Terry Baker, Manager of the CCMP, said that recruiting volunteers was not a problem – interest remained stable and fundraising as well as in-kind donations were easy for them to solicit, in part due to the program's reputation. Volunteers were extensively trained and 'treated like staff' in terms of the responsibilities, which vary depending on volunteer capacity. Baker mentioned that reimbursing volunteers for food and transport was a small but important part of ensuring long-term engagement, and lamented their lack of resources to do so.

Respondents also noted that it was difficult to get commitment from GARs to attend workshops or classes in Toronto. Given the complex landscape of settlement services in the city, Baker and Nimer both mentioned the notion of a 'bidding war' between settlement agencies and community organizations, all of whom sought to recruit newcomers for their programing. In their view, this led to newcomers facing fatigue from numerous engagement opportunities as well as to a lack of clear picture of the services available to them. Nimer believed that harmful rumours that spread through GAR communities were the product of an overly-complex settlement landscape where finding definitive information was difficult. Problems of engaging newcomers rather than volunteers were not unique to CultureLink, in their view.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

Findings are clearly mixed both across and within cases. However, some trends stand out. Most generally, the resettlement of Syrian refugees, and particularly images from the refugee crisis in Europe, catalyzed volunteer initiatives in support of Syrian refugee newcomers in a way not seen since Project Lifeline and the resettlement of the Indochinese "boat people" in the wake of the Vietnam War.

Unlike in that period, volunteer initiatives largely had to engage with a significantly more robust, varied, and entrenched settlement sector which often lacked sufficient resources or expertise to harness and mobilize volunteer initiatives. Thus we see differences across the indicators of complimentarity, sustainability, and scalability of collaborations with the settlement sector. "Fig. 3" below presents a summary of our research findings of the interactions between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector.

If "best practices" are to be identified, it is among initiatives which serve as a hub for mobilizing volunteers with the settlement sector, as found in medium-sized cities and in some cases in large cities, and with initiatives which match Canadians and established newcomers with resettled Syrians for settlement support in order to foster lasting relationships and durable integration. These initiatives are collaborative, complimentary, sustainable, and scalable.

Settlement Sector			
Volunteer Initiatives	**Non-Existent / Minimal**	**Small & Centralized**	**Large & Complex**
Organized / Devoted	✕	✕	**Toronto** M Complimentarity M Sustainability L Scalability
Pre-existing / repurposed	✕	**Thunder Bay Peterborough** H Complimentarity H Sustainability M-H Scalability	**Toronto Ottawa** H Complimentarity M Sustainability L Scalability
Novel / Grassroots	**Owen Sound / Grey Bruce** All Volunteer M Sustainability L Scalability	**Guelph Peterborough, Hamilton** H Complimentarity M-H Sustainability M-H Scalability	**Toronto Ottawa** L-H Complimentarity M-H Sustainability M-H Scalability

1. Crucial Mobilization but Low Scalability in Rural Areas

In Grey Bruce / Owen Sound, where the settlement sector had no presence, organized volunteer initiatives took it upon themselves to collect, collate, and disseminate resources, organize services provision to resettled refugees, and work to find employment for resettled Syrians.

We thus see rural areas as having **non-applicable complimentarity** given that the settlement sector is largely absent. However, close-knit community ties and an active civil society mean **medium sustainability**. The reason that sustainability of volunteer operations is not "high" is the reliance on a few individuals for crucial services like translation or ESL. Given the high rate of burnout and general life changes, volunteer efforts are not resilient to exogenous shocks. In rural cases, necessity was the catalyst for organization, though it cannot be said that this admirable self-organization and 'going it alone' culture should be the norm. We see **low scalability** to other contexts. In contrast, lessons should be taken from the context so that other rural communities do not have to start from scratch. It is also not advisable that communities rely on a few individuals and self-directed learning for settlement support.

We have **medium to high confidence** in our findings from these specific rural areas, but cannot claim generalizable findings or lessons across all cases. Historical immigration patterns, relations with indigenous and first nations, levels and types of industry, socioeconomic strata, and a host of other factors can significantly impact the settlement scene.

2. The "Sweet Spot" in Small Cities

Overall, we see a kind of "sweet spot" in the case of Thunder Bay and Peterborough, which we characterize as having a small and centralized settlement sector, which cooperated with a range of pre-existing / re-purposed and novel / grassroots volunteer initiatives.

Both cities represent cases of **very high complimentarity** between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector, **high sustainability**, and **medium to high scalability**. The key variables here seem to be a tight-knit and mobilized community, centralized and open settlement sector, key partnerships between civil society, faith groups, academics, and the settlement sector, which offer clear hubs for volunteer mobilization and support.

We have **high confidence** in findings from Thunder Bay and Peterborough, and speculate these findings might be reproduced in other areas with similar population size and density and a similarly focused settlement sector. Medium-sized cities with a centralized settlement sector might have much to teach the settlement sector in large cities, where turf and the overwhelming scale of volunteer support initiatives might have overwhelmed and fundamentally upset the organizational culture of settlement sector actors.

3. Complexity and Overlap in Large Cities

The cases of large cities yielded extremely **mixed results**, and it is challenging to draw a single picture of the types of interactions between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. Of course, in Toronto and Ottawa there are initiatives that have proved robust and scalable, with effective collaboration with the settlement sector. Others have ceased to exist.

We identify **medium complimentarity** between pre-existing volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector given that some worked well while others worked completely independently of the settlement sector, and vice versa. We see **medium sustainability** given the wide range of grassroots initiatives. Thus even where there is **medium to high complimentarity** and **medium to high sustainability** we can observe low scalability in initiatives between pre-existing organizations and a complex settlement sector given that partnerships between these groups depend on longstanding and idiosyncratic relationships.

Many of the informal conversations our research team conducted in Toronto highlight the fact that would-be volunteers became frustrated at the perceived lack of attentiveness of the settlement sector or the fact that it acts as a gatekeeper to Syrian newcomers. On the other hand, large cities have yielded highly sustainable and scalable models. In addition, Toronto's **newcomer employment sector and its social enterprises are robust, complimentary, sustainable, and scalable**.

In Ottawa, **Refugees613** represents a unique model for overcoming the problem of significant volunteer interest but a complex settlement sector with little experience or capacity in volunteer mobilization. It acts as both a coalition among settlement actors and a hub for directing volunteer initiatives.

We have only **medium to high confidence** in the case studies in major cities given the complexity of the issue area. A full picture would likely require a sustained research project of the same scope as the current paper which focused on all of Ontario.

4. Tensions between Volunteer Initiatives & the Settlement Sector

In roughly half the cases we encountered anecdotes of tensions between volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector. Settlement sector actors reported impatience among some volunteers when faced with limited access to newly-arrived Syrians, and behaviour which exhibited little to no knowledge of, or regard for the unique vulnerabilities of newly-arrive refugees. On the other side of the coin, some volunteers reported that the settlement sector actors played too much of a gatekeeper role, and were too concerned with process and 'turf' rather than ameliorating immediate issues. It is likely the case that there is truth to both sides of the story. The desire to support and protect newcomers is the overriding and common motivation of both.

Indeed, our online surveys showed that in most cases volunteer initiatives and the settlement sector eventually worked closely together, and volunteers consistently reported learning about vulnerability and trauma as one of the most positive developments of sustained interaction with the settlement sector.

5. The Persistence of Cultural Differences

The majority of sponsorship groups and settlement sector personnel reported navigating cultural differences as one of the most difficult aspects of sponsorship. Services for bridging cultural differences were almost entirely absent. The absence of training around cultural sensitivity and awareness was marked across rural areas.

6. Lack of Resources and Oversight in Private Sponsorship

In all cases, we heard stories from both the settlement sector and volunteer initiatives about instances of private sponsor groups behaving in ways that were paternalistic. This could come in the form of general cultural superiority around norms of social behavior, but also controlling access to bank accounts, discouraging newcomers from associating with their ethnic or faith groups, interfering on child care, interfering on choices around education, and generally not respecting the autonomy or agency of the newcomers who they had sponsored. Some of these behaviors could be ameliorated with training and mandatory oversight of the relationship.

7. The (Somewhat False) Distinction between GARs & PSRs

The differentiation between Privately-Sponsored Refugees and Government-Assisted Refugees can ignore the functional overlap in service provision by settlement sector actors outside of the RAP SPO and SAH range of actors. Our findings indicate the need for future research on models of refugee resettlement which combine the best of both worlds and engage volunteers and volunteer initiatives.

8. Social Networks and Personal Contact Matters Across all Cases

Across cases there are repeated instances of pairing individuals or groups of Canadians and Syrian newcomers. This aspect of the private sponsorship model seems to be an intuitive, if not necessarily recognized or supported way to help in the settlement and integration of Syrian refugee newcomers. Indeed, across responses from the surveys and in-person interviews the majority of cases exhibit some kind of drive to "match", "pair", or "buddy" in order to offer more personalized assistance, immersive ESL, sustained friendship, mentorship, or job training.

APPENDIX A:
VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Organization
Arden Language Centre
Collingwood Syrian Family Sponsorship Fund
Friends Around Georgian Bluffs
Friends of the Neighbourhood Group
Grey Bruce Newcomers Network
Hanover Area Refugee Committee
Ease into Canada Sponsorship Program
Lifeline Syria
Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
Meaford Refugee Welcome Group
MWRG
Newcomers North
Northern Bruce Refugee Sponsorship Group
Ottawa Centre Refugee Action

Organization
Ottawa Centre Refugee Action
Prince Edward County Syrian Refugee Fund
Refugee Career Jumpstart Project
Refugee Integration and Support Effort
Refugee Sponsorship Forum, First Baptist Church
Roofs for Refugees
Saugeen Shores Refugee Fund
Syrian Active Volunteer
Upper Grand District School Board
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Newcomers Committee
Students Offering Welcome
Syrian Refugee Consortium Guelph
Thunder Bay Multicultural Association Youth Mentorship Project
Together Project Welcome Group

APPENDIX B:
SAH / RAP SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Organization	Type
AURA	SAH
Canadian Unitarian Council	SAH
COSTI Immigrant Services	RAP
Crosslands Church	RAP
CultureLink Settlement and Community Services	RAP
Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support (DOORS) to New Life Refugee Centre	SAH
Diocese of Ontario Refugee Support (DOORS) to New Life Refugee Centre	SAH
London Cross Cultural Learner Centre	RAP
Maison Sophia House, Catholic Centre for Immigrants	RAP
Maison Sophia House, Catholic Centre for Immigrants	RAP
Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County	RAP
New Canadians Centre Peterborough	RAP

Organization	Type
New Canadians Centre Peterborough	RAP
Northwood Neighborhood Services	SAH
North Bay and District Multicultural Centre	SAH
North Park Community Centre	SAH
Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services	RAP
Reception House Waterloo Region	RAP
Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Catherines	SAH
Sault Community Career Centre	RAP
Thunder Bay Multicultural Association	RAP
The Anglican Diocese of Niagara	SAH
The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada	SAH
Wesley Urban Ministries	RAP
Woodvale Church	SAH
World Renew	SAH

APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEWEES

Location	Interviewees
Collingwood	Julie Buckley Collingwood Syrian Family Sponsorship
Grey Bruce Counties	David Morris Grey Bruce Newcomers Network
	Johanne and Clark Schneider Friends Around Georgian Bluffs
	Leslie Moskovitz Hanover and Area Refugee Committee
Guelph	Ishita Ghose Refugee Sponsorship Forum, First Baptist Church
Hamilton	Lisa Fulsom Wesley Urban Ministries
Ottawa	Bonnie Thornington Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
	Sally Dimachki Refugees 613
Owen Sound	Andrea and David Foster Arden Language Centre
	Dana Benson St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
	Donald Statham Lutheran Church of Our Saviour
	Moklass Hassan United Way Bruce Grey

Location	Interviewees
Peterborough	Magdy Kamar Kawartha Muslim Religious Association
	Michael VanDerHerberg New Canadians Centre Peterborough
Thunder Bay	Farhan Yousaf Racialized Young Professionals Group, Lakehead University
	Giovannina Rubero DOORS to New Life Refugee Centre
	Imam Hikmatullah Sherzad Thunder Bay Masjid
	Linda Woodbeck Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
	Manal Alzghoul Lakehead University
	Michelle Lander Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
	Paul Wojda Thunder Bay Multicultural Association
	Sandy Taddeo Right to Refuge
Toronto	Josie Di Zio COSTI Immigrant Services
	Andrew FitzGerald Ripple Refugee Project Chair
	Mustafa Alio Refugee Career Jumpstart Project
	Rasha El-Endari Near East Civilizations-Cultural Exchange Support Initiative
	Confidential Various

TOGETHER PROJECT