

Local Immigrant Partnerships Role in Syrian Refugee Resettlement in Three Ontario Reception Centres.

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Research Description:

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded rapid fire evaluation of Syrian refugee resettlement. “Rapid fire” refers to 12-18 months after surge.

Research Questions:

- What role did LIPs play in the Syrian refugee resettlement process?
- How did the regional context structure the nature and extent of LIP involvement?
- How effective were the LIP in coordinating, mobilizing, communicating and managing public and refugee serving sector responses to the resettlement process?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the LIP’s structure in light of the Syrian refugee resettlement process and how and why might these reflect differences in community context
- What policy lessons can be learned from the role of the LIPs in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in these communities?



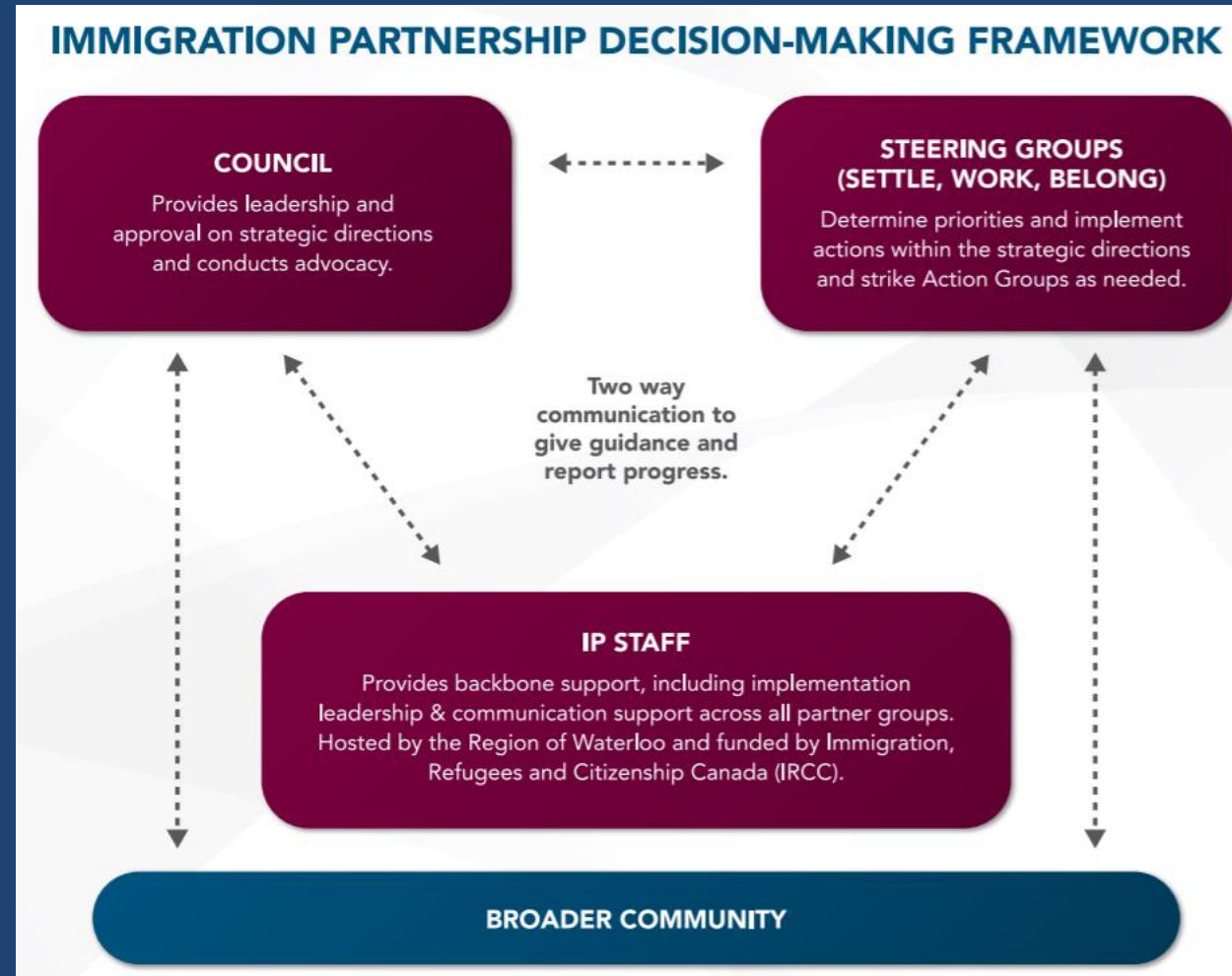
Region of Waterloo



Demographic Category	Statistics (Stats Can/IRCC)
Population	511,300
Immigrants as % of Population	23%
Assisted Refugees (GARS)	1013
Private Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)	226
Blended Visa Office Referrals (BVORS)	160
Average Annual GAR Intake	280

Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership

- Official Start: 2011
- Emerged out of WRIEN
- Contract Holder: Regional Municipality of Waterloo
- Exists at arms length from Regional Municipality
- Housed in Regional Municipality
- Primary Funding Source: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Secondary Funding Sources: Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Regional Municipality of Waterloo, and United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area
- Refugees part of language and mandate from inception.

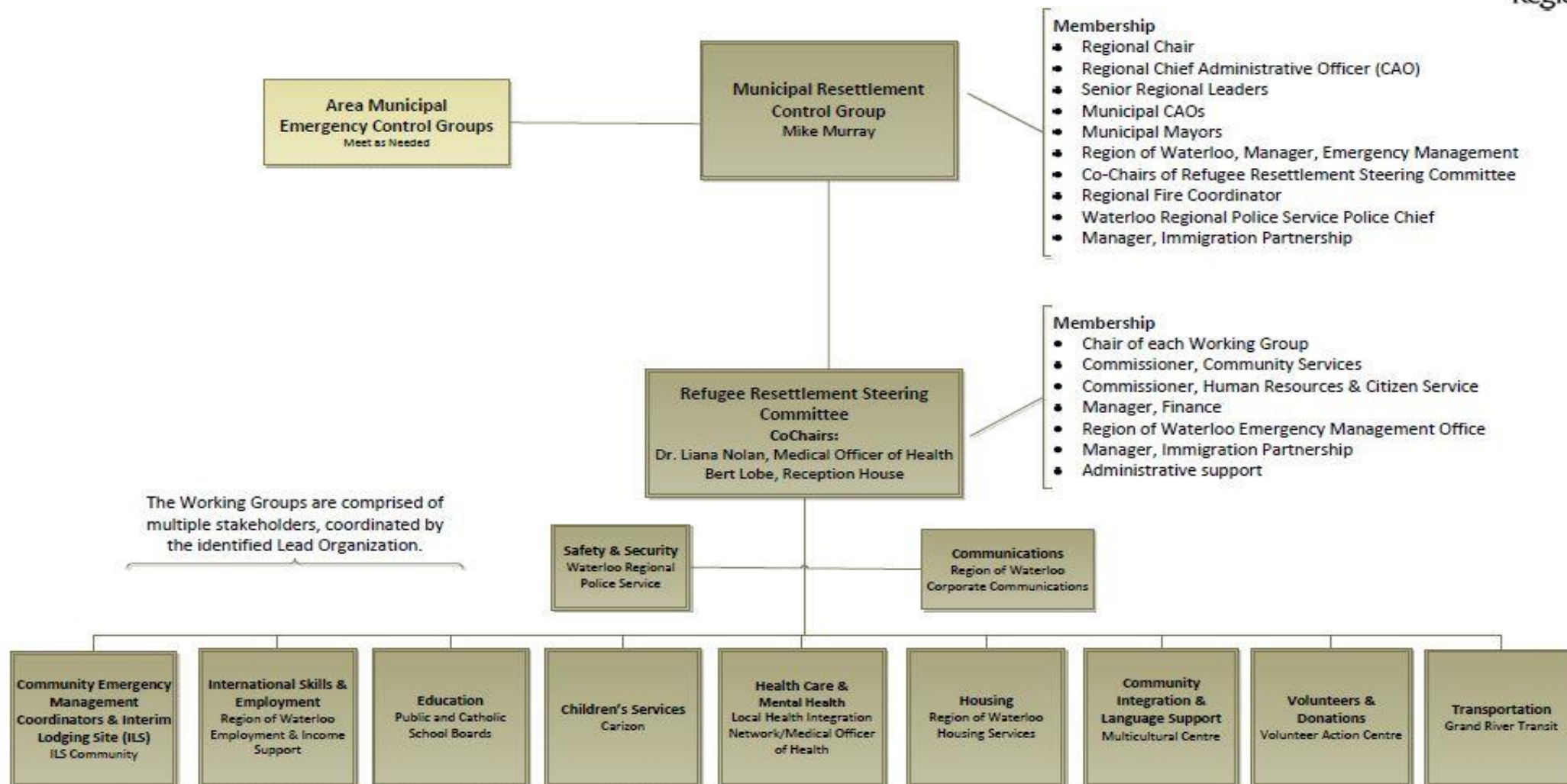


Pre-Arrival: LIP's Role

Time (2015)	Action
September 15	Helped organize and support local rally for Syrian refugees
Early October	Conversations begin around LIP table about prospect of resettling Syrian refugees and what type of planning that would entail Meeting with service providers and local organizations, hundreds in attendance, to discuss possible paths forward
Late-October	Discussions continue and plans starting to be put in place
Mid-November	Acknowledgement scale of operation will exceed LIP's capacity, in response to community request, ask Regional Municipality to take reins

Waterloo Region Syrian Refugee Resettlement Preparedness Plan

12/7/2015



Arrival (surge): LIP's Role

- Exists as separate but still highly collaborative body with Syrian refugee steering committee
- Helps mobilize individuals and organizations to sit on Syrian steering committee working groups
- LIP staff serve as primary support to steering committee working groups and sit at centre of operations
- Acted as liaison between smaller community organizations and large institutions
- Built capacity via initiatives like Immigration Partnership Fund for Syrian Newcomers



Reception House

Waterloo Region

a place for new beginnings



MUSLIM SOCIAL SERVICES

(Mis) Perceptions Regarding LIP's Role

- Despite, technically, being 2 separate entities, several participants saw the Steering Committee as an extension of the LIP or one body
- Given the performance and impact of the Syrian steering committee, this perception, while unfounded, carries a number of benefits for the LIP
- Disconnect not specific to a sector or level of position of participants



Role of Regional Municipality of Waterloo



- Provided Stability
 - Shared communication and digital infrastructure with LIP
- LIP being in located in-house helped facilitate easier access to the upper echelons of regional government, many whose services were affected by the surge
 - Perceived positively amongst community
- Participants generally viewed Regional Municipal involvement as to why Waterloo Region settled Syrians successfully

Upper-Level Government Relations

- IRCC communication locally was done primarily with Reception House, Waterloo's local government funded refugee service organization
- Waterloo's LIP did not reach out to IRCC and did not receive any correspondence until 4 months after first arrivals
- Communication more frequent with Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Steering committee received piecemeal communication from their respective upper-level government ministries but not always consistent information
- LIP did not receive additional funding for Syrian resettlement while already operating on a reduced budget from previous cutbacks

Post-Surge to Present: LIPs Role Moving Forward (PT. 1)

- The majority of participants expressed concern about the long-term resettlement needs of Syrian refugees and the community's ability to address them
- The long-term nature of resettlement is mismatched with the short-term nature of the LIP's funding agreement
- Over a year ago, Waterloo's LIP tried to address by proposing a third year agreement but proposal was declined



Post-Surge to Present: LIPs Role Moving Forward (PT. 2)

- Prior to Syrian resettlement, participants noted the LIP had yet to reach its potential
- One challenge to this was the lack of stakeholders at main council , more “strategic thinkers.”
- With the success of the Steering Committee and the level of participation and engagement, will the LIP be the vehicle to carry the momentum?
- Will it adjust the composition of its council to capitalize on the extensive community-building that has occurred?