

Digital Messaging for Settlement and Integration:

Lessons Learned from **REFUGEE 613 PROJECTS**

Refugee 613 | November 2023

{ REFUGEE } 613

AGENDA

- **Why Digital Messaging**
Laila Joud, Communications Manager, Refugee 613
- **Lessons Learned**
Nargis Eshan, Digital Content Specialist, Refugee 613
- **Newcomer Voices**
Dr.Fraidoon Latifi
- **Discussion**



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The land on which we conduct much of our work is the unceded, unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

The Algonquin peoples have lived on Turtle Island since time immemorial as the stewards and rightful owners of this land. We are grateful to be present on their territory and recognize that Refugee 613 is an organization assisting people in resettling on stolen land across Turtle Island.

We are committed to continually exploring how our organization can better support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and their rights.



OUR VISION

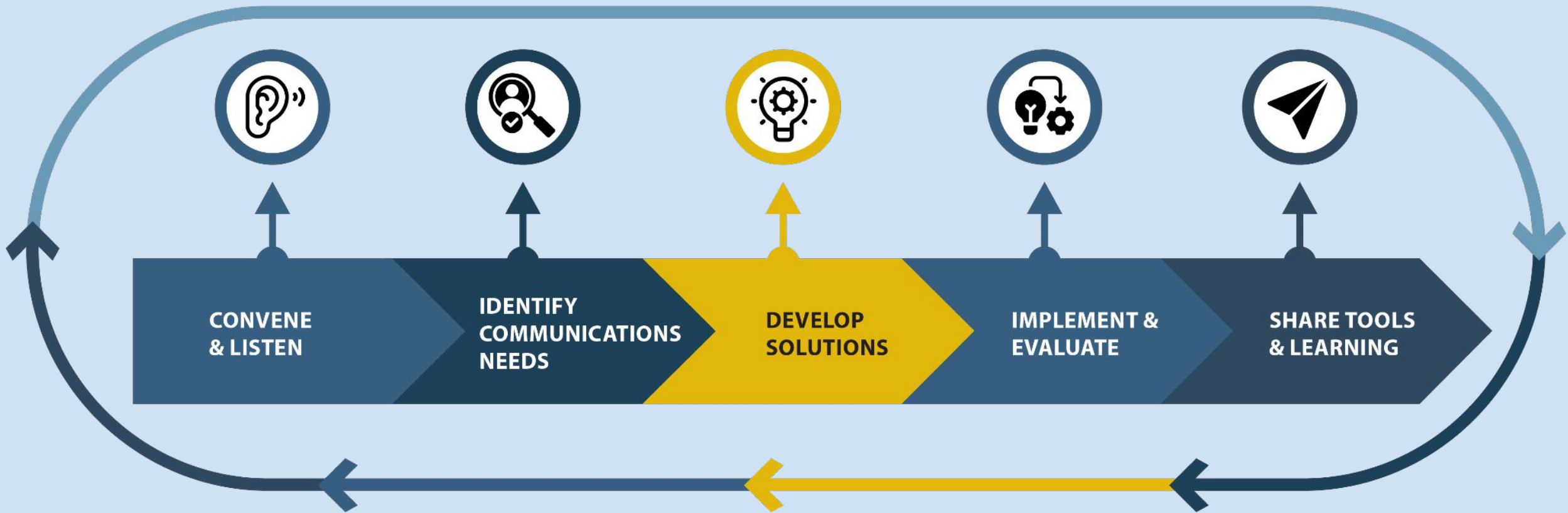
Everyone thrives in a welcoming world

OUR MISSION

Refugee 613 is an agile and innovative communications hub that informs, connects and inspires people to welcome refugees and build strong communities.



We close gaps in the newcomer integration experience

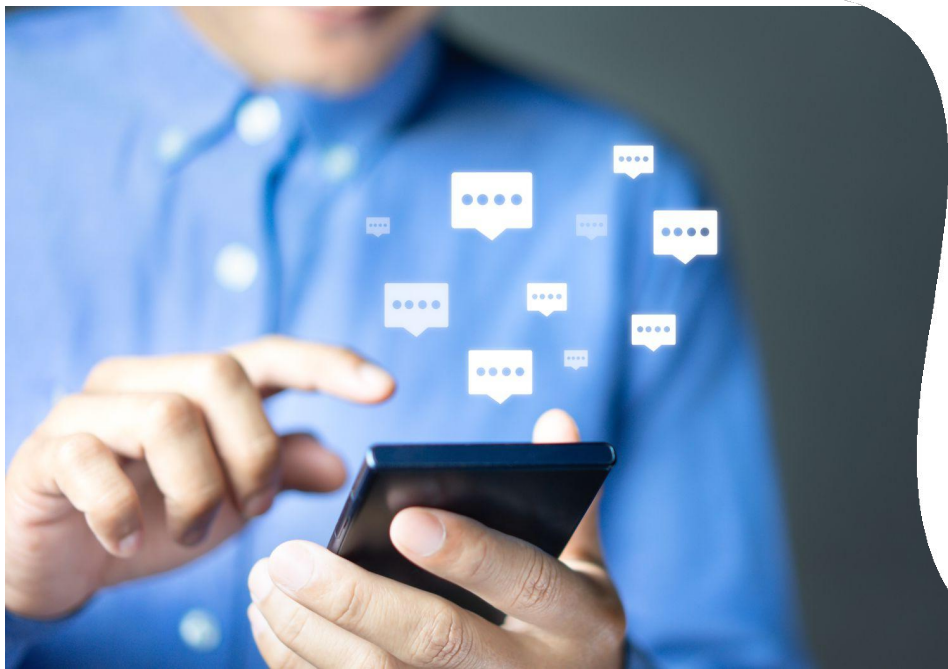


What do we do?

Communications & Community Mobilization

3 main program areas

- Community Mobilization (local)
- Settlement Information Creation & Delivery (national)
- Refugee Sponsor Recruitment and Support (local & national)



Digital Messaging for Settlement & Integration (DMSI)

What is Digital Messaging?

Using electronic tools like **Telegram**, **WhatsApp**, **Facebook**, **WeChat** and **text messaging** to connect and share information with people who have similar needs, interests, problems to solve, or services to deliver or coordinate.



Why Digital Messaging?

- Easy to download on a smartphone
- Simple and easy to use
- Low cost - often free to download and doesn't require wifi
- Extremely popular in newcomer networks - friends and family are there



Digital Messaging examples

- Settlement case managers communicating one on one with clients via WhatsApp to provide information and referrals in Calgary
- Health communicators in Ottawa using WhatsApp to provide updates on new pandemic measures
- Texting service to broadcast information to refugee claimants in BC
- Settlement info and referral service using Telegram, started by Refugee 613 and now moderated by volunteers



MTM Newcomers

MTM Newcomers is a syndicated annual study of media and technology usage by newcomers to Canada. It focuses on those who have come to Canada within the last 5 years including Canadian citizens, permanent residents, international students, temporary foreign workers, refugee claimants, and other non-permanent residents.



Mixed-Methodology

Based on a mixed-methodology consisting of online and in-person interviews:

- **Online study** conducted at a national level by panel and recruitment through a variety of settlement agencies
- **In-person interviews** in major cities across Canada



Large Sample Sizes

- Sample includes **over 4,000 newcomer respondents** from around the globe
- Also, an additional control sample of **800** native-born Canadians



Multilingual Survey

Surveys administered in **12 different languages:** Tagalog, Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Arabic, Spanish, Amharic, Hindi, Swahili, Ukrainian, English and French

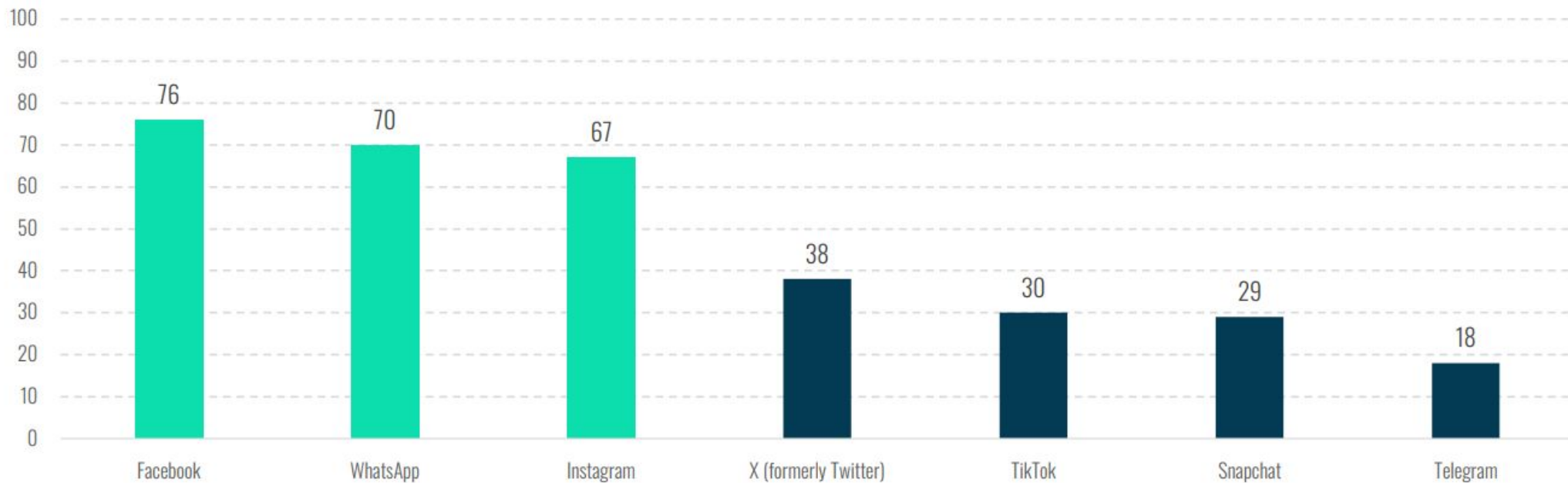


Big Variables Selection

Over **500 different variables** to choose from including: TV and video streaming like SVOD services, social networking, news consumption, radio and audio streaming, settlement and leisure activities, and more

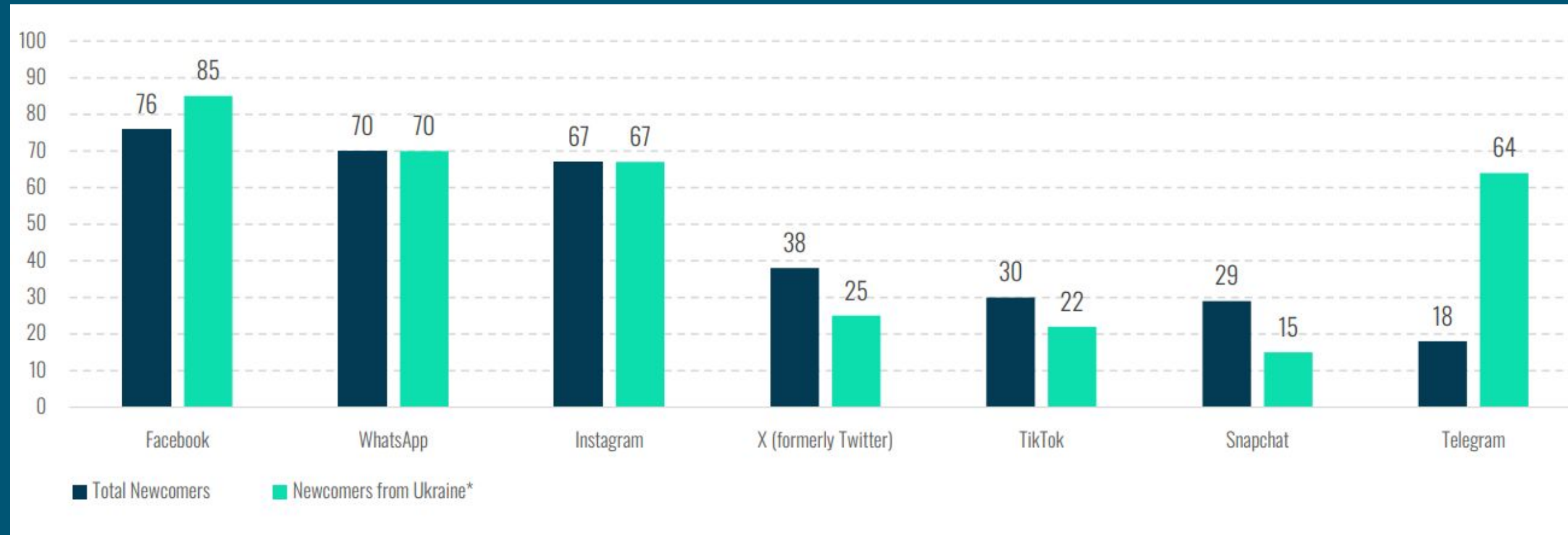
Newcomer Media and Technology Habits

- 100% of newcomers reported owning a cell phone
- 9 out of 10 newcomers reported using social networking sites



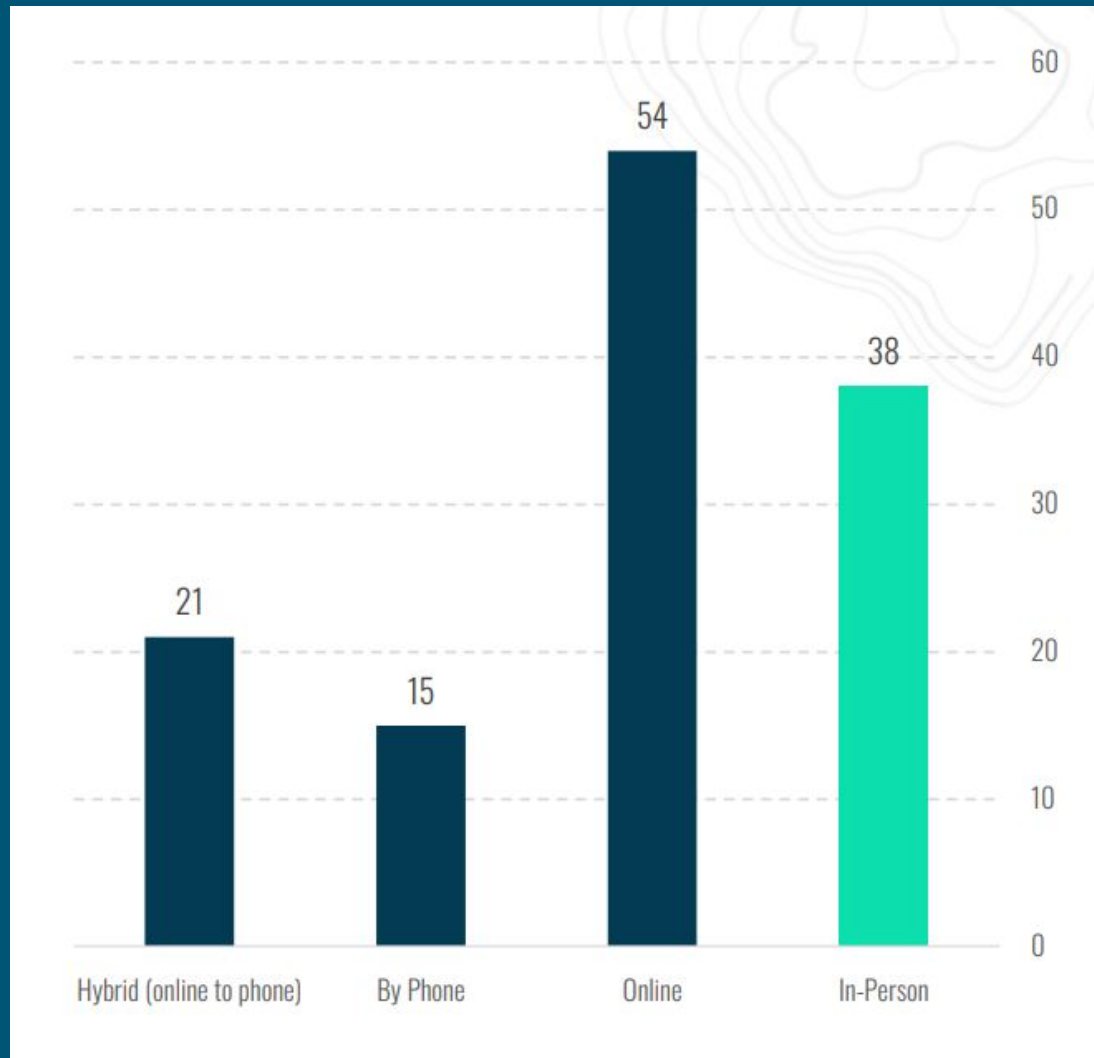
Source: Media Technology Monitor (MTM)

- Preferred platforms can vary by country or region of origin



Source: Media Technology Monitor (MTM)

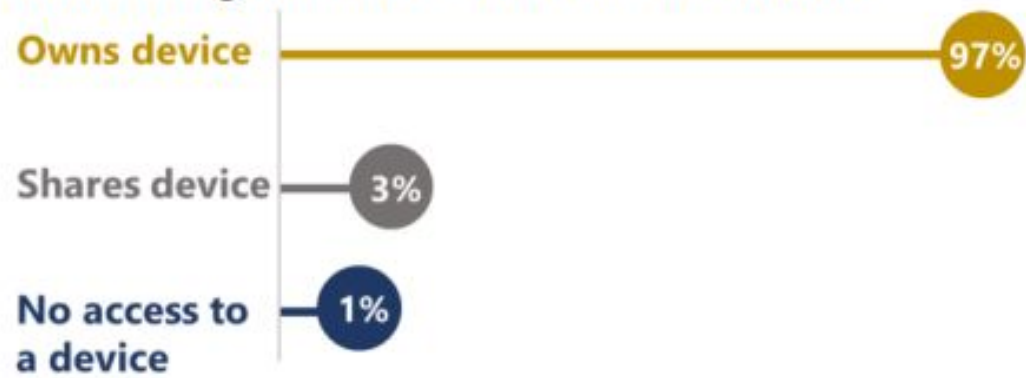
- 54% of newcomers reported accessing government-funded services online
- 55% are aware of those services



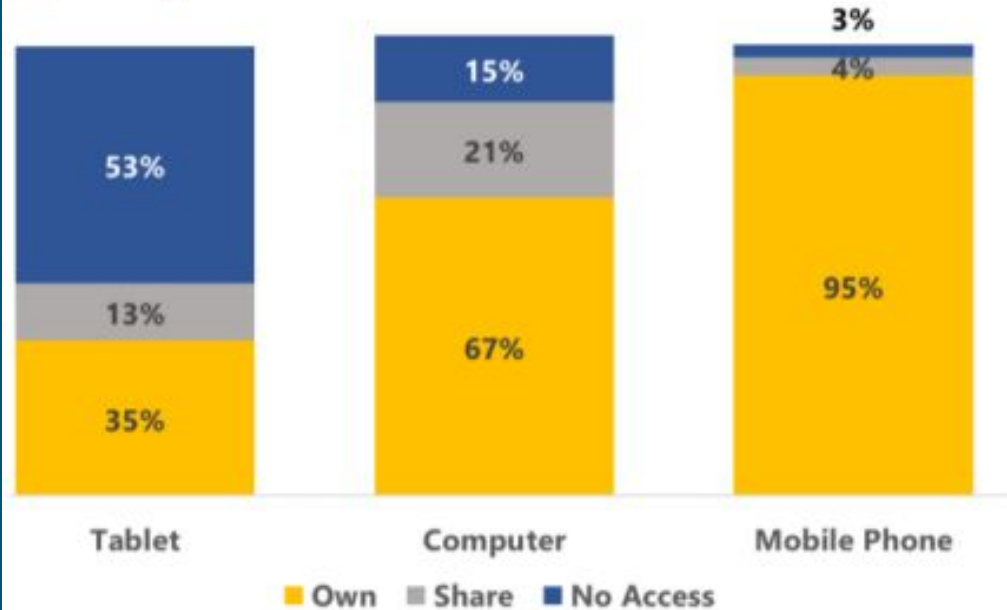
Source: Media Technology Monitor (MTM)

IRCC Settlement Outcomes Report

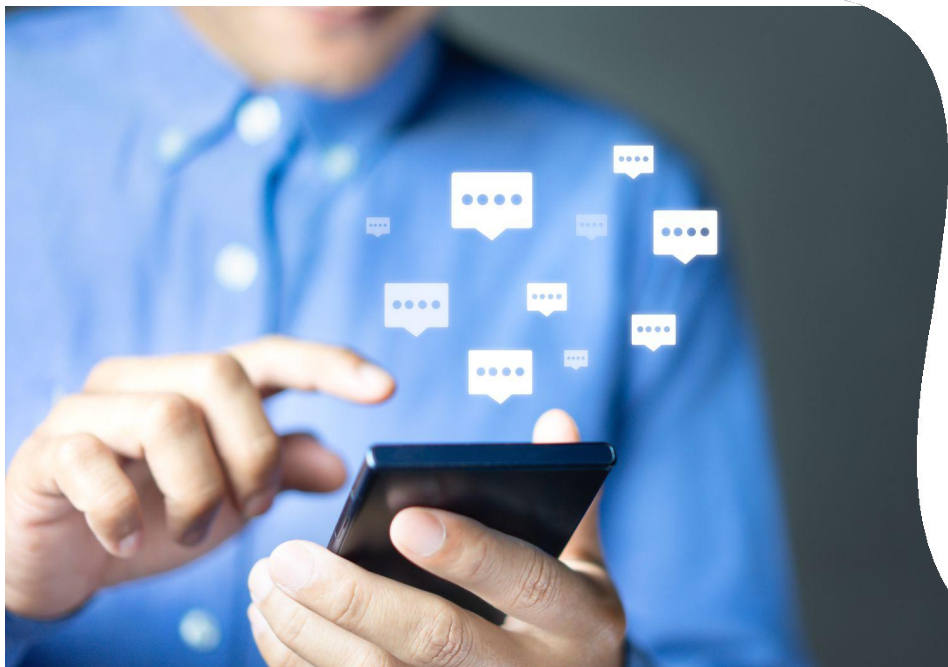
The vast majority of survey respondents owned a digital device to access settlement.



More clients reported owning a mobile phone than any other device.



Source : IRCC (2022) DCS Client Survey



Lessons Learned From Refugee 613 Pilot Projects

Refugee 613 Projects

- WhatsApp group for Arabic-speakers in Ottawa (Refugee 613 from 2017-2020, ongoing with volunteers)
- Digital Messaging for Settlement and Integration project (2018-2023)
- Afghan Digital Service (Telegram group for Afghan Newcomers) started in January, 2022
- Vaccination, Misinformation & Digital Media Project (2021- 2023)

Key Lessons Learned

1

Newcomers need access to different types of relevant information at different points of their immigration journey and in different ways.

Digital messaging facilitates more flexible and consistent access to information that accommodates the client's need for options in terms of when and how they access information.

Key Lessons Learned

2

Delivery of information should be designed and facilitated through a trauma-informed lens.

People retain information best when they are ready for it, and people migrating are no different.

Being able to ask the question they care about on their phone also relieves stress and relieves their caseworkers of answering the same questions repeatedly.

Key Lessons

3

Digital messaging services can bring you closer to your audience.

Paying close attention to their information needs and responding to what they're most interested in makes for a better service delivery. Ask lots of questions!

Key Lessons

5

The language used in a DM service is extremely important, and translation is just part of the issue.

Use plain language and have translations reviewed by community members to ensure they are relevant to the community.

Key Lessons

4

Digital messaging can improve access to information and provide context for that information, but it cannot overcome all barriers, particularly web sites that are complicated and hard to navigate.

Government and service provider websites need to consider the navigation skills of all newcomers in their user experience design.

Key Lessons

6

Misleading and inaccurate information travels faster and farther than truthful content, especially among newcomers facing challenges accessing official sources.

Digital messaging services can increase the capacity of newcomers to identify misinformation.

Key Lessons

7

Despite the proven value of Digital Messaging to both service providers and clients, some service providers remain skeptical of DM services run by external partners.

There is work to be done to better understand and address the reluctance to refer to digital messaging services.

Key Lessons

8

Digital messaging services serve newcomers best when they are not in competition with each other.

If you're considering starting a digital messaging service, explore the potential for partnership with other service providers. Avoid asking clients to sign up for multiple different services!

Key Lessons

9

Digital messaging is a tool, like email or a laptop, that will help you reach more clients, faster, and in the way they most want –but it will not significantly reduce costs.

It's essential to have human and other resources in place to deliver the service!

DMSI Toolkit

Scan the QR code to download our DMSI toolkit



FRENCH



ENGLISH

www.dmsi-mnei.ca



Dr. Fraidoon Latifi

Personal Newcomer Experience

- Challenges in finding Information registering for a school, acquiring a driver's license, employment and housing
- Language barrier
- Success with the use of digital messaging platforms.
E.g. Afghan Digital Service

Q&A





Summary and Conclusion

Stay in Touch!



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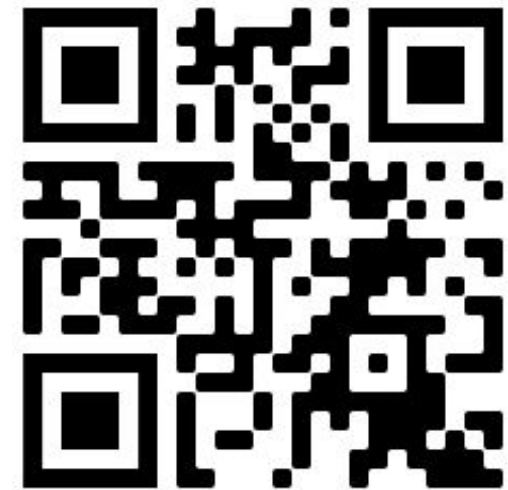
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Thank you !

