



# **Client Centrality in Refugee Resettlement: Holistic support to catalyze settlement**

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# Resettled Refugees in Canada (Jan 2015 – Sept 2024, IRCC data)

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- 47% Resettled Refugees are Female (49% for GARs)
- 60% age 18 and older on arrival (53% for GARs)



# Sustaining Welcome: Longitudinal Research on Integration with Syrian Refugees in BC

- Syrian Refugee Integration and Long-term Health Outcomes (Syria.lth) Project
- Funded by Canadian Institute of Health Research



## HOW WELL HAVE SYRIAN REFUGEES INTEGRATED INTO CANADA SINCE 2016?



**6.6M**

Syrians have become refugees since 2011



**47,000+**

Syrian Refugees welcomed to Canada through *Operation Syrian Refugee* (2015-2017)



**4,000**

Came to British Columbia

Our new multi-year research report, *Sustaining Welcome*, tracked the integration journey of over 200 resettled Syrian refugees in British Columbia from 2017-2020.

The report reveals the key **economic, social, and health challenges** refugees experience in Canada, from the **perspective of refugees themselves**.



# The first 4 years: Syrian Women in BC



Language

*“Language is the biggest obstacle”*

27% of women always required interpretation in year 4, compared to 19% of overall respondents

Childcare as a challenge to participation in LINC for those with pre-school age (year round) and school age children (summer)

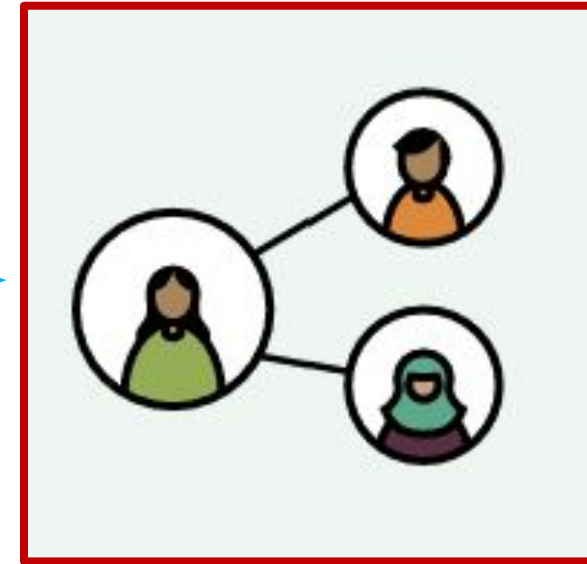


Employment

*“The second thing that has helped in learning the language is working with Canadians”*

Employment rates have increased over time but gendered barriers persist

15% of women employed in year 4 compared to 70% of men



Social Isolation

*‘Here [in BC] only those who work are the ones who exist ... if I don’t work then I don’t exist’*

Women report fewer social connections than men in year 4

Importance of social networks in finding employment

The report found many Syrian refugees, but not all, suffered from depression and mental health issues in their early years in Canada.

**The highest frequency of depression occurred among:**



The unemployed or financially insecure



Women, widows, the separated and divorced



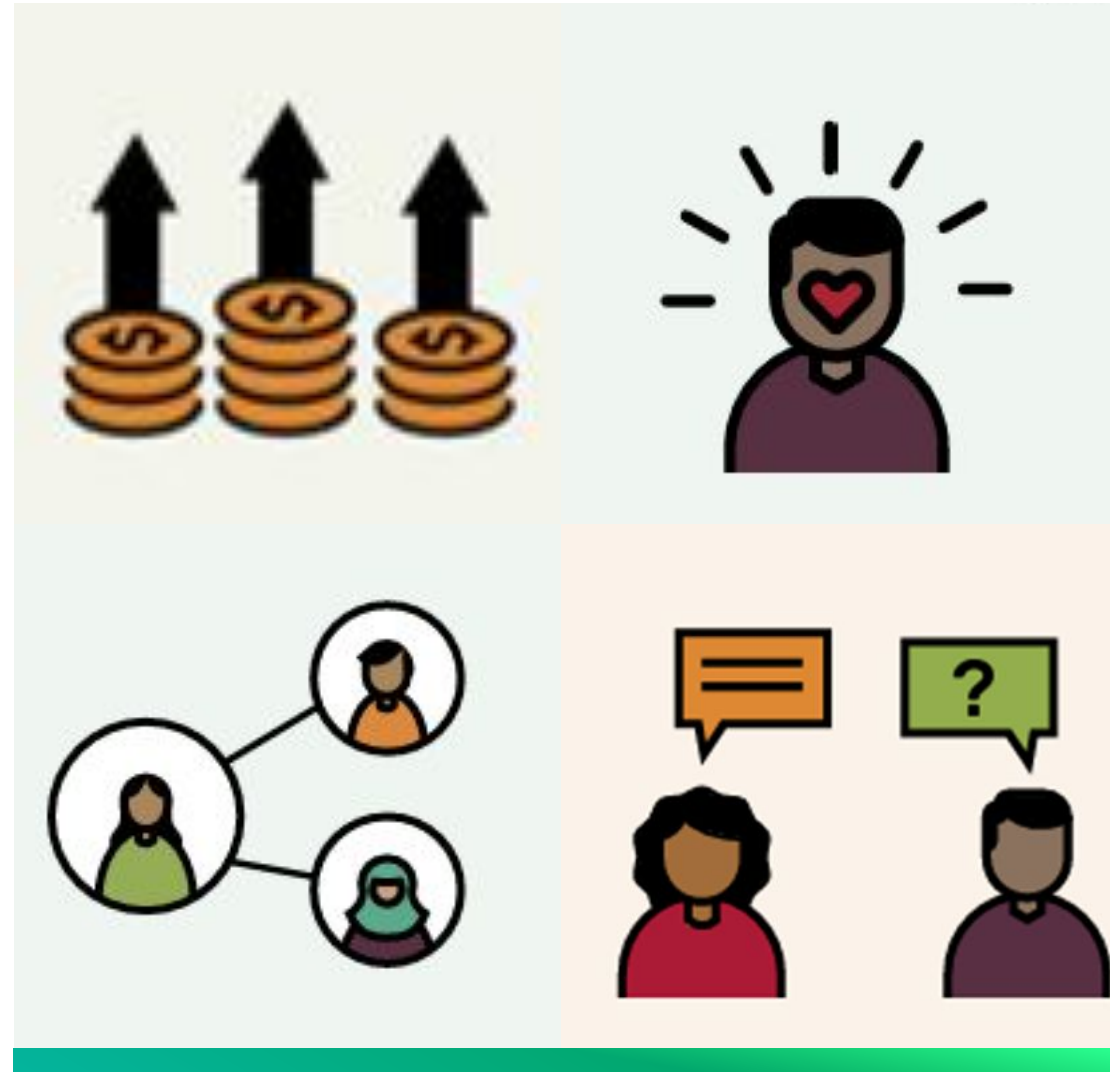
Those with fewer friends



Those with less education or limited English

# Intersecting barriers require creative responses

- Rethinking LINC – alternative times / formats (eg home tutors)
- Childcare and partnerships (eg summer camps)
- Employers willing to work with newcomers with low language
- Psycho-social supports and first language mental health programs





# Piloting a new approach

14 Afghan women with low-English expressed a desire for employment to supplement family income

8 week pilot that mobilized first language settlement support, employment services, digital literacy, and formal language learning focused on language for the work place.

Connected with a local restaurant owner from same community for a mini-hiring fair.

A number of individuals were interviewed for the restaurant and 2 were hired.

Respondents reported increased confidence in language, understanding the Canadian workplace and the employment process increased among participants



# Thank you!

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