Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, initiatives and policy implications. Synthesis report.

ROSE, Damaris
CHARETTE, Alexandra

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Research report of a study funded under the SSHRC Targeted Research proposal call, 2016: Syrian Refugee Arrival, Resettlement and Integration.

Institut national de la recherche scientifique
Centre Urbanisation Culture Société

Responsabilité scientifique : Damaris ROSE
damaris.rose@ucs.inrs.ca
Institut national de la recherche scientifique
Centre - Urbanisation Culture Société

Diffusion :
Institut national de la recherche scientifique
Centre - Urbanisation Culture Société
385, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1E3

Téléphone : (514) 499-4000
Télécopieur : (514) 499-4065

www.ucs.inrs.ca

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Canada

Collaboratrices à la recherche :

Valerie Preston, Université York
Kathy Sherrell, PhD, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia

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Résumé

Pour les nouveaux arrivants au Canada, un logement décent et abordable constitue un point d'ancrage qui leur permet d'initier leur parcours de rétablissement. Devant le volume et le rythme d'arrivée des réfugiés syriens en 2015-2016 dans de nombreuses villes canadiennes, des organismes, réseaux et regroupements locaux déploient des efforts énormes pour les aider à trouver un logement. Les défis étaient de taille, surtout dans les villes où les loyers sont élevés, d'autant plus qu'une proportion importante des réfugiés sont des familles nombreuses ou des personnes ayant des besoins lourds. Ce rapport constitue une synthèse d'une recherche financée par le CRSH et menée dans 13 villes, principalement auprès des intervenants d'organismes communautaires fournisseurs des services d'établissement de base aux réfugiés pris en charge par le gouvernement. Les chercheures visent à documenter les défis, ressources et initiatives associées à la recherche d'un premier logement adéquat et abordable pour ces nouveaux arrivants. En conclusion, elles proposent des pistes de réflexions politiques et des pistes de recherche futures.

Mots clés :

Programmes de rétablissement des personnes réfugiées; réfugiés syriens; logement; villes canadiennes; Canada

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Abstract

For newcomers to Canada, obtaining decent and affordable housing is an anchor point for embarking on the resettlement process. In cities across Canada, the volume and timing of Syrian refugee arrivals in 2015-2016 generated a huge effort by local organizations, networks to help these newcomers find housing. The challenges were significant, especially in high-rent cities and because of the high proportion of large families and individuals with high needs. This report is a synthesis of a research project, financed by SSHRC, conducted in 13 cities, mainly based on interviews with representatives of the newcomer serving organizations providing basic settlement services to government-assisted refugees. The study aimed to document the challenges, resources and initiatives involved in the process of finding adequate and affordable housing for these newcomers. In conclusion, the researchers put forward a number of issues for policy consideration and suggest avenues for further research.

Keywords:

Refugee resettlement programs; Syrian refugees; housing; Canadian cities; Canada.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES III

LIST OF FIGURES III

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS V

1. INTRODUCTION 1

    1.1 Study rationale and research objectives 3

2. RELEVANT INSIGHTS FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE HOUSING OF REFUGEE NEWCOMERS IN CANADIAN CITIES 6

3. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS ON FINDING HOUSING FOR THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES 8

    3.1 Aiming for advance preparedness… 8

    3.2 …and facing its limits 11

    3.3 Finding the first permanent housing for the GARs: challenges, strategies and tactics 14

        3.3.1 Finding suitable housing: size, location and quality 14

        3.3.2 Making the first housing affordable: ad hoc tactics, and potentially durable strategies 17

    3.4 Supporting housing stability 20

        3.4.1 ongoing support for living well in rental housing 20

        3.4.2 Toward “Month 13” 21

    3.5 The challenges and potential of Integrating and coordinating volunteer efforts and energies—a cross-cutting theme 23

4. HELPING PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES FIND HOUSING: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND EMERGING ISSUES 25

5. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS 28

5.1 Policy Considerations 28

5.1.1 For municipalities, Local Immigration Partnerships and other newcomer support networks 28

5.1.2 For Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 29

5.1.3 For federal and provincial housing policy decision makers and stakeholders 31

5.1.4 For all stakeholders 32

5.2 Research needs 32

6. REFERENCES CITED 34

APPENDIX A: TABLES AND FIGURES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT 43

APPENDIX B: LIST OF OTHER DISSEMINATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES STEMMING FROM THIS STUDY 55

List of Tables

Table A-1: Newcomer Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) interviewed 45

Table A-2: Family units of resettled Syrian refugees by admission category and family size, Canada, Nov. 2015-July 2016 46

Table A-3: Average rent levels in the lowest quartile, private row houses and apartments, for the cities selected for this study, October 2016 47

Table A-4: Percentage change in average rents Oct. 2015 – Oct. 2016 by bedroom types, for the cities included in this study 48

List of Figures

Figure A-1: Refugees resettled in Canada, 2006-2016, by admission category 49

Figure A-2: Destinations of resettled Syrian refugees (all categories), by province/territory, Nov. 2015-March 2017 (N = 43 725) 50

Figure A-3: Incidence of Social Assistance (SA) and Employment Earnings (EE) for 2003-2013 cohorts of Government Assisted and Privately Sponsored Refugees 51

Figure A-4: Average rents for a 3-bedroom apartment (October 2015) plotted against cities' percentage contribution to Syrian GAR resettlement in Canada (Nov. 2015-Sept. 2016) 52

Figure A-5: Schematic representation of data sources, research themes and analytical process used in this study 53

Figure A-6: Volume and timing of GAR arrivals, for the main destination Census Metropolitan Areas, Nov. 2015-Sept. 2016 54

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian government operation to airlift and resettle over 26 000 Syrian refugees between early November 2015 and the end of February 2016 (referred to as "Wave 1" of the Syrian refugee operation) was the largest since the welcoming of 60 000 South-East Asian "boat people" in 1979-1981. Consequently, whereas Canada's intake of resettled refugees had been in the range of 10 000 to 12 000 per year in the previous decade, this number jumped to some 20 000 in 2015 and 47 000 in 2016 (see Figure A-1). By March 2017, the numbers of Syrian refugees welcomed had attained almost 44 000, distributed across all provinces (see Figure A-2). The highest volumes of government assisted refugee arrivals occurred in January and February 2016, although the time frame varied between cities. The intensity of the arrival timetable and the challenges this posed for governments, NGOs, community-based settlement organizations and citizens involved in the resettlement process echoed in some important respects the experiences of resettling the Kosovar refugees in 1999 (Abu-Laban et al. 2001). These previous major episodes proved to be rich occasions for generating new policy initiatives and citizen mobilizations in support of successful resettlement outcomes. As well, in the course of the numerous "ordinary" years of refugee intake, organizations involved in facilitating refugee resettlement at a local scale have accumulated a wealth of experience and expertise that they could mobilize and ramp up as needed for the next major operation.

Nevertheless, by virtue of its scale and visibility, the Syrian operation has highlighted or crystallized some emergent and longer-standing concerns within the newcomer settlement community as to the resettlement challenges faced by refugee newcomers—especially government assisted refugees (GARs). The Syrian operation was the first large-scale operation over a short timeframe since the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA), which committed Canada to taking a larger share of "high needs" refugees in the GAR stream (Hyndman 2011; Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016c). This includes people in large and complex family configurations; people with major disabilities or health problems; people having gone through protracted experiences of displacement and associated trauma; and those with low literacy rates in their mother tongue. For refugee newcomers in such circumstances, obtaining employment in the first years after arrival is likely to be a major challenge without strong and ongoing support services, especially for those who have limited

employment experience and language competencies at arrival. As of 2010, it was taking 10 years after landing in Canada for GARs to attain similar employment earnings to refugees in other entry categories, and these were still only about 60% of the Canadian average (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016c). In contrast, Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) data show an improvement in economic integration indicators for PSRs in recent years (see Figure A-3).

Moreover, local contexts of reception have changed over the past two decades in at least two important respects. First, federal government representatives no longer direct or coordinate the local resettlement process, leaving this to local and regional stakeholders. Second, the meagre level of the Resettlement Assistance Program allowance, calibrated to provincial social assistance rates, has been a long-standing problem in terms of housing affordability for refugee newcomers (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011; Power Analysis Inc. 2002). Over the past decade or so, rapid housing market inflation has led to increasing shortages of affordable rental housing in many of the cities welcoming Syrian and other refugees, while in most provinces and cities governments have funded few or no new social housing starts for over two decades. Consequently, the settlement sector's capacity to help refugee newcomers find affordable housing faces even greater challenges than in the past. Apprised of this issue at the start of the operation, the federal minister responsible for the Syrian operation solicited charitable donations from corporate Canada, to be channelled through a special "Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees" hosted by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) (Bervoets 2015; Ireton 2015). CFC staff worked with local community foundations in GAR-receiving cities to seek out granting opportunities for collaborative initiatives to address Syrian GAR newcomers' urgent needs, primarily in regards to housing affordability. CFC staff aimed to distribute the funds proportionately to GAR arrival numbers per city, and in most cities the local RAP-SPO was CFC's initial point of contact (personal communication with Sara Lyons, CFC Vice-President, December 2016). While praising this initiative, the national association representing the newcomer settlement community (including the organizations mandated to help GARs find their first housing) cautioned that this stopgap measure would probably not be sufficient (Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance 2015). The ensuing weeks saw extensive coast-to-coast media coverage, not only of the bottlenecks and other difficulties with the first housing of the Syrian refugees, but also of numerous local-scale efforts by community,

private and government actors to assist in meeting these challenges. This suggests that the Syrian operation, like its predecessors, may have been a fertile ground for generating new initiatives and promising practices to assist in the housing aspects of the early stages of resettlement.

Consequently, we sought funding from a short-term targeted research program, *Syrian Refugee Arrival, Resettlement and Integration (SRARI)*, launched by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in partnership Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada to "support research and mobilize knowledge in a timely way on key issues and events (…) in the early days of the migration and resettlement process". The proposal call invited researchers experienced in the field of immigration and settlement to address "pressing, short-term research issues related to the current refugee resettlement effort" in ways that would "inform the efforts of policy-makers, service organizations and other stakeholders". Ours, "*Finding housing for the "Welcome Syrians" refugee newcomers: A cross-Canada analysis of initiatives, challenges and lessons learned",* was among the 25 successful proposals. In the spirit of the research program's "rapid response" mandate, this research synthesis is the first publication from our project and aims to be a concise and accessible presentation of our main findings (see Appendix B for a list of other dissemination activities to date).

1.1 Study rationale and research objectives

> *"Once people are in permanent accommodation they begin to rebuild their lives. They begin to make connections, networks (…)."*
>
> *"From there, everything else falls into place, or so you'd hope, as far as integrating and settling. They can find a primary care doctor, they can get their kids in a local school, they become part of that community. So it's integral to get them into that permanent housing (...)."*
>
> *"That first apartment is that first place that they are safe. They finally have a new start."*
>
> *"The more effort we put in up front towards their housing needs, (...) the more positive long-term effects come through for the families."*
>
> - Resettlement Assistance Program Service Provider Organization interviews, winter 2017 (Vancouver, Hamilton, Halifax, Peterborough)

Obtaining a suitable, stable and affordable housing unit in a safe and welcoming neighbourhood is a crucial step in newcomers' efforts to make a new start. As well as fulfilling the elemental need for shelter, it is a base for access to the everyday services and resources for rebuilding an 'ordinary' life and to specialized programs to facilitate their settlement in Canada. As government assisted Syrian refugee Mohamed Alchelby told a CBC News reporter while his family temporary household in a Toronto hotel, *"The most important thing now is to have [a] residence and go to school, and learn, and start our lives"* (Martin 2016). Housing, and also its neighbourhood context, may have important impacts on newcomers' social connections and on their overall sense of inclusion. For newcomers who arrive as refugees fleeing from contexts of profound and traumatic dislocation, the stability and the quality of the first permanent housing in Canada may take on even stronger affective and symbolic dimensions.

The attribution and types of responsibilities for helping resettled refugees to find and settle into their first permanent housing depend on the entry category. Private sponsors' commitments include paying for temporary accommodation on arrival and for ensuring that they have suitable living arrangements for the first year of settlement or until the privately sponsored refugee (PSR) individual or family becomes economically self-sufficient, whichever comes first (58% of PSRs surveyed for IRCC's program evaluation reported that their sponsor(s) paid the rent directly to the landlord (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016a)). For government assisted refugees[1], IRCC and its Québec counterpart, the ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI), delegate the arrangements for temporary accommodation in the destination city and for finding suitable permanent accommodation to the newcomer service-provider organization holding the government contract for delivery of the Resettlement Assistance Program in that city (we refer to these as RAP-SPOs or RAP providers in this report). The GARs themselves, however, decide whether to take the housing units offered. The RAP-SPOs are thus the centrepiece of the local social infrastructure for the housing dimension of initial resettlement. They collaborate with and draw on the assistance of other local organizations, municipalities, provincial bodies and

[1] We recognize that using these administrative labels and the term 'refugee newcomers' rather than 'new permanent residents' in this report places the emphasis on a single aspect of their experience and identity that they may want to shed as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, this terminology seems defensible and necessary for this study given its focus on housing assistance in the first months and year of a resettlement process largely framed by targeted government-supported programs, even though these programs' ultimate aim is to assist these newcomers in becoming 'ordinary'permanent residents and citizens.

housing providers in various ways to help achieve the goal of finding suitable affordable housing for GARs. Such collaborations may be informal or temporary, or may take place within a local multipartite network for newcomer support, For Blended Sponsorships (BVOR), sponsors and government share financial responsibilities, and RAP-SPOs may facilitate finding housing. These initial orientations and services delivered by the RAP are part of a broader multifaceted package delivered over the first few weeks to get refugee newcomers through the first urgent and practical aspects of resettlement. The overall aim of the RAP package, plus the linkages and referrals offered to further sets of services and resources to assist with settlement, is to "put an end as soon as possible to [refugee newcomers' sense of] disorientation and to render places, people and institutions familiar" (Saillant 2007, 77 [our translation]).

Our study's main goal was to learn more about how the RAP-SPOs went about finding the first permanent housing for Syrian government assisted refugees. We sought to document how this process unfolded in a large sample of cities across Canada in different size ranges and comprising a range of different local rental housing market contexts (see Figure A-4). What challenges did the RAP providers face? What kinds of help could they mobilize and what strategies and tactics did they deploy to settle these newcomers into suitable housing and to ensure the stability of those arrangements? What are the relevant lessons and policy implications of these experiences? In winter and spring 2017 we conducted 13 in-depth interviews (averaging 75 minutes) over the phone with 15 senior supervisory or management personnel of RAP-SPOs in cities in 7 provinces in all regions of Canada (see Table A-1). Collectively, the selected cities welcomed approximately 61% of Syrian GARs and 87% of Syrian PSRs resettled to Canada between November 2015 and September 2016 (calculated from IRCC and MIDI data). Interview participants were closely involved with housing (and often other) aspects of the Syrian resettlement operation on a day-to-day basis. We asked them to take us through their experiences of the accommodation and housing aspects of the operation, from the planning stages through the arrivals and temporary accommodation arrangements to the process of finding permanent housing and finally to the situation at the end of year 1 when the RAP allowance comes to an end. Most informants could also place their experiences within a "big picture" assessment of the Syrian operation in their city, from their perspective. We developed a thematic analysis of the interview materials (some 550 pages of verbatim transcripts), including emerging issues and cross-cutting

themes as well as the points in our interview guide. Two on-line group meetings held in May 2017, in which most interviewees were able to participate (also transcribed verbatim) helped us clarify certain points and sparked some discussion about policy issues.

Our project timeframe and resources precluded examining housing issues in equivalent depth for those assisting the privately sponsored refugees. In some of the cases where the interviewee's organizations is also a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) (see Table A-1), they were able to provide a few valuable insights. We also interviewed a few key informants in Montréal. In section 4 of this report we briefly highlight the themes uncovered from these sources and from documentary sources, and point to some research and policy questions that emerge from this partial and preliminary analysis.

While the interviews with RAP-SPOs form the cornerstones of this research, we also drew on other data sources. We analyzed the verbatim evidence and briefs to the two parliamentary committees that held hearings in spring-summer 2016 on the welcoming of the Syrian refugees. We built an exhaustive press file of national and local coverage of housing-related aspects of the Syrian resettlement operation. We also drew on various local documentary sources and on the preliminary findings of some of the other projects funded under the SIARI initiative. Figure A-5 summarizes our overall methodological strategy.

2. RELEVANT INSIGHTS FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE HOUSING OF REFUGEE NEWCOMERS IN CANADIAN CITIES

The first decade or so of the new millennium saw a flourishing of research on newcomer housing experiences in Canadian cities, mostly under the auspices of the Metropolis Project, which brought together academic, local community and government stakeholders. This rich and diverse body of work includes numerous local-scale studies, some of them focusing on refugees or inland refugee claimants, and a few more broadly based and comparative studies. As well, the *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada* (LSIC), which followed a large sample of economic and family class immigrants and resettled refugees landed in 2000-2001, has enabled some robust analyses of

housing outcomes over newcomers' first four years. Certain key findings from this literature provide essential context for the present study.

First, in the early months and years, resettled refugees face greater housing difficulties than economic or family class immigrants. The LSIC shows that, overall, their situation improves considerably over time; for instance, almost one fifth become homeowners by year 4. However, even after four years, over one fifth of renters are still facing critically high housing affordability ratios (i.e. 50% or more of their income goes on rent). Moreover, the incidence of living in crowded conditions declines more slowly for refugees than for those in other entry categories, such that over 30% of refugees are still dealing with crowded housing conditions after 4 years (Hiebert 2009). These differences are attributable on the one hand, to refugees' greater difficulties in entering the labour market and obtaining stable, decent-paying work, and on the other hand to their larger family sizes. Numerous smaller-scale studies corroborate these high rates of crowding and show them to be a reluctant strategy to maintain affordability. A drawback of most of this research, including the LSIC, is the inability to distinguish GARs from PSRs due to study design or sample size issues. The only extant systematic study of PSR housing experiences indicates that their housing conditions improve over time but that many have experienced affordability and crowding difficulties (Carter et al. 2008).

Second, previous research suggests that the quality and appropriateness of information and accompaniment provided to refugee newcomers before, during and in the months after arrival have important impacts on their early housing experiences and outcomes. In this respect, resettled refugees, both GAR and PSR, fare better than refugee claimants (Murdie 2008). Nevertheless, local communities do not necessarily have the resources in place to offer sufficient ongoing support and guidance in the months after families are settled into their first housing under the Resettlement Assistance Program (Sherrell and Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2009). Moreover, recent research with clients of newcomer settlement agencies shows that despite their permanent immigration status and greater access to initial settlement assistance, GARs are almost as likely as refugee claimants to have experienced unhealthy housing conditions (mould, infestations…) (Francis and Hiebert 2014; Preston et al. 2011; Rose and Charette 2014). Refugee newcomers' inability to provide

guarantors and security deposits increases the likelihood of having to rent substandard units (Newbold et al. 2011) unless settlement organizations can link them up with supportive landlords.

Whereas the LSIC followed a pre-IRPA cohort, more recent smaller-scale studies suggest that both refugees' initial access to suitable and affordable housing and their ability to improve their housing situation over time have become more challenging for the post-IRPA arrivals. Greater initial barriers to labour market integration and/or prolonged reliance on precarious employment—a situation not unique to refugee newcomers—reduce the financial resources available for housing. Income support rates (both RAP and social assistance) have not kept pace with rents, although the depth of this mismatch varies by province, city and family type. Persistent low income combined with a limited supply of suitable affordable housing may well lead to GARs with large families envisaging remaining in their initial housing for a long time, even when a growing family creates the need to move to a larger unit. When opportunities for upward residential mobility are more limited, the quality and suitability of the *first* permanent housing, as well as its neighbourhood context, may take on even more significance. This makes it all the more important to better understand how both settlement organizations and private sponsors find and settle refugees into their first housing.

3. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS ON FINDING HOUSING FOR THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES

3.1 Aiming for advance preparedness…

"So we knew that we were going to be needing help to deal with it. So (…) we met with over 70 different service providers in one big room (….) We organized into five sectoral tables. In each, we had a representative from the RAP program or from the organization experienced in working with refugees" (RAP-SPO, Windsor).

"We met every week, sometimes twice a week, with other community members, organizations and agencies to figure out how this was going to work (...). What to us was normal business, not everyone knew that that was normal business and so there was (...) an opportunity for some coaching and some education (...)" (RAP-SPO, Winnipeg).

"[The province started a (...) a task force (...) The first meetings specifically around housing were in December". Based on presentations by the RAP-SPO,

"they decided then there should be a specific emergency task force on housing the Syrians (...) [It included] the director of Housing Nova Scotia, the province, the president of the landlord association, plus key members of the Poverty Network, that are working on strategies with Nova Scotia. So they were helping us." (RAP-SPO, Halifax).

"There are 200 members in the Community Partnership Network including some housing providers. We were very quickly invited to come to the public housing providers' network (...). We were able to let them know what we were expecting (...). So we were able to use that network in order to move people out [of temporary accommodation into permanent housing]" (RAP-SPO, Victoria).

"*Our housing task force gave local organizations with a stake in housing the platform to collaborate and consult"* (Refugee613 2016).

In each of the cities in our study**,** a range of organizations (generally including newcomer-serving and other community organizations, municipal and provincial agencies) came together in the fall of 2015 to form steering committees and task forces to try to plan for the arrival and resettlement of an as-yet unknown number of Syrian refugees. The RAP-SPOs were major players in, and, in some cases, initiators of these coordination networks. In some cases these were spin-offs of pre-existing networks, such as the Local Immigration Partnership or, in Toronto, the City's Immigrant and Refugee Housing Committee (in existence for over a decade). Advance coordination of roles seemed to work better if the RAP SPO was a major player in the existing network (Veronis 2017). Conversely, a mistimed municipal intervention in housing reported by one RAP-SPO interviewee may have been due to organizational issues within that city's LIP.

A number of interviewees underscored the importance of these advance-planning meetings for making the RAP-SPO's mandate and expertise better known, to other stakeholders in the wider settlement community. This would foster effective sharing and coordination of tasks, roles and responsibilities, and, in regards to housing, help identify resources and means to ramp up the supply of suitable and affordable housing over a short timeframe. For example, in Winnipeg, the provincial government agreed to expand its rent supplement program so that Syrians could move rapidly out of temporary accommodation into private rental units on an approved list for the subsidy (Silvius et al. 2017), and in Hamilton, the City made available some unused funds in its housing allowance program (SPO interview). It proved important to find ways of drawing on the strengths of emergency preparedness models to support, rather than compete with, the expertise of RAP-SPOs for whom the Syrian operation was different in degree but not in

kind from their normal resettlement work. Reflecting back on these advance-planning efforts, study participants felt that they had strongly positive and lasting impacts in terms of strengthening networks, information sharing and improving understanding of respective roles and strengths of different stakeholders.

A crucial component of advance planning was to set up mechanisms not only for creating inventories of potential housing in advance of the Syrian arrivals but also for continuing to solicit and process offers of housing, so as to meet foreseen needs and unforeseen contingencies in the weeks and months after the arrivals. Including a housing table or task force in the advance planning network proved to have major positive impacts in helping to find suitable and affordable housing once the Syrian refugee newcomers started arriving, in that this was a means of inviting buy-in by both private and social housing providers. Private landlord organizations even became members of these tables in certain cases (e.g. Refugee613 2017). In most of the cities in this study, the RAP-SPOs had long-standing working relationships with several major local landlords to provide decent quality housing at low-end-of market rent for refugee newcomers; sometimes the landlords' association or a major property company was already a supporting member of local newcomer settlement organizations: *"we are already experienced in dealing with property owners. They are understanding"* (Maison Internationale de la Rive-Sud 2016). For the Syrian resettlement operation, it was a question of renewing these existing working relationships so as to encourage landlords to contribute suitable inventory and offer favourable rental arrangements over the first months or year. Local media reported extensively on examples (e.g. Halifax Chronicle Herald [no by-line] 2016; Huncar 2015) and many interviewees corroborated these accounts: for example, *"we leveraged our relationship with them, we tried to extend our current project [to the] expected housing capacity that would be required. Our landlords were very supportive"* (RAP-SPO, Toronto). RAP-SPO directors, their housing search personnel, and other local stakeholders also reached out directly to new potential housing providers. Bringing them on board early in the process enabled a timely flow of information about the particular housing challenges faced by refugees, and the support that would be provided by RAP and other programs to assist them (Hisola 2017). This pre-empted misapprehensions—for example, the president of one landlords' association did not understand that GARs would have a guaranteed source of income (AM900 CHML 2015)—and reduced the incidence of discriminatory attitudes once the resettlement

operation was underway. *"It was good experience, because right now, we can work with more landlords and try to explain to them the orientation about government-assisted refugees*" (RAP-SPO, Halifax). Interviewees in several cities also told us of their direct overtures to local social housing providers (public and cooperative) to help them learn more about the Syrian newcomers' needs and to explore possible room to manoeuvre within the limitations imposed by waiting list priority criteria and provincial residency requirements.

In a number of cities, another key component of advance preparedness involved municipal or provincial government departments and community organizations (long-established newcomer serving organizations and newly formed volunteer groups) collaborating to set up or expand housing portals and housing matching services to help find suitable housing for GAR and PSR refugee newcomers. These mechanisms for receiving and processing offers of rooms and units from individual property owners, small landlords and, sometimes, non-profit housing providers—complemented the RAP-SPOs' own outreach via the media and direct contacts with major landlords (e.g. Choo and Watson 2017). It also alleviated the additional workload on RAP-providers resulting from the outpouring of ad hoc offers of housing, not all of which was suitable for reasons of size, lack of privacy or temporariness (Lindsay 2015).

3.2 …and facing its limits

> *"When we first learned the Syrians were coming, we were saying, "OK, what did we learn from Kosovo?" And we talked, we dragged out our old reports and recommendations and thought we were prepared (...). Over the last few years. (...) we have seen the population has changed to more higher needs clients and we were expecting to see the same. But we were not prepared or we were not realizing what it means to work with a family of nine, where (…) everybody except for two is under the age of fourteen or ten, you know? (…). We had a long list of apartments. We had pages and pages of empty apartments, but the majority of the housing we have is one and two bedroom apartments (…). And we didn't see that trend before people were starting to arrive" (RAP-SPO, Halifax).*

Reinforcing an important finding of IRCC's rapid impact evaluation (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016b), most of our study participants stressed that insufficient advance information about the size and configuration of families, especially

during the early weeks of the operation, placed significant limits on the advance planning capacity of communities and their own organization. It challenged their capacity to manage the unexpected. Almost 40% of GAR families resettled from November 2015 to July 2016 had 6 or more members, over 10% were families of 8 or more (see Table A-2), and about 60% of individual GARs were aged under 18 (IRCC, Open Data spreadsheets). Due to these unexpectedly large family sizes, many of the housing offers that had come in from small property owners and individuals in advance of the arrivals were unsuitable because they were too small (Schmidt 2015, and interviews). Furthermore, in the early weeks of the resettlement operation, IRCC transmitted the information about the numbers and timeframe of arrivals to cities and RAP-SPOs at very short notice. Consequently, the organizations had to adapt and intensify their housing search strategies. At the same time, unexpected and sometimes very helpful ad hoc offers emerged informally from private sponsors who had reserved housing for families that ultimately did not arrive for many months.

As well, in the early weeks of the operation, RAP-SPOs received very short notice concerning the arrival of GARs with major health needs and disabilities. Although IRCC made sure to destine them to cities with adequate capacity and experience for the medical aspect of those needs, finding suitable housing sometimes posed particular challenges for the RAP-SPOs. Examples given by interviewees included needing to find affordable housing adjacent to a hospital that happened to be located in a high-rent central neighbourhood, and a lack of adapted housing within the social rental stock.

Interviewees provided richly textured accounts of how they managed to adapt and finalize temporary accommodation arrangements at short notice and coordinate the delivery of orientation sessions and referrals with health and other agencies (space considerations do not permit us to go into the details here). In most of the cities covered by our study, hotels had to be used since the numbers were too great for the RAP-SPOs' own temporary facilities (where these existed). Participants explained the logistical challenges they faced due to the presence of large numbers of children, and reflected on lessons learned about mitigating the delays in accessing settlement resources caused by longer-than-normal stays in such accommodation.

Contrary to impressions left by media coverage, delays of one month and more in finalizing offers of permanent housing were not ubiquitous. Among the cities included in our study, they occurred mainly in those where steep ramp-up of the Syrian operation took place early on and with high volumes over a matter of days (see Figure A.6). The longest waits were in the tightest housing markets (Toronto and Vancouver), but also in Hamilton, whose rental market was being increasingly affected by the Toronto boom. Very large families and people with multiple special needs generally had the longest waits for permanent housing (e.g. Moro 2016)—unless the provincial/municipal public housing authority agreed to take them as special priority cases, which, according to interviewees, did happen in a few places. For example, on Vancouver Island; in Vancouver, about 20% of all Syrian GAR newcomers obtained places in public social housing; as did some special needs cases in Toronto and Gatineau. Housing for single people could also take a long time to set up, since a shared apartment with other refugees or a room in a private home was usually the only affordable option due to the extremely low RAP allowance for unattached persons, and the housing search workers had to verify the suitability of such arrangements. A few interviewees mentioned that this could be even more challenging in the case of LGBTQ refugees in the GAR and BVOR streams.

The overall rushed nature of the Syrian operation (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016b) had specific impacts on RAP-SPOs' ability to find and move people into permanent housing in a short space of time. The challenge of administrative ramp-up at IRCC led to delays in releasing funds to hire new housing search workers who then had to be trained. (In Toronto, however, there was municipal support for this). Where the ramp-up was steep and intense, the RAP-SPOs faced significant difficulties coordinating the availability of apartments with the receipt of the cheque needed for the rent deposit, so that a lease could be signed. Delays with furniture delivery were also not uncommon. Several study participants felt that the media and general public did not appreciate the complexities of this process. Moreover, while long hotel stays were no-one's preferred option—*"it's very hard for a family to function as a, you know, a family unit in a functional kind of way, when they're in a hotel room"* (RAP-SPO, Victoria)—they gave housing search workers enough time to find permanent housing that was suitable. For a counter-example, we may look to the case of Moncton, studied in another SRARI project (Belkhodja 2017, and personal communications with authors; Fida 2016).

Seeking to avoid the “hotel model”, the RAP-SPO opted to move some of the arriving families directly into permanent accommodation in its existing inventory. However, these units proved unsuitable; consequently, the City and Red Cross had to implement an emergency “command and control model”, moving people out of this housing and into hotels while setting up an expanded housing search and matching process.

3.3 Finding the first permanent housing for the GARs: challenges, strategies and tactics

Analysis of our interviews and other source materials confirms unequivocally that affordability was the most fundamental challenge in finding the first permanent housing for GARs, especially in the more expensive housing markets. Nevertheless, the housing search workers simultaneously had to ensure that the housing offered met the criterion of suitability relative to the family configuration and with respect to its location within the city, and that of adequate material quality. We address these aspects first.

Interviewees underlined the pivotal importance of giving specialized training to housing search workers to help them become familiar with local housing market contexts, and become better able to establish rapport with new potential housing providers and accompany the refugee newcomers in making appropriate, albeit constrained, choices. Some SPOs faced shortages of time and resources for training during the peak resettlement period. In some smaller cities, RAP-SPOs included in their housing search teams members of volunteer support teams set up to complement RAP services by more personalized forms of accompaniment to GARs: *“the use of these GAR support teams has made a huge difference in terms of working with the families to allow them to…find suitable housing. Then they have like a team behind them that's advocating for them”* (RAP-SPO interview, Peterborough).

3.3.1 Finding suitable housing: size, location and quality

> *”When you have low vacancy rates, landlords increasingly have the ability to choose who they want to come in, so one of the challenges we faced was convincing landlords to rent units to people with four and five children under five”* (RAP-SPO, Vancouver).

In regards to large families, the depth of the challenge of finding suitable housing units while respecting occupancy codes varied between cities depending on the housing stock as well as housing market conditions and landlord buy-in to the resettlement effort. For example, in Windsor's relatively soft market, the RAP-SPO was able to persuade some landlords to connect side-by-size duplexes, and even in the tighter Halifax market, landlords agreed to make minor structural changes to connect two apartments. In the more expensive cities, housing search workers sought out suitable apartments or townhouses in low-end-of-market neighbourhoods in suburban areas, in which case they also had to consider the adequacy of public transportation to access settlement services, health care facilities and so on.

Where possible, housing search workers met requests to keep groups of friends together—including families who had met during their refugee journeys or in the hotels (Arab Community Centre of Toronto 2016)—so as to foster mutual support and reduce the mental health risks of isolation:

> *"(…) when we have a group of people that came together on the same plane, lived together in the same hotel: (...). If that building had more than one unit [available], we tend to see two good friends or two families that like each or know each well want to be together in that building (...). Because otherwise (...), even if you place them in town [rather than in a more outlying location], if they are the only one that's renting the unit, they don't feel that comfortable or safe (...)"* (RAP-SPO, Ottawa).

In regards to quality, RAP-SPOs told us that they were almost always able to ensure that the housing offered to GARs was in good physical condition. They attributed this to their good working relationships with professional landlords and property managers as well as to the training given to housing search workers. Where problems arose—such as bedbug infestations, which were reported in a few cities in our study, and elsewhere—this was sometimes a consequence of having to work with an unknown landlord or building. In emergencies where housing became unlivable, some RAP-SPOs or their partner organizations drew on the Welcome Fund grants or other locally generated donations to finance the cost of a new rent deposit so that the family could relocate rapidly (e.g. Vancouver, Hamilton, Peterborough). In Montréal, where housing quality problems are widespread in the low-end-of-market segment, the City agreed to transfer funds for a ramp-up of the work of municipal housing authority's emergency housing division, so that it could gather offers of private rental housing, verify their

condition, and then channel them to the RAP-SPO (Montréal. [Ville] 2016). In Winnipeg, where substandard housing is also prevalent, the province created an inventory of quality-controlled units eligible for its rent supplement program. Following representations by the RAP-SPO, the province expanded this program to assist the Syrian newcomers, of whom a large proportion of them benefited from it (Silvius et al. 2017, and RAP-SPO interview).

Nevertheless, the housing that RAP-SPOs could offer to Syrian GARs was often quite basic, as was the furniture and furnishings—although where they could access supplementary resources from donors for this purpose, some RAP-SPOs provided modest embellishments to increase its home-like qualities. The newcomers were very often housed in medium-to-high density apartment buildings/complexes, whereas many were accustomed to the privacy of stand-alone houses. Housing search workers also had to be sensitive to clients' wishes to avoid places that could evoke the traumas of the refugee experience—in some instances this meant avoiding basement apartments.

Generally, however, in view of the size requirements and affordability constraints, RAP-SPOs could only offer their clients a limited range of choices. Several interviewees noted that a surprisingly large number of their clients were reluctant to accept the first, or even the first few, offers of permanent housing, typically on account of its basic character, the high density context or its location beyond walking distance of places of worship. This increased the workload on housing search workers, who had to find ways to assist their clients to **reconcile their expectations with local housing market realities** for families on a very tight budget: *"it's, sort of, talking them into, or letting them know that they can't afford anything more right now, that it's something that they can manage"* (RAP-SPO, Hamilton). Interviewees believed strongly that the federal government's decision not to offer the usual pre-arrival orientation to the Syrian GARs contributed to widespread misapprehensions and inflated expectations of the quality of housing that would be offered to them on arrival. Social media networking between newcomers destined in different cities may have compounded the problem since it was difficult for them to appreciate that the range of housing options could be more constrained in some places than in others. IRCC's rapid impact evaluation also underscores this point (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016b). A RAP-SPO interviewee in Gatineau, Quebec insightfully suggested that some Syrian newcomers might be reluctant to accept a less-than-ideal first housing unit because they

did not realize that in Canada and Québec, unlike in Syria (Al Khalaf 2014), it is perfectly normal, and not necessarily difficult, to move to a new and better dwelling once one's economic circumstances permit. As to location and neighbourhood, personalized accompaniment with the help of volunteers—and sometimes also with help from municipal newcomer support programs for learning about public transportation—seemed to help reassure clients.

3.3.2 MAKING THE FIRST HOUSING AFFORDABLE: AD HOC TACTICS, AND POTENTIALLY DURABLE STRATEGIES

> *"It has to be less than 50% of their total income as a family"* (RAP-SPO, Peterborough).
>
> *"This major landlord gave us the whole complex, he reduced the rent by 20%, to make it work with the allowances [created with the Welcome Fund grant] (…). If we did not have that rent supplement, it would be really unfortunate, because then people would have to pay their food money to supplement their rent"* (RAP-SPO, Calgary)
>
> *"Most of the big families will rely on the money from the Child Benefit to supplement the rent that they have to pay"* (RAP-SPO, Ottawa).
>
> "*A single person with a lot of issues, torture and everything, vulnerable person, who cannot share an apartment with anybody--how we can find them an apartment for [the RAP shelter allowance rate of] $300?* (RAP-SPO, Halifax, in group discussion).

The housing affordability challenge that RAP-providers faced boiled down to the need to avoid rent levels that would be unmanageable in the first few months and/or unsustainable through the first year. Where possible, they also tried to plan for the housing to still be affordable after the transition from RAP to provincial social assistance at the end of year 1. Interviewees reiterated that the root of the problem is that IRCC does not calibrate the notional rent amount (plus the National Housing Supplement) used in the calculation of the RAP allowance to the actual costs of renting in different local housing markets.

We took some examples of 2016-2017 RAP allowances and Child Benefit rates (provided to us by study participants), and compared them with Canada Mortgage and Housing Rental Market Survey data for October 2016 for average rents in the lowest quartile of the housing market (i.e. the more basic units in cheaper neighbourhoods that

housing search workers mostly rely on; see Appendix A, Table A-3). In Ontario, for instance, the shelter component of the RAP allowance for a couple with two children is $795 out of a total RAP income of $1439, but in the Toronto CMA the low-end-of-market rent for the 3-bedroom apartment that the family would need if their children were of different sexes and age ranges is $1300. Even with the Child Benefit, they will pay 49% of their meagre income on rent (this may or may not include utilities). The same family configuration in Hamilton will fare a little better (40% of their income on rent). Very large families are able to deploy their quite substantial Child Benefit (approximately $500 per child) to cover their rents, but may well still have to supplement their basic needs by using food banks (CBC [no byline] 2016). Conversely, small families and those without children have more severe affordability ratios, and for single people, a self-contained unit is out of the question on a RAP income (a basic studio apartment would use up 83% of the RAP income in Calgary, for example). The Hamilton interview pointed out that even a room in a rooming house was $450 (57% of the RAP allowance). Interviewees also told us that their clients often also needed to use the transportation allowance component of RAP (one transit pass per adult in the major cities) to help cover rent and other essentials—echoing a wider problem of transit affordability for low-income Canadians.

Faced with these realities—and with rental markets that were inflating rapidly in 2015-2016 in some of the cities in this study (see Appendix A, Table A-4)—the RAP-SPOs' most prevalent response was to mobilize a range of tactics that, while somewhat ad hoc, built on the overtures to housing providers initiated in the planning stages. In balanced local housing markets or where housing providers held segments with higher vacancy rates, they were able to negotiate quite substantial rent discounts over the year (15-20%) and/or free rent until families received Child Benefit payments (which took up to 3 months). In tighter housing markets, the most prevalent tactic was to use the Welcome Fund allocation to create various forms of short-term rent supplementation, including shallow across-the-board subsidies and/or deeper subsidies to the most needy, such as large families waiting for Child Benefit and small families and single people receiving little or no Child Benefit. In Hamilton. the RAP-SPO replicated the allocation model used in the municipal rent supplement program. The numerous study participants who deployed the Welcome Fund to these ends underscored that it was a major factor in helping to make the first housing affordable. However, it created challenges for RAP providers seeking to ensure that assistance with rents was allocated equitably. The

Toronto RAP provider had to negotiate changes to an experimental model in which Welcome Fund and municipal contributions to reduce rents were tied to units whose landlord had already reduced the rent, because this did not necessarily lead to help going to the most needy (RAP-SPO interview). More fundamentally, a number of interviewees stated that using donor funds earmarked only for Syrian GARs raised major ethical dilemmas for their organization, especially if it was simultaneously serving needy refugee newcomers from other countries.

In a few cities, RAP-SPOs could tap into government-funded rent supplements. The previously mentioned program in Manitoba improved affordability as well as quality. In Hamilton, the RAP-provider helped some Syrian newcomers to access a municipal rent subsidy program available for up to five years as part of the regional anti-poverty strategy. RAP-SPOs appreciated such programs for their potential to offer more sustainable solutions with guaranteed ongoing affordability to those who might well not become self-supporting for a number of years. (In Manitoba, however, the new provincial government suspended the supplement program in April 2016.) In this vein, RAP-SPOs also reached out to social housing providers. This generated offers from cooperatives and municipal non-profit market providers in several of the cities in our study (Victoria, Windsor, Ottawa, Gatineau, and St. John). While the numbers housed in this way were modest, interviewees were keen on the mixed-income dimension of this housing. Regarding rent-geared-to-income provincial/municipal public housing, overtures made in the advance planning stage paid off to the extent that the housing authority had suitable units coming on stream while still respecting the parameters of the waiting-list criteria. In Vancouver, as many as 20% of Syrian newcomers gained access to BC Housing on the basis of their very high needs.

Suitable affordable housing offers were very often located in low-to-modest income suburban neighbourhoods, sometimes dispersed, sometimes including clusters of buildings where RAP-providers settled up to a few dozen families. These aspects depended on local housing market contingencies and the inventories of housing providers cooperating with the RAP-SPOs (Lambert 2016; Miller 2016a, and Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and St. John interviews). While RAP-SPOs preferred not to concentrate a substantial proportion (e.g. 20%) of their Syrian newcomer clients in the same housing development, they opted to do so if they judged that the affordability advantages were too major to pass up (Calgary; Ottawa, and St.-John interviews).

3.4 Supporting housing stability

Over and beyond finding suitable and affordable housing as part of the RAP mandate, the RAP-SPOs continue to be responsible for monitoring the GARs' resettlement progress throughout the first year and for referrals to other programs to assist different aspects of their settlement. Depending on funding structures that vary between the provinces, refugee newcomers identified as high needs may be assisted by intensive case-management protocols. These, inter alia, can help detect risks to housing stability such as falling into rent arrears—another emergency for which some RAP-providers or partner organizations appreciated being able to draw on donor-generated funds.

3.4.1 ONGOING SUPPORT FOR LIVING WELL IN RENTAL HOUSING

For several of the RAP-SPOs we interviewed, among the 'wraparound' supports their Syrian refugee clients needed was ongoing accompaniment for 'living well' within the parameters of the Canadian rental housing system, and in their rental housing building or complex. They underscored that, before and during arrival, refugees need basic and reliable information about landlord-tenant legal frameworks, and what to expect in terms of facilities in rental buildings and developments, and that this learning process needs to be reinforced at appropriate moments during the early months. This is in line with previous research—not limited to refugee-stream newcomers—and the findings of another SIARI-funded study (Abu-Laban et al. 2001; David Redmond and Associates 2004; Esses et al. 2017). CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2016) and several provinces have ongoing programs for housing guides for both newcomers and the settlement organizations assisting them. Several interviewees in our study believed that the lack of the usual pre-arrival orientation, which includes a housing component, increased the unpreparedness of Syrian refugees for some aspects of settling into their rental housing. One participant felt that the artificiality of the hotel environment made it difficult to absorb information about different aspects of living in the "real world". A few interviewees saw cultural norms about the outdoor supervision of children as a significant issue, as some Syrian newcomers had to reconcile traditions of collective models of supervision with the constraints imposed by the high density, spatial configuration and mixed demographics of Canadian apartment complexes.

In response to such issues, some study participants' organizations had already devised and implemented adaptations to existing programs, such as BC's Ready-to-Rent Program. In Halifax, a major property owner provided a program to teach children and adults about recycling and waste management (Halifax Chronicle Herald [no by-line] 2016). In Ottawa, affordability considerations led the RAP-SPO to settle most of the city's Syrian GARs in several private apartment complexes in low-income sectors in the east and south of the city, including 17% in two huge high-rise apartment buildings. To pre-empt and mitigate problems arising from this relative concentration and the unfamiliarity of the housing configuration, the SPO deployed settlement and community development workers on-site to help with the day-to-day aspects of neighbouring and sharing space (RAP-provider interview). Here, and in other examples referred to by interviewees or in the media, volunteer support teams also assisted newcomers in making connections with the wider neighbourhood (e.g. RAP-SPO interview, Halifax; Miller 2016b). In St. John, the provincial housing authority offered enough housing in a single public housing develop to settle several dozen Syrian families—amounting to the majority of that city's intake. Located in a "priority neighbourhood", it had a high vacancy rate due to reputational problems. Social agencies—and volunteer groups—embarked on a major and coordinated program of accompaniment and outreach to foster "bottom-up" neighbourhood revitalization and community development involving Syrian and non-Syrian residents alike. According to the RAP-provider interviewee, outcomes so far have proved positive for all local area residents.

Regarding secondary migration of GARs (moving to a different city after they complete the RAP program), several interviewees indicated that the numbers were significant but rarely led to housing difficulties. The reasons for such moves are to join family members and/or to take up a job offer and/or because that city has more affordable housing. GARs' files would be transferred to the RAP-SPO in the destination city, and high needs clients would receive specialized support services, including those related to housing, for the remainder of year 1.

3.4.2 Toward "Month 13"

First coined in Ottawa in spring 2016, the term 'Month 13' became a shorthand for how the end of their Resettlement Assistance Program support or the private sponsorship agreement would affect those resettled refugees who still needed income support.

Moving onto provincial social assistance could mean no income change, a slight improvement, a slight decline or a significant reduction in an already meagre income. The impact depended on the province and city of residence as well as the co-resident family configuration (for example, families with 18-year-olds receiving a separate allowance under RAP but not under provincial welfare where they are deemed to be minors) and clawback thresholds for part-time earnings by people on income support.

The timing of our interviews fortuitously coincided with the arrival of Month 13 for the majority of the RAP-SPOs in our study. We learned that, overall, the impacts were most severe in BC, but also that in Vancouver, and in cities in other provinces, some RAP-SPOs planned months in advance to ease the effects of a possible income decline due to this transition. For example, they liaised with provincial social assistance to provide coaching both refugee newcomers and government personnel. Some RAP-providers were able to plan for Month 13 when negotiating initial rent levels, in order to permit housing stability. Landlords' discounts and rent supplementation created with Welcome Fund support did not usually extend into Month 13; however, the Vancouver and Windsor SPOs told us that they were able to reserve a portion of the Welcome Fund allocation to help subsidize rents for a few more months for those facing the greatest new difficulties on account of the changeover. Some RAP-providers also encouraged and helped clients to switch to a month-to-month lease to avoid losing the deposit if it did turn out to be necessary to move to a cheaper apartment.

Although the Month 13 issue turned out to be more manageable than was feared, it nonetheless highlights how even small changes in income support policies can add significantly to the challenges of maintaining housing stability. In contrast, the minority of Syrian newcomers who accessed rent-geared-to-income housing before the end of year 1 did not have to face this issue: *"We had quite a few families go into social housing, and absolutely, we're less concerned about their situation, and had we been able to get more in social housing, I think it would be a better, much more stable situation for people to go in"* RAP-SPO, Victoria (group discussion).

3.5 The challenges and potential of Integrating and coordinating volunteer efforts and energies—a cross-cutting theme

> *"Settlement isn't just about settlement agencies anymore. Canadians in huge numbers have bought into the notion that they have a role to play in helping newcomers integrate. This is something that many settlement agencies and sponsorship groups couldn't have dreamed of a year ago (...). The problem is that they aren't funded to manage this goodwill (…) to screen, train and support the community interest"* (Refugee613 2016)

An important cross-cutting theme in interviewees' narratives of the advance-planning stages, managing the stays in temporary accommodation, searching for and setting up the arrangements for moving people into permanent housing, and the ongoing supports to settling well in that housing, was that RAP-SPOs were often surprised by the huge outpouring of volunteer desires to assist refugee newcomers. Stakeholders involved at the planning stage did not foresee the extent of the surge in volunteering by groups and individuals. There were even instances of new volunteer organizations initiating their own housing search process for GARs (CBC Radio - Metro Morning 2016). The RAP providers felt it important to educate volunteers about the RAP program and find ways of *"channelling unformed volunteer energies"* (Calgary) into a more structured protocol for supportive contributions that would avoid *"boundary crossing"* (Victoria): *"we had a huge bunch of volunteers from the Syrian community and who were willing to assist families (…) with housing. So we needed to educate them about the housing guidelines, and how to manage the relationship between them and us, so what their role would be and what our role would be"* (RAP-SPO Toronto). Managing diverse offers of time, housing, and material and financial donations generated a huge amount of extra work during an extremely busy period for the RAP-providers and could at times prove overwhelming (Carman 2017). Interviewees were very appreciative of instances where municipalities, private enterprises or other social agencies stepped in to assist with these logistics (e.g. providing warehouse space for donated goods, coordinating deliveries taking phone calls).

RAP-SPOs in the smaller cities in our study seemed to find it easier to integrate volunteers into aspects of their work, even in such delicate areas as the housing search process. This was perhaps because of the higher profile of volunteering in smaller

communities or because the RAP-SPO was itself a smaller organization with greater flexibility in some aspects of its operation. In the larger cities it seemed to take more time to set up ways of coordinating between volunteer groups, especially new ones, and the RAP providers. In several of the cities, the Syrian operation saw the emergence or expansion of the "volunteer support team" model, to complement RAP and other specialized services in housing and other areas:

> *"So it's very similar to sponsors, except that these groups of volunteers have no involvement with money. They didn't raise the money. They don't control finances involved for the families. So they're simply meant to be a kind of a relational or… social connection to the community. And then they take care of a lot of stuff around you know transportation, rides, child-minding, spending time with them on the weekends, having conversations with them to see where they're at, things like that"* (RAP-SPO, Peterborough).

These teams were sometimes formed of people who had originally planned to take on private sponsorships that had not (yet) materialized, and interviewees in several cities alluded to the value of their contributions, including in regards to housing (Toronto, Peterborough, St. John). The Peterborough RAP-SPO restructured an earlier protocol so that trained volunteer teams could participate actively and appropriately in the housing search process (New Canadians Centre - Peterborough 2017).

Some interviewees told us that the process of working out better models for collaboration with grass-roots community initiatives was one of the most important learning experiences out of the Syrian operation. Finally—and on a more speculative note—the increased engagement of community-based volunteers may have helped Syrian newcomers to gain access to a wider variety of neighbourhoods in the major cities. This could happen by way of offers of housing from individuals and small landlords in neighbourhoods not normally on the SPO's radar, and then the involvement of volunteers with local knowledge helping the RAP-SPO by driving newcomers to these neighbourhoods to check out housing offers (interview, Toronto). This may be why, according to research by ISSofBC tracking the residential location of the Syrian newcomers, a considerable number are in neighbourhoods that are not traditionally newcomer areas (Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia 2017).

4. HELPING PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES FIND HOUSING: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND EMERGING ISSUES

The demographic and socioeconomic profiles of the privately sponsored refugees resettled to Canada in the Syrian operation differ in several respects from those of the government-assisted refugees, as does their geographic pattern of settlement. Average family sizes are much smaller, and include a large proportion of individuals arriving on their own (see Table A-2). They have much higher education levels and knowledge of at least one official language upon arrival (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016b). While these factors are likely to assist their labour market integration, as with previous cohorts of PSRs in the past decade or so (see Table A-3), many are still likely to face employment barriers and economic precariousness in the first years of settlement.

About 70% of Syrian PSRs have settled in Canada's two largest metropolitan areas, Toronto and Montréal (roughly equally divided between each; source: IRCC and MIDI monthly updates to Sept. 2016). Another 7% settled in Calgary. No other urban centre received more than 4%. This geographical pattern is primarily a result of the strengths of established Syrian diaspora communities in these cities, where there was a huge upsurge in sponsorship requests by faith-based organizations and small groups comprised wholly or partly of relatives of Syrian refugees. Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) organizations have been playing an increasing role in the private sponsorship process in recent years, such that most sponsor groups work under the umbrella of a SAH (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2016a, MIDI, unpublished data from an access to information request, 2017).

Apart from the lower prevalence of large families, the challenges of finding the first permanent housing for the Syrian PSRs resembled those for the GARs in some key respects. In several cities, the advance planning committees included a SAH representative (Calgary and Halifax RAP-provider interviews). However, the fact of the housing responsibility lying with a sponsor group rather than with a newcomer-serving organization holding a RAP contract led to some differences in process and outcomes. First, as with the RAP allowance for GARs, IRCC and the MIDI calibrate sponsor groups' financial obligations to social assistance rates. Media reports and other documentary sources indicate that sponsors of Syrian PSRs (using their own resources and/or by fundraising) would sometimes considerably exceed this commitment in order to find suitable housing. In doing so, some were no doubt more mindful than others from the outset of the issue of sustainability if the family or individual did not become economically self-sufficient by "month 13" (Thomas 2016; Wilde 2016). In several cities, sympathetic

landlords explicitly included PSRs in their philanthropic gestures to the resettlement effort (Huncar 2015; Walsh 2016). However, Welcome Fund grants could not be used to reduce rents for PSRs.

Second, private sponsors, like RAP housing search workers, had to confront barriers to accessing potential rental supply due to landlord incomprehension of refugee newcomers' circumstances and their income stream (AM900 CHML 2015), or to outright discrimination (Chowdhry 2016). Private sponsors had more room to manoeuvre than RAP organizations in that they could act as guarantors or sign leases (Keung 2016). Some may have had access to a wider range of rental bargains or even free housing, via professional and personal networks, though no doubt more so in rural areas than cities (RAP-SPO interview, Halifax). Some groups had a good grasp of the factors that they had to balance in a huge city like Toronto: *"We need to determine location between where the volunteers are, where the Canadian family lives and where it is most affordable"* (Wilde 2016). However according to some of our RAP-provider interviewees whose organization was also a SAH, the outpouring of private sponsor support in the Syrian operation brought in many new groups lacking experience, inter alia, with the local context of rental housing and ill-prepared for the challenges of finding appropriate housing in the tighter markets. Unlike the RAP-providers, these groups could not draw on a long history of working relationships with landlords. Moreover, lacking the knowhow of trained housing search workers in negotiating with landlords and assuaging their concerns, they were more vulnerable to the excessive and/or illegal demands or practices of some landlords, such as demanding 6 months or more advance rent or signing multiple leases for the same apartment (Action Réfugiés Montréal 2016; Herhalt 2015; Simes 2016). In some instances, local legal clinics offered assistance (Hamilton Spectator [no by-line] 2016).

Where a SAH with long experience in the housing aspects of newcomer settlement was the sponsor or cosponsor, it could more easily assist sponsors in their housing search by mobilizing its connections with landlords. SAHs that also held the RAP contract also were sometimes able to dovetail housing assistance to PSR- and GAR-stream clients by deploying the same teams of experienced housing workers to each stream (Calgary and Halifax RAP-SPO interviews). Hosting the SAH and RAP programs in the same organization may also have facilitated the transfer of offers of housing from the PSR to the GAR stream in cases where PSR arrivals were delayed for months after the private sponsors had rented apartments in anticipation of an earlier arrival date.

According to interviewees and the organizations represented in the documentary sources consulted for this study, most sponsors supported the Syrian PSRs very well; this is in line with the results of previous research (Carter et al. 2008). Nevertheless, there were a number of reports of far more sponsored refugee newcomers than expected seeking help from community organizations for housing and other basic needs, on account of insufficient support from their sponsors. It would seem that PSRs were more likely to be left to fend for themselves when the sponsors were distant relatives, rather than close family or community, religious or citizen groups, and there were even reports of excessive control and abuse (Action Réfugiés Montréal 2016; Bégin 2016; Klingbeil 2016). More commonly, it was a question of sponsors with the best of intentions facing unexpected difficulties in fulfilling their commitments. Some sponsoring organizations were overwhelmed by the large numbers arriving during peak periods (Action Réfugiés Montréal 2016; Levant Settlement Centre 2016); they faced similar uncertainties as to numbers and arrival dates as did organizations assisting the GARs. Downturns in the regional economy or other causes of unexpected job loss left some sponsors with little financial room to manoeuvre (RAP-SPO interview, Calgary; Levant Settlement Centre 2016). In such cases, local organizations ramped up their fundraising drives and networking efforts to help alleviate the situation.

Several interviewees mentioned that resources provided by the IRCC-funded Refugee Sponsorship Training Program proved invaluable for basic orientation of sponsors and PSRs on various aspects of settlement, including housing. The Québec government, however, has not funded an equivalent program, and the very high numbers of private sponsorships in that province under the Syrian operation has highlighted a major gap in the settlement support system infrastructure (interview, TRCI). Thus, the main SAH in the City of Montréal, working closely with diaspora communities in the Syrian resettlement effort, had to seek out donor funds for this purpose (CACI - Centre d'appui aux communautés immigrantes 2016). Charitable support also enabled the SPO that holds the RAP contract to assist hundreds of PSRs under a special program (Centre social d'aide aux immigrants 2016).

5. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

> *"[It's] the first time it's happened like this, where the three levels of government have come together and provided unprecedented cooperation and support (…) priority attention with an assigned lead team and leadership at federal, provincial and municipal levels. There was a shift in the planning culture from "does it fit program,/policy" to 'how can we make it happen". Because of this support we were able to provide such a large number of Syrian refugees with settlement support in such a short period of time* (RAP-SPO, Toronto).
>
> *"The notion that the minister goes out and asks businesses to contribute and he raises thirty million dollars. I mean that itself is the proof that they know [the RAP allowance] is not enough"* (RAP-SPO interviewee, group discussion).

All study participants underscored their intense satisfaction and pride with their team in succeeding in rising to the considerable challenges of finding satisfactory first permanent housing for the Syrian GARs under their responsibility, within a few months, at most, of their arrival. They also underscored their gratitude to groups, organizations and government agencies and departments supporting them in this effort. However, they also alluded to the phenomenal stresses placed on their organization's staff by the intensity of the Syrian operation and the housing affordability conundrum. In our analysis, we have sought to take the measure of their perspectives, but we take full responsibility for our interpretations and for our assessment of the main policy issues and future research needs arising from this report.

5.1 Policy Considerations

5.1.1 For municipalities, Local Immigration Partnerships and other newcomer support networks

This study has uncovered a rich variety of good established practices and new initiatives emerging from within local communities during the Syrian operation. It has also highlighted the difficulties that came up. This leads us to point to several ways that local governance structures and networks could improve or increase the robustness of their infrastructure for advanced preparedness for future major episodes of refugee arrivals taking place over a short timeframe.

- It is important to make local housing tables and task forces permanent, where this is not already the case, and to foster not only outreach to, but also active participation in these tables, by the full range of local housing providers, including private developers and landlords as well as the public and non-profit sectors.

- Municipalities are well positioned to make essential contributions to receiving and coordinating offers of volunteer assistance, and should establish and fund permanent procedures and protocols for this, in consultation with settlement sector organizations and existing volunteer networks.

- Municipalities should also maintain the infrastructure and knowhow developed in the ramp-up of housing banks and portals for the Syrian operation, including procedures for evaluating the physical condition of housing.

- Multi-sector newcomer support networks need to work out protocols for clearly establishing and delimiting the respective roles of the various local stakeholders including new volunteer groups.

5.1.2 For Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Three main lessons directly germane to IRCC policies and procedures emerge from this study.

- Adequate advance notification of the profile of GARs, especially their family sizes, and the estimated arrival dates in each city, are crucial to local planning efforts for an efficient and timely resettlement into their first permanent housing. A more predictable arrival timetable for the PSRs would also alleviate the burden and stress on sponsor groups in regards to housing.

- The RAP providers we interviewed strongly believe that the lack of pre-arrival information/training for the Syrian operation refugees increased the challenges of settling these newcomers into their first housing. It is important to reinstate pre-arrival orientation and, in so doing, to fully utilize the expertise of CMHC's newcomer housing information resources team. Ongoing reinforcement of newcomers' learning about the housing system and living well in rental housing are also crucial to successful settlement outcomes. We encourage IRCC to collaborate with provinces, cities and non-profit agencies to enhance what is presently a spotty patchwork of support to such programs.

- The Syrian operation has crystallized and brought to the forefront the need to revisit income support to GARs, as a result of the challenges that organizations faced in settling substantial numbers of these refugee newcomers in expensive housing markets. Our study shows that, in a number of cities, the Welcome Fund played a major role in helping RAP providers bridge the housing affordability gap for their most precarious or vulnerable clients. However, the substantial deployment of charitable and philanthropic contributions to resolve the housing "emergencies" of the Syrian operation has raised some important issues of equity, ethics and sustainability:

    - Earmarking donor contributions to refugee newcomers of a particular origin excludes equally needy individuals who are not part of that subgroup. If the federal government opts to mobilize private charitable and philanthropic contributions, for future large-scale refugee operations, it will need to persuade donors to refrain from such targeting, so that local organizations making use of these funds will not face uncomfortable ethical dilemmas.

    - Canadians are accustomed to supporting charitable fundraising drives for emergencies and extraordinary needs. However, housing affordability is a long-standing and chronic problem for most of those whose income is tied to provincial social assistance levels, the exceptions being the minority who have access to rent-geared-to-income housing. IRCC needs to confront head-on (in collaboration with other federal agencies and provincial governments) a fundamental paradox. This is that relying on an income support mechanism calibrated to the aid-of-last-resort system of provincial social assistance is incompatible with Canada's international commitment to provide adequate support for refugees to resettle with dignity—a process which takes time, especially for those with high needs facing major barriers to economic self-sufficiency in the short or medium term.

- The family composition of the Syrian GARs has also foregrounded some important broader issues stemming from the federal government's (and the provinces') increased deployment of the Child Benefit as an anti-poverty measure. The 2016 improvements to the Child Benefit for low-income families coincided with the Syrian operation. While fortuitous in helping to avert a housing affordability crisis for large families, it highlighted the untenable income support situation for refugee newcomers without children. IRCC should not rely on the Child Benefit to resolve the paradox set out in the previous point.

5.1.3 For federal and provincial housing policy decision makers and stakeholders

The challenges that organizations and groups faced in finding suitable affordable housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers stemmed in part but certainly not only from the fact that substantial numbers of these newcomers had special needs. This study's findings also point to broader issues as to howCanada, the provinces and the cities should adjust housing policy to the changing composition of the low-income population.

- We encourage CMHC's Newcomer Housing Information team to continue to improve its resource materials for newcomers, settlement organizations and landlords, and to intensify its outreach to end users. Greater use of multimedia resources and efforts to foster mutual understandings of differences in housing cultures between Canada and countries of origin would be very helpful, pre-arrival, during the early weeks and in the ensuing months as part of ongoing support to settlement.
- While this study has shown that RAP-SPOs were able to settle GARs in private rental housing that was of adequate quality, they achieved this on account of their existing networks combined with buy-in from other property owners willing to contribute to the local community's resettlement effort. There is no guarantee that those newcomers who continue to be economically precarious after the intense accompaniment of the GAR process has ended will be able to find decent housing if they have to move. The broader context is one of undermaintenance and lack of government aid for rehabilitation, which have become major problems within the older low-end-of-market rental housing stock in many Canadian cities over the past two decades or so. Reinstating the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for private landlords as well as increasing the resources for rehabilitation of deteriorated public housing units would help many low-income households including those who enter Canada as refugees.
- The housing aspect of Syrian refugee resettlement has also highlighted the importance of diversifying the housing stock to take into account the needs of large and multi-generational families in new affordable rental housing and in designing incentive programs for retrofitting.
- For long-term affordability in a stable housing situation, expanding the rent-geared-to-income social and community housing stock would provide a sustainable solution to the housing needs of newcomers admitted in the resettled refugee streams and

who require income support due to ongoing high needs, or because they are only able to find very precarious employment. This too is a mainstream social policy that will benefit various needy groups including high needs newcomers.

- However, in several provinces, newcomers, even though they have permanent residency in Canada, are barred for 6 or even 12 months from applying for public housing or for rent allowances—an inequity that further delays the attainment of housing stability for needy refugee-stream newcomers. A proactive approach to this inequity would be to place it on the negotiating table for all renewals of federal/provincial social/affordable housing agreements.

- This study also highlights that the Child Benefit has become a *de facto* housing allowance for families with several minor children. This creates inequities between low-income households based on the presence of minor children. In addition, some interviewees in our study expressed concern that it could encourage landlords to inflate rents in low-end-of-market housing suitable for larger families. If governments decide to have housing allowances or rent supplementation play a greater role in alleviating acute housing affordable problems, it will be important to build in controls to prevent such unintended consequences.

5.1.4 FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

- It is important for all stakeholders, from local community organizations to the federal government, to develop protocols for preserving “institutional memory” so that valuable lessons learned in the course of one refugee operation can be drawn upon, years or even decades later, to inspire and assist decision-making the next time. For example, the problems associated with earmarked donor funds, and the issue of boundary crossing by untrained volunteers, are not new; they came up during the Kosovo resettlement operation (Abu-Laban et al. 2001). Providing the resources for stable archiving of research studies and evaluation reports by local organizations, governments and academics would mitigate the effects of staff turnover and generational change that challenge such memory-building.

5.2 Research needs

The strengths of this study include its representativeness of the challenges, resources and initiatives related to finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in different provinces and regions, cities of varying sizes, and different types of housing markets.

We believe our findings to be robust but also nuanced regarding the commonalities and the range of different situations that organizations faced in their quest for housing solutions to sustain the GARs at least through to the end of year 1. Given the resources and timeframe of this research project, we could only make a brief and preliminary assessment of the challenges and resources for those helping privately sponsored refugees. Nevertheless, we have uncovered sufficient convincing material to trouble the simplistic assumption, pervasive in the news media, that PSRs necessary have better accompaniment and better housing outcomes than GARs. In this final section, we outline a number of needs for further research suggested by our analysis and by the gaps in this study.

- Our study has not addressed issues related to finding housing for the Syrian Newcomers in the Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) stream. We did not include the very few examples given by interviewees, out of concerns about representativeness and preserving confidentiality. How did the mix of sponsor group and RAP support contribute to housing outcomes? Did the non-eligibility of BVORs for a start-up allowance create difficulties and how did housing workers and sponsors deal with them?

- The Welcome Fund, as well as adaptations made to existing provincial or municipal programs provided valuable opportunities for experimenting with different models and protocols for rent supplementation to assist needy GARs. Community Foundations of Canada does not currently have plans to publish an evaluation report of the Welcome Fund program. In-depth case studies, with the RAP-provider organizations, to assess the merits and the limitations encountered in implementing these different variants of rent supplementation, would be of value for housing policy development at local and provincial scales.

- For all entry categories of Syrian refugees, it will be important to track and analyze housing trajectories and the success of housing outcomes after year 1, with matched comparisons in different housing markets. A four-year tracking study currently underway (*Refugee integration and long-term health outcomes in Canada*, led by Michaela Hynie of York University), focussing on the health outcomes of Syrian and other refugees in the 2015-2017 arrival cohorts, should be very useful in this respect. It includes a block of questions on housing, and targets Vancouver, Okanagan Valley, Kitchener-Waterloo, Windsor, Toronto and Montréal. We hope to explore with the lead researcher the possibility of seeking additional funds for an enhanced housing component.

- PSR sponsorships can now take a considerable variety of forms and permutations, making it a challenge to design research that can adequately document and analyze sponsors' involvement in finding and maintaining PSRs in suitable accommodation, the challenges they face and the resources to which they have access. It will be important to address this challenge in order to improve the design and the reach of programs supporting private sponsors, especially in difficult housing markets.

- Tracking refugee newcomers' locations within a metropolitan area over time is also important. RAP-SPOs (and some SAHs) have the capacity and the administrative data to do this, and some have done so. If early settlement patterns show a relatively dispersed pattern, this could indicate greater community engagement of individuals, small property owners and neighbourhood organizations, beyond those associated with traditional immigrant reception areas. This would suggest potentially transformative impacts of the Syrian operation on local and regional contexts of welcome. Research funding support could enable SPOs in different cities to use mapping and qualitative studies so as to better understand the causal factors between the spatial patterns, and to track and compare longer-term outcomes, such as housing adequacy, access to rent-geared-to-income housing, and home ownership.

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Appendix A: Tables and Figures referred to in the text

Table A-1: Newcomer Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) interviewed

City, Province	Organization name (see note 1)	Resettlement Assistance Program provider?	Sponsorship Agreement Holder?
Victoria, BC	Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria	yes (since 2016)	yes
Vancouver, BC	Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (see note 2)	yes	yes
Calgary, AB	Calgary Catholic Immigration Society	yes	yes
Winnipeg, MB	Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council	yes	no
Windsor, ON	Multicultural Council of Windsor-Essex County	yes	no
Hamilton, ON	Wesley Urban Ministries	yes	yes
Toronto, ON	COSTI Immigrant Services	yes	no
Peterborough, ON	New Canadians Centre	yes (since 2016)	no
Ottawa, ON	Catholic Centre for Immigrants / Centre catholique pour immigrants (see note 2)	yes	yes
Gatineau, QC	Accueil Parrainage Outaouais	yes (see note 4)	yes (see note 5)
Montréal, QC	Centre social d'aide aux immigrants	yes (see note 4)	no
Montréal, QC	Action Réfugiés Montréal	no	yes (see note 5)
Montréal, QC	Table de concertation des organismes d'aide aux personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)	no	no (see note 6)
St. John, NB	YM-YWCA of Greater St. John Newcomer Connections	yes	no
Halifax, NS	Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (see note 2)	yes	yes

Notes:

1: We interviewed senior management or professional staff directly involved with the accommodation and housing aspects of the Syrian resettlement operation, and who could also provide broader context on the organization's role in the operation in their city or region. We initially contacted the Executive Director or other senior management person. The decision as to who we should interview was then made within the organization. Under the ethics protocol for this study, interviewees are cited anonymously but, except in the case of delicate points that could create difficulties for the organization, we identify the city (and thus, indirectly, the RAP-SPO), because local context and variation are central to this research.

2: For these SPOs, there were two interview participants.

3: This SPO's CEO proffered contextual information over the phone prior to the actual interview with a (different) senior staff person.

4: Québec's equivalent to the RAP is *PRO-Réussir l'immigration, Volet 2*, administered by the MIDI with funds transferred from the federal government. This program differs from the RAP in one important respect: income support is fully integrated into the provincial welfare program.

5: In Québec, a sponsorship agreement holder is known as a *Détenteur d'entente de parrainage*. There are some minor differences in adminstration and regulation of these umbrella agreements in Québec versus the rest of Canada.

6: At the TCRI, we interviewed the staff person designated to the private sponsorship file, in particular to the question of sponsor training.

Table A-2: Family units of resettled Syrian refugees by admission category and family size, Canada, Nov. 2015-July 2016

	GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEE		PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEE		BLENDED SPONSORSHIP REFUGEE		TOTAL, RESETTLED FAMILY UNITS	
FAMILY SIZE	Family Count	%	Family Count	%	Family Count	%	Family Count	%
1	408	12.3%	2295	49.0%	127	19.1%	2830	32.7%
2 to 3	360	10.9%	1166	24.9%	82	12.3%	1608	18.6%
4 to 5	1235	37.3%	1113	23.8%	276	41.4%	2624	30.3%
6 to 8	1182	35.7%	109	2.3%	159	23.9%	1450	16.7%
9 to 10	114	3.4%	2	0.0%	14	2.1%	130	1.5%
11 +	14	0.4%	0	0.0%	8	1.2%	22	0.3%
Total	3313	100%	4685	100%	666	100%	8664	100%

Source: Authors' calculations from data in IRCC Open Data Table, "Canada (including Quebec) - Admissions of Syrian Refugees by Immigration Category and Family Composition, November 4, 2015 - July 31, 2016". The data refer to preliminary estimates of family groups processed under Canada's Syrian refugee resettlement commitment between November 4, 2015 and July 31, 2016; http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_SyriaFC_0013_E.xls (consulted 2017-03-02).

Note:
Family size refers to the number of persons migrating together, according to IRCC's files. This may not always correspond to the number of 'households' for housing purposes. In particular, some "1-person family units" consist of unaccompanied individuals migrating on a separate IRCC file from the rest of their (normally co-resident) family.

Table A-3: Average rent levels in the lowest quartile, private row houses and apartments, for the cities selected for this study, October 2016

	BACHELOR		1 BEDROOM		2 BEDROOM		3+ BEDROOM	
CENSUS SUBDIVISION	Rent	Data quality	Rent	Data quality	Rent	Data quality	Rent	Data quality
Victoria	$690	a	$820	a	$1014	a	$1383	
Vancouver	$846	a	$900	a	$1100	a	$1280	a
Calgary	$750	a	$900	a	$1075	a	$1100	a
Winnipeg	$529	a	$725	a	$921	a	$1100	a
Windsor	$450	b	$612	a	$750	a	$900	c
Hamilton	$550	b	$728	a	$870	a	$1050	a
Toronto	$800	a	$962	a	$1112	a	$1300	a
Peterborough	$650	a	$750	a	$875	a	$916	b
Ottawa	$742	a	$875	a	$1012	a	$1200	a
Gatineau	$540	a	$600	a	$699	a	$800	a
Montréal	$488	a	$555	a	$635	a	$735	a
Saint John	$409	b	$545	a	$625	a	$690	a
Halifax	$625	a	$675	a	$819	a	$960	a

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Table "Private Row (Townhouse) and Apartment Rent Quartile by Bedroom Type and Census Subdivision for Centres 10,000+, October 2016" https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/stda_007.cfm .

Notes:

This table is not available for the CMA unit of geography. The CSD (census subdivision) usually covers a larger area.

The lowest quartile corresponds to the low end of the rental market.

CMHC's data quality estimates:

a – Excellent

b – Very good

c – Good

d – Fair (use with caution)

x – Poor – Suppressed

Table A-4: Percentage change in average rents Oct. 2015 – Oct. 2016 by bedroom types, for the cities included in this study

	BACHELOR		1 BEDROOM		2 BEDROOM		3+ BEDROOM		TOTAL	
CMA	% change	data quality	% change	data quality	% change	data quality	% change	data quality	% change	data quality
Victoria	6.8	b	5	a	5.3	b	5.4	d	5.5	a
Vancouver	6.4	a	6.8	a	5.7	a	4.4	c	6.4	a
Calgary	-8.3	b	-7.4	a	-7.5	a	-4.6	c	-7.6	a
Winnipeg	2.6	b	1.9	a	2	b	++		2.1	a
Windsor	++		3	a	2.7	a	3.3	c	2.7	a
Hamilton	7.1	c	5.2	b	4.9	c	x	x	5.1	b
Toronto	3	b	3.4	a	3.1	a	2.1	b	3.1	a
Peterborough	++		1.3	a	1.3	a	x		1.3	a
Ottawa-Gatineau (ON part)	2.6	a	2.1	a	2.1	a	x		2.1	a
Ottawa-Gatineau (QC part)	++		0.5	b	++		++		++	
Montréal	2.1	b	1.7	a	1.7	a	2.1	c	1.7	a
Saint John	2.7	c	3.7	c	2	c	++		1.8	c
Halifax	3.3	c	2.5	a	1.4	a	1.6	c	1.8	a

Source: Compiled from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Rental Market Reports 2016* for each CMA, Table 1.1.5, "Private Apartment Estimate of Percentage Change (%) of Average Rent by Bedroom Type", available from CMHC's Housing Market Information Portal, https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmiportal/en/ .

Notes:

The Percentage Change of Average Rent measures change in rents in rental units that were common to the survey sample for both years. The data only cover purpose built rental units in buildings with 3 or more rental units. Condominiums and houses rented out are excluded.

CMHC's data quality estimates:

a – Excellent

b – Very good

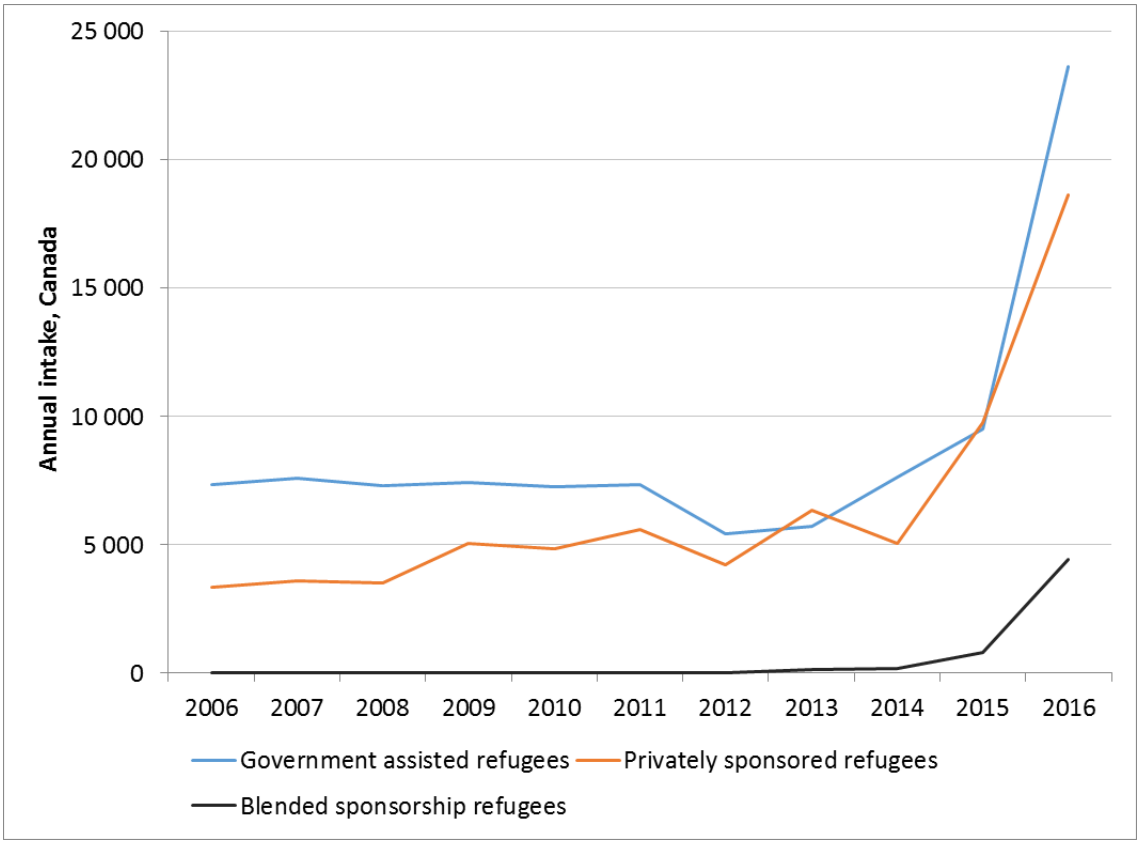
c – Good

d – Fair (use with caution)

x – Poor – Suppressed

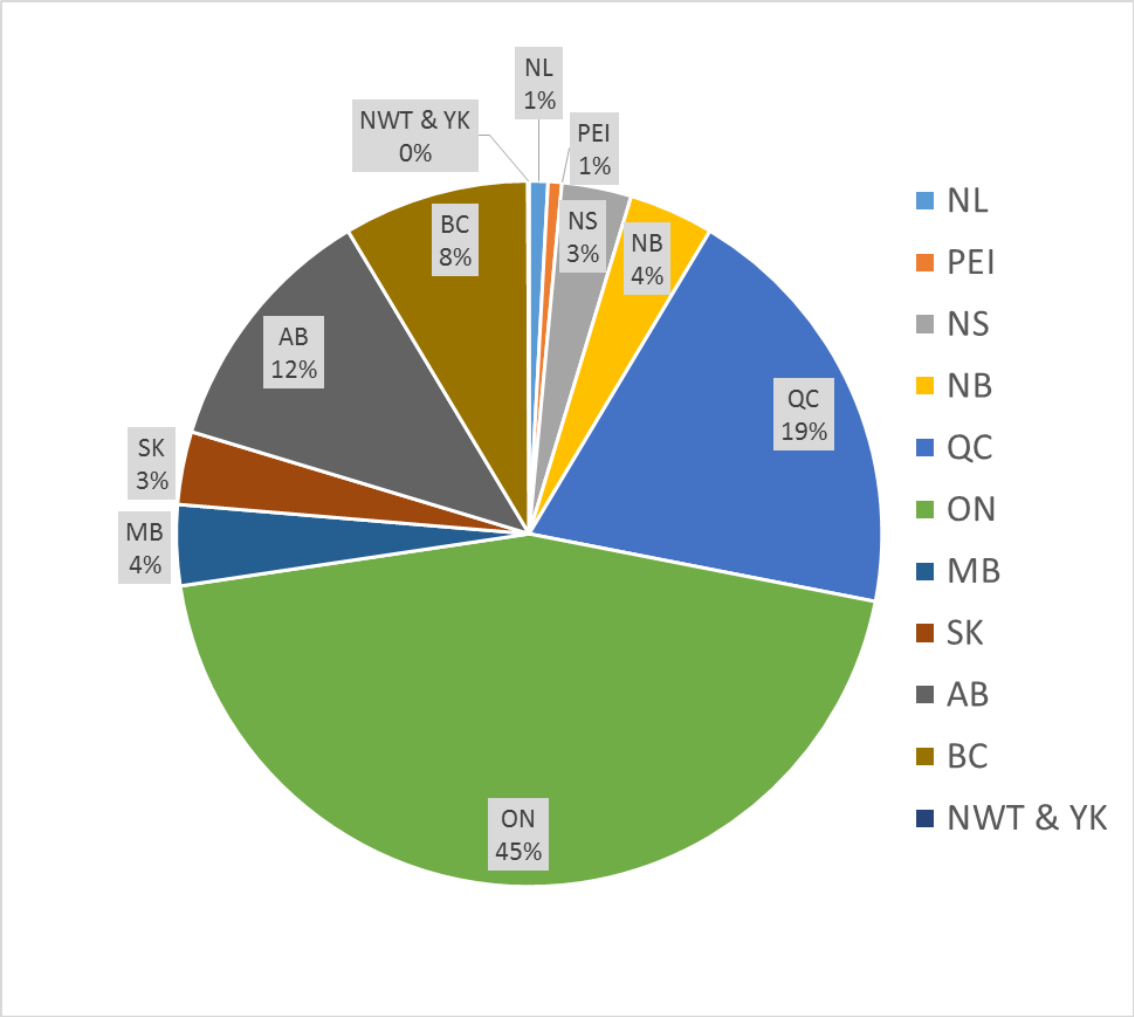
++ – Change in rent is not statistically significant, i.e. the change in rent is not statistically different from zero.

Figure A-1: Refugees resettled in Canada, 2006-2016, by admission category



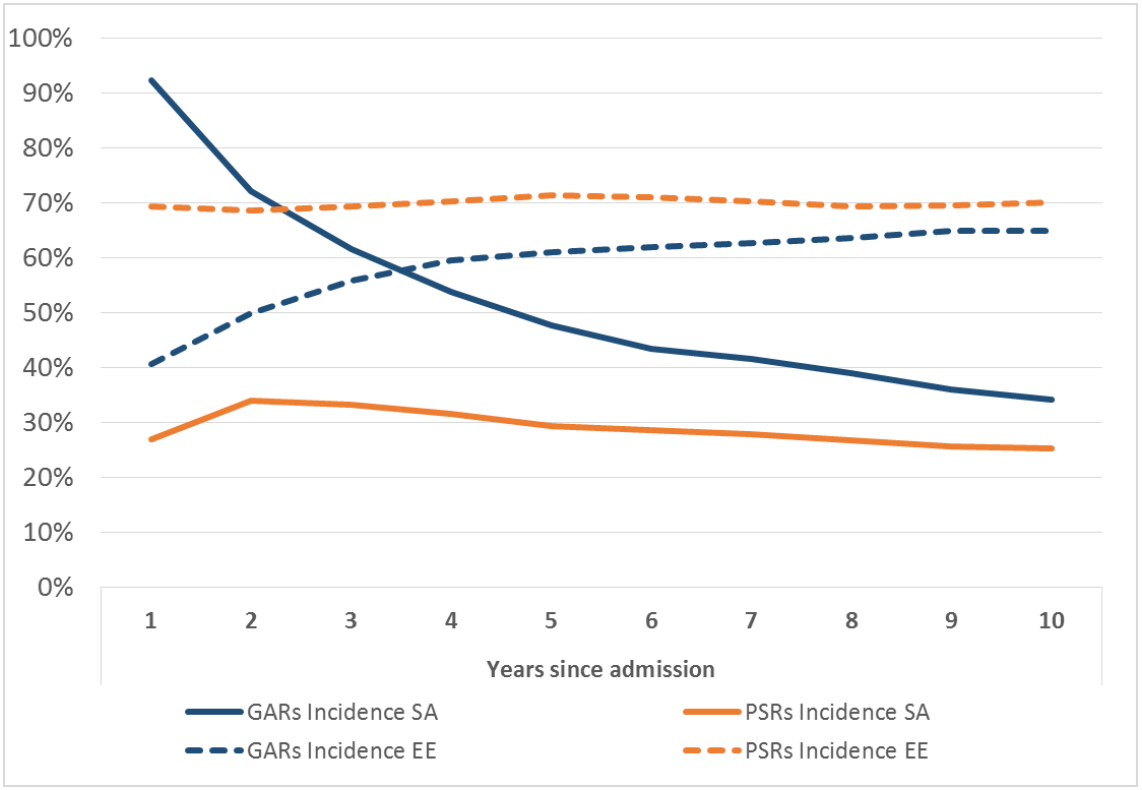
Sources: Authors' calculations from the following online tables :" Canada - Permanent residents by category"; http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_FFPR_02_E.xls;"Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Province/Territory of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, January 2015 - March 2017; http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_M_PRadmiss_0001_E.xls; "Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Immigration Category, January 2015 - March 2017; http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_M_PRadmiss_0003_E.xls,

Figure A-2: Destinations of resettled Syrian refugees (all categories), by province/territory, Nov. 2015-March 2017 (N = 43 725)



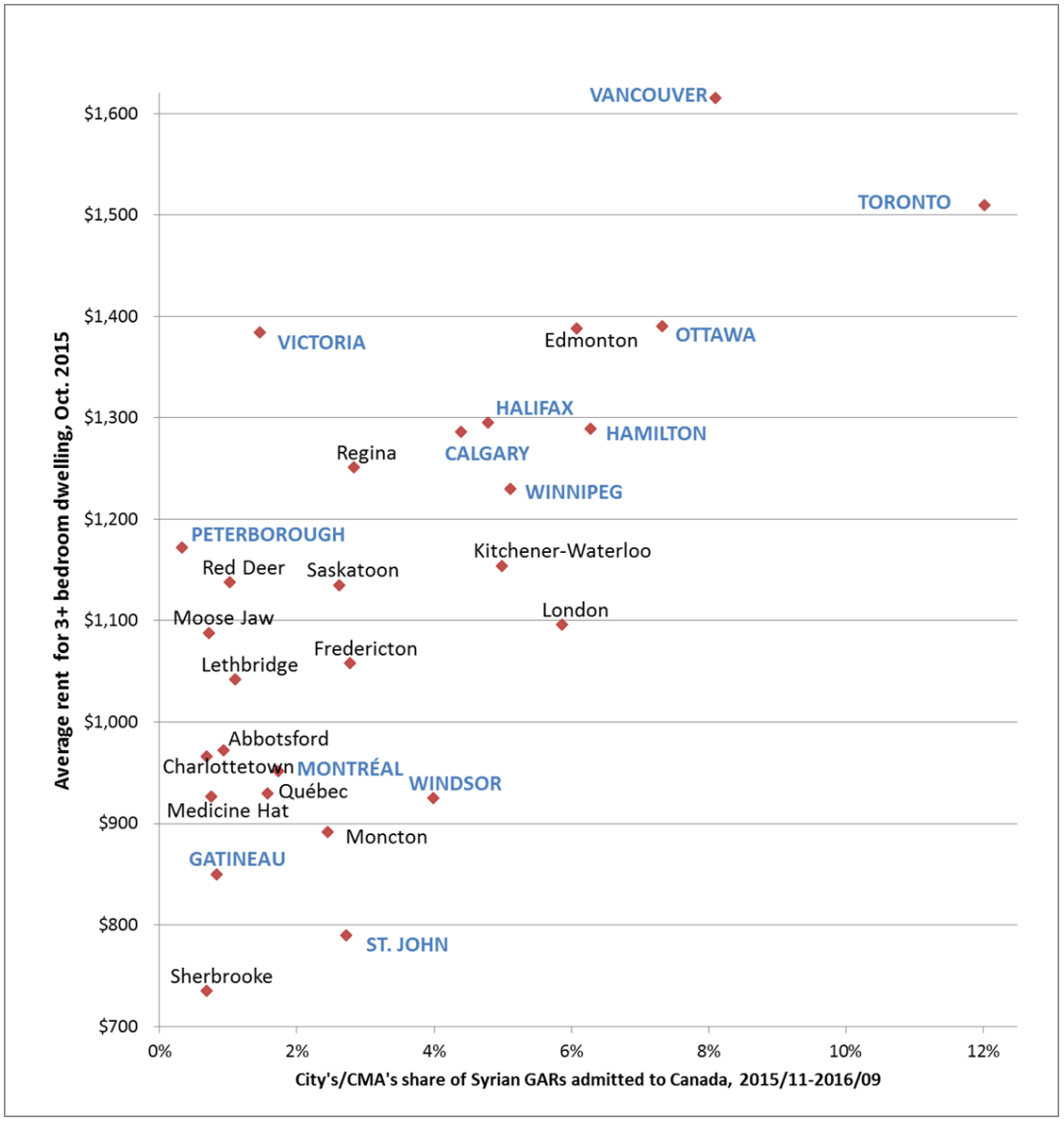
Source:Calculated from IRCC Open Data table." Canada - Admissions of Syrian Refugees by Province/Territory and Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, November 4th, 2015 – March 31st, 2017"; http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_M_SRadmiss_0007_E.xls, consulted 2017/05/24. Data are preliminary estimates.

Figure A-3: Incidence of Social Assistance (SA) and Employment Earnings (EE) for 2003-2013 cohorts of Government Assisted and Privately Sponsored Refugees



Source: Edlund 2017, based on IMDB 2016 (2013 tax year). Graph redrawn by authors.

Figure A-4: Average rents for a 3-bedroom apartment (October 2015) plotted against cities' percentage contribution to Syrian GAR resettlement in Canada (Nov. 2015-Sept. 2016)



Sources: We compiled the numbers of GARs for all provinces except Québec using IRCC's online monthly updates. We aggregated the published data to the Census Metropolitan Area scale. For Vancouver and Abbotsford, we used ISS of BC's data, because IRCC's data for Vancouver included GARs destined for Abbotsford and certain other BC cities. For cities in Québec, we used the MIDI's monthly updates. On this chart, we only plot places to which 100 or more Syrian GARs were destined as of September 2016.

Note:
This scatterplot was a key instrument in our sampling strategy: it assisted us in selecting a range of cities in different types of rental markets and with varied numerical importance (in terms of percentage contributions) in the resettlement of Syrian GARs. The cities where we interviewed are shown in upper case and blue font.

Figure A-5: Schematic representation of data sources, research themes and analytical process used in this study

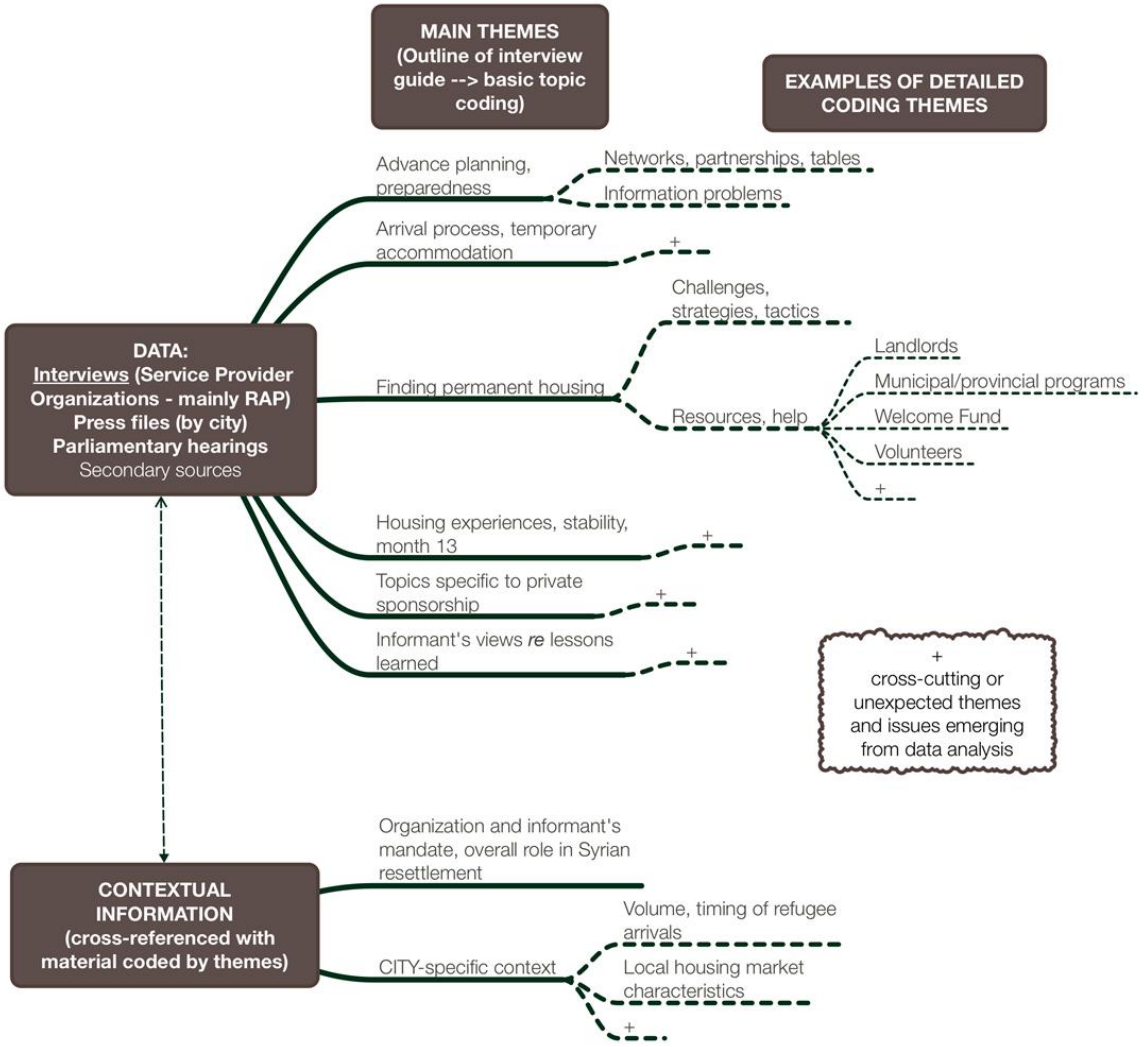
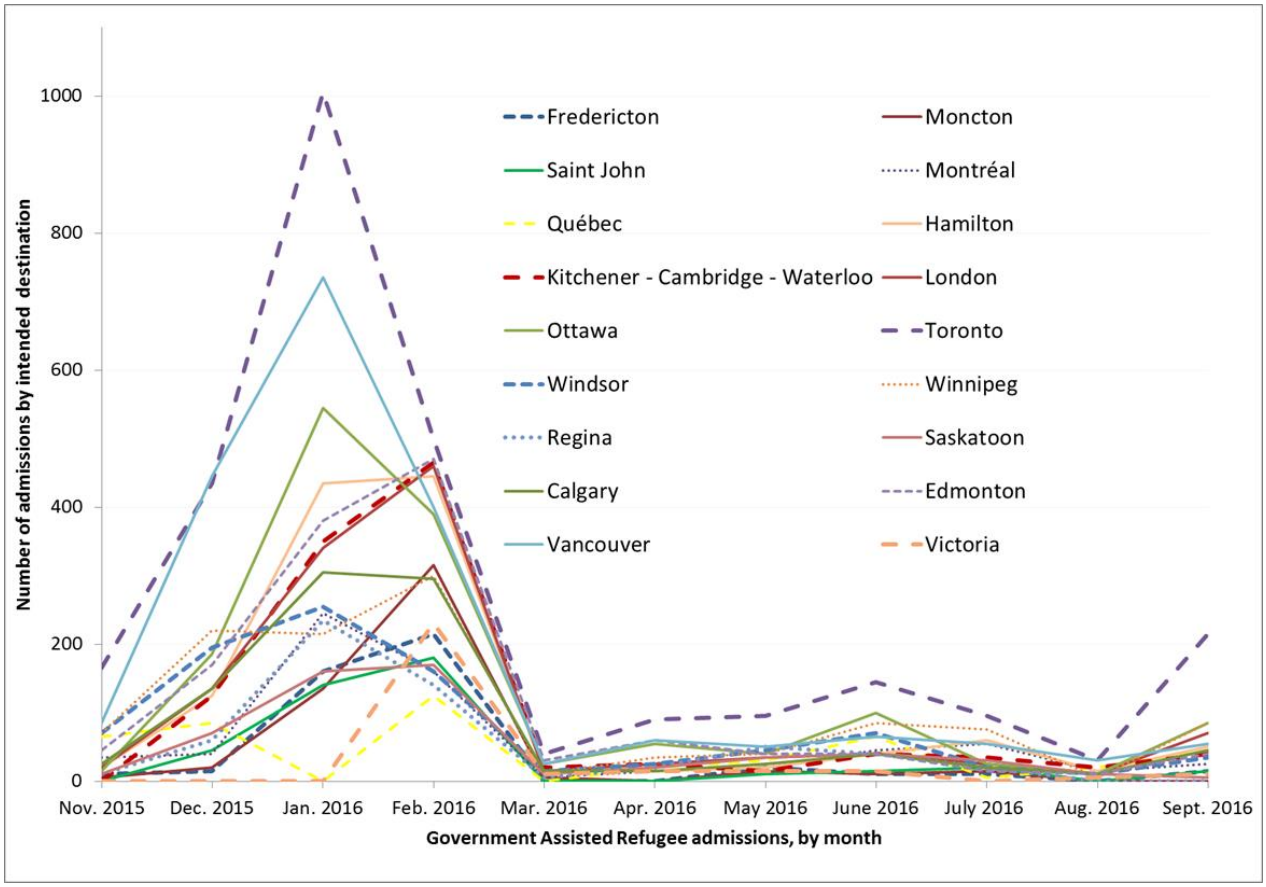


Figure A-6: Volume and timing of GAR arrivals, for the main destination Census Metropolitan Areas, Nov. 2015-Sept. 2016



Source: IRCC Open Data Table, "Canada - Admissions of Resettled Refugees by Province/Territory and Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, November 4th, 2015 – September 30th, 2016", http://www.cic.gc.ca/opendata-donneesouvertes/data/IRCC_Adhoc_Resettled_0001_E.xls. Only the major destinations are shown in this chart. The Vancouver figures include GARs initially processed in Vancouver but destined for certain other BC cities.

Appendix B: List of other dissemination and outreach activities stemming from this study

This list is current as of the date of publication of this research report.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. *Executive Summary. Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, initiatives and policy implications. Synthesis report*. Montréal: Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Centre – Urbanisation Culture Société; http://espace.inrs.ca/6458.

Rose, Damaris et Alexandra Charette. 2017. *Sommaire exécutif. Trouver des logements pour les réfugiés syriens dans les villes canadiennes : défis, initiatives, et leçons à tirer. Rapport de synthèse*. Montréal: Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Centre – Urbanisation Culture Société; http://espace.inrs.ca/6458.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. "Finding Housing for the 'Welcome Syrians' Refugee Newcomers: A Cross-Canada Analysis of Initiatives, Challenges and Lessons Learned. Research in progress." 19th National Metropolis Conference, Montréal, 16-18 March 2017. http://speakers.ciim.ca/wp-content/uploads/papers2017/198/D1DamarisRose[D1%20DamarisRo+02059].pptx.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. "Making sense of place-based differences in challenges and initiatives in finding housing for the Syrian refugees." 19th National Metropolis Conference, Montréal, 16-18 March 2017. http://speakers.ciim.ca/wp-content/uploads/papers2017/198/A1DamarisRose[A1%20DamarisRo+77052].pptx

Rose, Damaris et Alexandra Charette. 2017. « Trouver des logements pour les réfugiés syriens : survol des résultats d'une étude pancanadienne. » Journée d'étude du Centre pour l'évaluation des politiques d'immigration, « Un an plus tard L'expérience d'accueil des réfugiés syriens au Québec et au Canada » Université Concordia, 26 mai 2017, Université Concordia, 26 mai 2017. https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/polisci/research/cipe/projects.html ; lien direct vers le fichier PDF : https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/polisci/cipe/docs/CÉPI%2026%20mai%20-%20Rose%20&%20Charette.pdf.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. Webinar: Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, initiatives and (preliminary) lessons learned (Trouver des logements pour les réfugiés syriens dans les villes canadiennes : défis, initiatives, et leçons (préliminaires) à tirer). On-line [Montréal]: Centre interuniversitaire québécois de statistiques sociales / Quebec Interuniversity Centre for Social Statistics Video (includes question period): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdIjsPO4fkU; PDF of presentation: https://www.ciqss.org/sites/default/files/documents/Finding%20housing%20for%20Syrian%20refugees%20Canada%20-%20Webinar%202017-05-17%20(Rose%20&%20Charette).pdf.
There were 85 registrants for the webinar, 65 of whom attended.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. "Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, initiatives and policy implications." Invited seminar presentation to CMHC Strategic Policy Group, Office of the Senior VP, Policy, Research & Public Affairs, and Office of the VP, Housing Markets and Indicators, Ottawa, 2017-06-29.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017. "Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities: challenges, tactics, initiatives and lessons learned." Pathways to Prosperity 2017 National Conference, Toronto (16-17 November 2017), 2017-11-16.

Rose, Damaris and Alexandra Charette. 2017, in press. *Finding housing for the Syrian refugee newcomers in Canadian cities**. A BMRC Research Digest. York University, Building Migrant Resilience in Cities Partnership, http://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/research-digests/ ; direct link to PDF file: http://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/files/2017/11/DamarisResearchDigestFinalSecured.pdf

Rose, Damaris et Alexandra Charette. 2017, sous presse. *Trouver des logements pour les réfugiés syriens dans les villes canadiennes**. Un résume de recherche par l'IMRU. Université York, Partenariat de recherche Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain, http://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/fr/recueils-de-recherche/ ; lien direct vers le fichier PDF : http://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/files/2017/11/DamarisResearchDigestFinalSecuredFR.pdf

*The title of the Research Digest may differ from the one indicated here / Il se peut que le titre du résumé de recherche diffère de celui indiqué ici.

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