

The Early Settlement Experiences of Syrian Families in Different Sized Communities in Southwestern Ontario

BRIEF SUMMARY

This research explores Syrian families' early settlement experiences in different sized communities in Southwestern Ontario as it relates to housing, employment, health and education. This research examines how Syrian families developed relationships with local residents, sponsors, and neighbours. The research explains the experiences of Syrian families to learn English, the presence or absence of interpretation and local settlement services, access to transportation, access to Arabic schools, and access to cultural food. This research particularly examines whether there are differences in their experiences via different sponsorship types. Finally, the research delves into Syrian families' perception of safety and stability in their communities and whether they prefer to stay or leave their respective communities.

KEY FINDINGS

- ❑ The settlement experiences of Syrian families varied based on community size, with the unique dynamics of rural and small towns offering both positive support and recognition from residents and presenting challenges due to a lack of resources that meet the specific needs of this refugee population.
- ❑ During early settlement, Syrian families faced challenges in accessing affordable housing, employment, health care services in different sized communities.
- ❑ Resettlement is a subjective experience, and it is essential to recognize that the experiences of refugees settling in Canada are not homogenous; refugee experiences vary by the community they land in, their educational background, route of arrival, and access to services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research four key recommendations emerge:

- ❑ There is a need for free interpretation services, access to English as an additional language schools, transportation, cultural food and for government-funded programs aimed at teaching the Arabic language to school-age children and worship places in rural and small towns and census agglomeration communities.
- ❑ There is a need to health service providers are well equipped to diagnose their health condition, access Arabic-speaking practitioners and address the long waiting times in accessing family doctors and emergency rooms.
- ❑ There is a need to provide these families with affordable units that match family size. For instance, Syrian families' size ranged from 2-10 members per household, which should be reflected in the housing market.
- ❑ There is a need to develop employment programs that improve Syrian men's language and skills in fields such as carpentry, welding and provide them with some income.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This thesis can be accessed online at <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/items/1ff2752f-a917-41e5-ae9b-5e1f521ca2dal>.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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