

NO: R174

COUNCIL DATE: July 24, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: July 20, 2017**
FROM: General Manager, Planning & Development **FILE: 5080-01**
SUBJECT: Update on the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership: 2016-2017

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Adopt the “Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy 2017-2020. Surrey: Our New Home” (the “Refugee Strategy”), attached as Appendix “I.”

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Council with an update on the activities of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) over the past year;
- Inform Council of the City of Surrey’s new three-year Contribution Agreement with Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to support the LIP; and
- Recommend that Council adopt the Refugee Strategy.

BACKGROUND

In March 2014, the City entered into a two-year Contribution Agreement with IRCC to establish an LIP (Corporate Report No. Ro85; 2014, Appendix “II”). In March 2016, the Contribution Agreement was extended for a third year (2016-2017).

Council was provided with annual updates on the activities of the LIP in 2015 and 2016 (Corporate Report No. Ro25; 2015, Appendix “III” and Corporate Report No. Ro129; 2016, Appendix “IV”).

In April 2016, Council was updated on the arrival of the Syrian refugees and the activities undertaken by the City, in partnership with the LIP, to welcome the newcomers (Corporate Report No. Ro89; 2016, Appendix “V”).

In January 2017, Council received a report on the True Colours of Surrey, an anti-racism public awareness campaign (Corporate Report Ro13; 2017, Appendix “VI”).

DISCUSSION

LIPs are federally-funded local partnerships that aim to enhance collaboration, coordination, and strategic planning at the community level in order to foster more welcoming and inclusive communities for new immigrants and refugees, and improve their settlement and integration outcomes.

The LIP is guided by a committee consisting of members from 30 organizations representing multiple sectors of the community including government, business, education, health, settlement and community agencies, as well as City Departments. Councillor Villeneuve, Chair of the Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), and Anita Huberman, CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade (SBOT), co-chair the LIP Committee.

The LIP's Immigrant Advisory Roundtable (IAR) engages local residents who are immigrants and refugees. The IAR currently has 18 members who come from 14 different countries.

Over the past year, the LIP focussed its efforts on developing a Refugee Strategy and beginning to implement the Immigrant Integration Strategy (the "Immigrant Strategy"). Highlights are outlined in the annual report – "Moving Forward: Priming for Accelerated Change – 2016-2017 Our Year in Review" (attached as Appendix "VII").

Information on all the LIP activities and accomplishments are available online on the LIP website at www.surreylip.ca.

Refugee Strategy

Over the past decade, and especially over the past year, Surrey has been British Columbia's arrival city for refugees settling in BC. The obstacles that refugees face in adjusting to their new life in Canada are of a different magnitude, and often of a different nature, than those of immigrants. For this reason, the LIP developed a specific three-year Refugee Strategy.

The Refugee Strategy was developed by PEERs Employment and Educational Resources consultants with the guidance of a LIP Refugee Strategy Working Group. The Refugee Strategy was informed by extensive research and community consultations, including:

- SFU Surrey conducted the "Our Community, Our Voice" Refugee Research Project in 2015-2016. This comprehensive research project included a literature review, community consultations, and focus groups that involved a broad cross-section of refugees, service providers, and community leaders.
- Refugee youth were engaged in the process. SFU hired young refugee people as research assistants for the "Our Community, Our Voice" project. As well, in the spring of 2016, the LIP partnered with the Vancouver Foundation's Fresh Voices team to host a day-long youth consultation with about 50 newcomer youth.
- In the fall of 2016, a planning consultation was held with approximately 40 key community leaders to reflect on the research and consultation results and identify the strategic priorities for the Refugee Strategy.

The Refugee Strategy is organized around four strategic directions, and includes a total of 17 objectives and 50 recommended actions. The strategic directions and related objectives are as follows.

Investing in the Potential of Refugee Youth

- Gain a better understanding of both the capabilities and the integration barriers of refugee youth.
- Support opportunities for refugee youth to convene, connect across cultures, share their experiences and perspectives and build leadership skills.
- Enhance services and supports for refugee youth to participate in the full range of day to day social and recreational activities available to all young people in Surrey.
- Collaborate with Surrey's education system to identify the specific community needs of recently arrived refugee youth and develop responsive and more accessible programming and supports.
- Increase opportunities for refugee youth to access suitable (age and culturally appropriate) employment services and supports, volunteer opportunities and gain work experience.

Enhancing Service Capacity and Coordination

- Educate the community about the range of refugee settlement and integration services and supports including both those offered by immigrant and refugee serving agencies and mainstream community agencies and institutions.
- Enhance Surrey's capacity to coordinate refugee services supports and respond to the demands of the significant refugee population.
- Educate stakeholders on the services and supports available to address refugee health needs.
- Improve coordination of volunteers and donations that support refugees in Surrey.
- Identify and better address the English language acquisition challenges faced by refugees.

Supporting Economic Self-sufficiency and Inclusion

- Work with other Surrey, provincial, and national stakeholders to promote the elimination of Canada's refugee transportation loan repayment requirements.
- Work with all stakeholders to reduce immediate financial burdens faced by refugees in Surrey.
- Increase availability of and access to programs that support refugee workforce entry, self-employment, and social enterprise.
- Increase Surrey refugees' knowledge of financial, economic and labour market systems, supports, benefits, requirements and entitlements.

Enhancing Social Inclusion

- Educate and increase understanding amongst community leaders, service providers and the public on the needs, circumstances and experiential realities of Surrey's refugee populations.
- Increase awareness of the social, cultural and economic benefits that refugees bring to Surrey.
- Increase awareness and disseminate information and resources to reduce incidences of racism, cultural and religious discrimination.

Over the next three years, the LIP will guide and monitor the implementation of the Refugee Strategy. It will depend on a range of stakeholders taking on specific actions to achieve the strategy's goals and objectives.

Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy – Implementation Activities in 2016-2017

The Immigrant Strategy was completed in the spring of 2016. Over the past year the LIP undertook a number of activities toward implementing each of the Immigrant Strategy's five strategic directions. For most of these initiatives, project-specific working groups were set up, that involved LIP and IAR members, as well as staff and project consultants.

Strategic Direction 1: Accessible Services

- **Research on Informal English Language Training in Surrey:** English Language Training (ELT) is essential for the integration of newcomers who are not proficient in English. IRCC funds the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program; however, newcomers also utilize informal language classes to learn English.

In the past year, the LIP commissioned Jacopo Miro (Ph.D. candidate, UBC) to conduct a study on informal ELT in Surrey. The study included a scan of existing informal ELT programs, and interviews and surveys with newcomers and agencies that provide informal ELT on the benefits and challenges associated with these informal ELT services. A Fact Sheet of key findings is attached as Appendix "VIII;" the full report is available on the LIP website at: www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/ELL_Final_Report%20%282%29.pdf

- **Online Inventories:** Surrey Libraries was contracted by the LIP in 2016 to develop two online inventories - an inventory of funding opportunities and an inventory of ethnic and immigrant professional groups and networks in Surrey and Metro Vancouver. Both inventories are available on the LIP website at: www.surreylip.ca/inventories.
- **Service Map Update:** The LIP website includes a map with links to almost 300 settlement services available in Surrey. In 2017, the LIP undertook a comprehensive update of the Service Map which is available at: <http://surreylip.ca/service-map>.

Strategic Direction 2: Engaged Community

- **True Colours of Surrey Project:** The True Colours Project focussed on issues of racism and discrimination. Funded by a grant from the Province, the project included: a scan of anti-racism programs in Surrey; a survey of Surrey residents on their perceptions and experiences of discrimination; a community forum; and the development of "We Are Surrey" public awareness campaign materials. The campaign features posters and stories about 18 diverse Surrey residents. A Fact Sheet of key findings from the True Colours research and the "We Are Surrey" booklet are attached as Appendices "IX" and "X;" the full True Colours of Surrey report is available on the LIP website at:

www.surreylip.ca/content/true-colours-surrey

The posters were featured on 34 bus shelters across the city during the month of March 2017. Since January 2017, the City's social media team has been posting the "We Are Surrey" posters on Twitter and Facebook.

- **Citizenship Ceremony:** On April 12, 2017, the LIP hosted a community Citizenship Ceremony at City Hall. It was attended by over 200 people, including the 60 residents who became Canadians. The day included roundtable discussions about what it means to be Canadian, the official Citizenship Ceremony, and a celebration. The ceremony was a partnership between LIP, IRCC, and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship.
- **IAR's Welcoming Event:** On May 13, 2017, the IAR organized a newcomer welcoming event - Everyone in Surrey Belongs! - at the Fleetwood Community Centre. The event was attended by 100 local residents.

Strategic Direction 3: Meaningful Employment

- **Business Sector Dialogues:** The LIP, in partnership with the SBOT, hosted a series of roundtables with Surrey-based employers and new immigrants. Four sector-specific sessions (Health Care, Manufacturing, Construction, and Technology) were held with over 80 participants. The goal was to identify innovative approaches to addressing employer skill shortages and immigrant labour market challenges in each particular sector. A Fact Sheet of key findings is attached as Appendix "XI;" the full report is available at <http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/immigrant%2oemployer%2odialogues%2ofinal.pdf>.
- **Connector Program:** For the third year, the City's Human Resources Department partnered with the Immigrant Employment Council of BC on the Connector Program, a simple and effective referral program that helps new immigrants build professional networks and connect with local job opportunities. This year close to 30 City employees signed up for the program to support newcomer job seekers.
- **Human Resources Train the Trainer Workshop:** A training workshop was organized by the IP, in partnership with the City's Human Resources Department and Vancity. The session brought together City and Vancity Human Resources professionals and over 40 Surrey-based settlement and employment counselors. The HR professionals shared information on their hiring processes. The goal was to build the capacity and expertise of the settlement sector in supporting newcomers to secure employment.
- **Employer Go2 Resource:** This online tool, launched in March 2017, provides an easy one-stop-shop for resources designed to help Surrey-based employers connect with newcomer talent. Employer Go2 is available at: <http://www.surreylip.ca/content/employer-go2-resources>

Strategic Direction 4: Thriving Youth

- **Refugee Youth Leadership Team:** The Refugee Youth Leadership Team was established in January 2017. It was responsible for planning and hosting two community events in the spring of 2017.
- **Art Exchange Collaboration for Youth:** Working with the City's Cultural Services Youth Outreach, the Refugee Youth Leadership Team planned and hosted an art exchange and collaboration at the City Centre Library. Over 20 young people attended the event. The art pieces created were displayed at the youth forum and the community citizenship ceremony.

- **Newcomer Youth Voices Leadership Conference:** The Refugee Youth Leadership Team hosted a youth leadership conference in March 2017. The conference brought together about 70 newcomer youth for a day of learning, fun, and cultural exchange. The newsletter about the event is attached in Appendix “XII.”

Strategic Direction 5: Sustainable Leadership

- **Evaluation:** An evaluation of the LIP partnership was conducted by Dr. Nathalie Gagnon of Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Etta Brodersen, Ph.D. candidate, SFU. Overall, the results of the interviews and surveys completed by LIP members were positive, with the majority of members agreeing that the LIP table is effective and that the LIP is meeting its objectives. A number of recommendations were put forward that will be considered by the LIP in the coming year. The full report is available at: http://surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/2017_SurreyLIP-Research%20Report-Web-final_o.pdf
- **Communications:** The LIP produced a number of communication materials including fact sheets, a newsletter, an annual report, regular e-updates, and rack cards to promote the LIP settlement service map and informal English language opportunities for newcomers in Surrey. The LIP website is kept up-to-date; it has shown a significant increase in traffic (9,000 unique visitors, 54,000 webpage views and 2,200 documents downloaded in the past year).
- **Advocacy:** On April 6, 2017, the LIP hosted a meeting with Minister Ahmed D. Hussen (IRCC) at City Hall. The LIP shared its perspectives on immigrant and refugee integration in Surrey and on the activities of the LIP. The LIP expressed concerns about the negative impact of the refugee transportation loan on refugee settlement and urged the Minister to eliminate this requirement.

Syrian Refugee Welcoming Activities (Summer 2016)

The City, in partnership with the LIP, undertook a number of actions to welcome the arrival of Syrian refugees in early 2016. Council was provided with an update in April 2016. Below are two actions that took place in the summer of 2016.

City Staff Donations

In follow-up to staff education sessions held in March 2016, City staff and departments volunteered and/or donated to support the refugees.

- Several departments conducted donation drives (e.g. Bylaws conducted a blanket drive and Surrey Libraries had a food drive).
- Some staff members became volunteer hosts to refugee families and/or conversation circle leaders.
- Staff collected donations for ten highly vulnerable Syrian refugee families that were identified by two settlement agencies. Two truck-loads of furniture and over 40 boxes of household items, clothes and school supplies were donated. Arabic-speaking IAR members helped to deliver the donated items to the refugee families.

- The cost of transit was identified by settlement agencies as one of the major barriers for refugees to access services. Through the City's Employee Gift Appreciation program, staff donated close to \$4,000 which was used to purchase 1,800 transit passes for refugees.

Surrey Welcomes Refugees Event

The Surrey Welcomes Refugees event took place on July 20, 2016 in the City Plaza. The event was organized by Healthy Communities with the support of Social Planning and a LIP Working Group. It featured over 25 fun, family-oriented activities led by community partners, free food, and entertainment. It is estimated that over 500 people attended the event, most of them newly arrived refugees.

Next Steps: Surrey LIP 2017-2020

In March 2017, the City signed a new Contribution Agreement with IRCC for \$629,500 to lead and facilitate LIP activities over the next three years (April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2020). The following core activities will be undertaken:

- Convene the LIP Committee, IAR, and Project Working Group meetings to advance the implementation of both the Immigrant and Refugee Integration strategies;
- Retain a consultant to facilitate the implementation of the Refugee Strategy and a Youth Engagement consultant to support newcomer youth participation;
- Develop a baseline of indicators to measure the impact of the LIP and conduct an annual evaluation;
- Host an annual Surrey Newcomer Employment Week (NEW) which aims to improve immigrant/refugee labour market integration in Surrey (the first Surrey NEW to be held in the fall: October 21-27, 2017);
- Organize a dialogue event that brings together refugee and Indigenous youth (a grant from Community Foundations of Canada will fund this project); and
- Support a Newcomer Youth Leadership Team to build and enhance newcomer youth leadership capacities and opportunities in Surrey.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This Corporate Report supports the following Desired Outcomes (DO) and Strategic Directions (SD) identified in the Sustainability Charter 2.0.

Inclusion

- DO5: New immigrants and refugees are supported to settle, integrate and become thriving members of the community.
- SD1: Support the social and economic integration of newcomers through the Local Immigration Partnership, and development and implementation of immigrant and refugee strategic plans.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Receive this report as information; and
- Adopt the “Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy 2017-2020. Surrey: Our New Home” (the “Refugee Strategy”), attached as Appendix “I.”

Original signed by

Jean Lamontagne

General Manager, Planning & Development

AM/ss

Appendix “I”	- Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy 2017-2020. Surrey: Our New Home
Appendix “II”	- Corporate Report No. R085; 2014 (without appendices)
Appendix “III”	- Corporate Report No. R025; 2015 (without appendices)
Appendix “IV”	- Corporate Report No. R129; 2016 (without appendices)
Appendix “V”	- Corporate Report No. R089; 2016 (without appendices)
Appendix “VI”	- Corporate Report No. R013; 2017 (without appendices)
Appendix “VII”	- 2016-2017 Surrey LIP Annual Report
Appendix “VIII”	- Informal English Language Training in Surrey Fact Sheet
Appendix “IX”	- True Colours of Surrey Research Findings Fact Sheet
Appendix “X”	- We Are Surrey Booklet
Appendix “XI”	- Surrey Industry Dialogues Review Fact Sheet
Appendix “XII”	- Engaged and Inclusive Newsletter, March 2017. Newcomer Youth Voices on Surrey LIP

SURREY REFUGEE INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2017-2020





Mayor Hepner,
Surrey Refugee Forum,
January 2016.

Message from the Co-Chairs

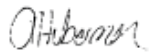
On behalf of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, we are pleased to present Surrey's Refugee Integration Strategy. It marks the culmination of three years of research and consultation, an effort that has received the input of hundreds of Surrey residents, involved the participation of dozens of service providers and community organizations, and tapped the expertise of some of our community's most accomplished individuals and organizations. We are thankful for all their contributions. That so many people came together in common cause is reflective of the good intentions and desire to ensure the successful inclusion of refugees in Surrey.

Surrey truly is a city that celebrates its diversity and welcomes its newcomers, from wherever they may come. Increasingly, in the case of refugees, it is B.C.'s arrival city, welcoming about half of all refugees whose destinations within the province can be tracked. We embrace that role, recognizing that refugees arrive with tremendous optimism and a strong desire to integrate into their new country, community and the workplace. At the same time, refugees face a variety of barriers, and this Strategy is based on the principle that all Surrey citizens, businesses and institutions will benefit from the elimination of those barriers. The path to creating a community where everyone feels a sense of belonging is woven throughout this Strategy.

On behalf of everyone involved in this crucial effort, we wish to express our thanks to the key contributors who provided so much of their time and expertise in the development of this Strategy, including the Refugee Strategic Planning Working Group, the Surrey LIP project team and project consultants PEERs Inc. and to the hundreds of Surrey residents whose participation was so important, whether civic leaders, employees and representatives of concerned organizations, or refugees themselves.



Judy Villeneuve
Councillor
City of Surrey



Anita Huberman
CEO
Surrey Board of Trade



Judy Villeneuve



Anita Huberman

I long for the day that I get my Canadian citizenship and officially be one of you, because it is this country in the world that has given me back my sense of humanity and dignity.

—Ebraheem Abo-Korj, the Ethar Organization Founder, fled Syria in 2013 and landed to Canada in 2015



A family portrait activity at the Surrey Welcomes Refugees event, July 20, 2016.

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I have a deep interest in helping and working with refugees and new immigrants. I believe that giving back to the community is the first step to a better society.

— Kue K’nyawmupoe, Surrey Immigrant Advisory Roundtable member, came from Karen State, Myanmar in 2007

My vision of the welcoming Surrey is where newcomers have an opportunity and a say in making more welcoming spaces in the city.

— Aydin Nozhat, Surrey Immigrant Advisory Roundtable member, came from Iran in 2012

On the front and back cover are members of the Ethar Organization at the Surrey Welcomes Refugees event, July 2016.

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

WHO WE ARE

The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a robust committee made up of 30 community organizations representing community, immigrant and refugee service agencies, education, business, government, libraries, health, parks and recreation, faith, and others. Led by the City of Surrey, the Surrey LIP works collaboratively to identify and support coordinated, comprehensive, and strategic approaches to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration that work for all residents of Surrey, newcomers and longer-term residents alike.

SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Kelly Aslanowicz

*Senior Manager, Business Development
Human Resources Management Association*

Minakshi Bagai

*Acting Director of Employment Services
Sources Community Resources Society*

Ravi Basi

*Manager, Multicultural Services
Surrey Libraries*

Debra Bryant

*Chief Executive Officer
Association of Neighbourhood Houses BC*

Devinder Chattha

*Director, Language Studies, Settlement
& Social Services
Progressive Intercultural Community Services*

Patrick Donohoe

*Dean, Faculty of Academic &
Career Advancement
Kwantlen Polytechnic University*

Steve Dooley

*Executive Director
Simon Fraser University Surrey*

Neil Fernyhough

*Manager, Community Programs
Alexandra Neighbourhood House*

Meri Ghazaryan

*Manager, Global Connections
Immigrant Employment Council of BC*

Daljit Gill-Badesha

*Healthy Communities Manager
City of Surrey, Surrey Parks, Recreation
and Culture*

Jonquil Hallgate

Surrey Interfaith Council

Anita Huberman

*CEO, Co-Chair of the Surrey LIP Committee
The Surrey Board of Trade*

Tahzeem Kassam

*Chief Operating Officer
DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society*

Jamie Kopp

*Program Manager
Umoja Operation Compassion Society*

Jennifer Kuenzig

*Community & Contract Services Manager
Douglas College, Training Group*

Caroline Lai

*Manager, ELL Welcome Centre
Surrey School District #36*

Jenny Lam

*Regional Manager
SUCCESS Surrey Delta Service Centre*

Catherine Ludgate

*Manager, Community Investment
Vancity*

Jagbir Mand

*Program Coordinator
Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society*

Harbinder Mann

*Employment Specialist, Human Resources
City of Surrey, Human Resources*

Aileen Murphy

*Senior Social Planner, Surrey LIP
Contract Manager
City of Surrey, Social Planning*

James Musgrave
Manager Surrey Youth Services – South
Pacific Community Resources Society

Diane Purvey
Dean of Arts
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Mulalo Sadike
Manager, Global Initiatives and
Immigrant Services
YMCA

Geoff Sale
Manager, Internationally Trained
Professionals Program
Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC

Kathy Sherrell
Associate Director, Settlement
Immigrant Services Society of BC

Hemi Shrestha
Manager, Population and Public Health
Fraser Health Authority

Rosy Takhar
Manager, Crime Prevention and
Community Services
Surrey RCMP

Khim Tan
Senior Manager, Immigrant Services
Options Community Services Society

Doug Tennant
Executive Director
Semiahmoo House Society

Councillor Judy Villeneuve
Surrey LIP Co-Chair
City of Surrey



HOW WE WORK

The City of Surrey manages the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership and is responsible for all the Surrey LIP deliverables.

It supplies the project staff: a Coordinator and a Senior Social Planner. The LIP Committee meets four to five times per year and is co-chaired by Councillor Judy Villeneuve, representing the City, and Anita Huberman, CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade.

Additional services and input are provided by ex-officio members, working groups and contracted researchers and consultants.

SURREY IMMIGRANT ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE

The Surrey LIP Committee identified the need to have representation and input of Surrey immigrants and refugees included in its research and planning processes and expanded its governance structure to include the direct participation of newcomers. The 18 Immigrant Advisory Roundtable (IAR) members represent 16 different source countries. The Advisory Roundtable occupies a central role in the Partnership's strategy, fulfilling three key roles:

- 1 To represent authentic voices of newcomer residents in the Surrey LIP strategic planning processes;
- 2 To help increase awareness of and engagement in intercultural issues; and
- 3 To reach out to ethno-specific communities to disseminate Surrey LIP information and encourage participation in its work.

IMMIGRANT ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS (IAR)

Mayyadah Al-ani
Wafa Al-jabiri
Mohammad Ali, Co-Chair
Khaleda Banu
Nina Bazie
Margery Cantil
Faisal Durrani
Preeti Hiro
Kue K'nyawmupoe
Robert (Jin-Chein) Lin
Rehab Marghany
Drastant Mehta, Co-Chair
Piyush Mehta
Magdalena Mot, Co-Chair
Yasin Muktar Mussa
Aydin Nozhat
Pranjali Wadkar
Dongmei (Lily) Yang

Research and Consultation

The Surrey LIP Refugee Settlement Strategy has been developed through a process involving in-depth research guided by extensive community consultation.

Considerable data and insight relevant to the refugee situation were accrued during research and consultation leading to the development of the Surrey LIP Immigrant Integration Strategy, released in early 2016. These included a Service Mapping Project that identified applicable services, as well as gaps and overlaps; an Immigrant Integration Research Project that canvassed both newcomers and longer-term residents, and identified 10 areas of specific concern; and a Labour Market Research Project that identified key obstacles to newcomer employment.

Additional information was obtained during Surrey LIP activities that included demographic research and other investigations leading to the production of refugee-specific newsletters, fact sheets and bulletins.

The “Our Community, Our Voice” Refugee Research Project, led by Simon Fraser University Surrey, involved intensive research into the realities of Surrey’s refugee populations. This project was guided by 22 community stakeholders, staffed by 12 research assistants (including seven refugees), and incorporated a diverse array of research techniques, including a literature review, community consultations, and focus groups that involved a broad cross-section of refugees, service providers and community leaders.


During all elements of the research process, youth were a consistent focus. Specific projects included a day-long consultation involving about 50 newcomer youth, aged 15 to 22, about half of whom arrived as refugees.

In the final stages of development, nearly 40 key Surrey civic and community leaders came together in a fruitful day-long planning consultation. Participants included the Surrey LIP co-chairs, councillor Villeneuve and Anita Huberman, and senior representatives from several of the city’s largest organizations and institutions.

Input to the plan was also obtained from the work of the Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team (RRT-FV). Since the influx of Syrians refugees into the communities of the Fraser Valley in 2016, the RRT-FV has worked to identify, prioritize and address the needs and challenges of refugees in the region. The RRT-FV included representation from 25 organizations involved in the resettlement and integration of refugees.



Visual summary from refugee research consultation, May 2015.

A group of children are playing in a shallow pool of water. In the foreground, a girl in a pink t-shirt with the text 'STRONG IS THE NEW PRETTY' is jumping with her right arm raised. Next to her, a girl in a white t-shirt with a colorful graphic is laughing. To the right, a boy in a red and black checkered shirt is standing in the water. In the background, other children and a blue shipping container are visible. The scene is outdoors and appears to be a community event.

Children at the Surrey Welcomes Refugee event, July 2016.

Surrey's Refugee Planning Context

The Surrey LIP is unique amongst the nation's LIPs as its work will be guided by two strategic plans – one focused on immigrant settlement and integration and one focused on refugee settlement and integration.

This approach has been followed because, over the last decade and especially over the last year, Surrey accepts a significant proportion of the refugees to B.C., and stands out as one of the largest refugee receiving communities in Canada. Surrey contains a little over 1% of Canada's population, and about 10% of B.C.'s, yet during the period November 4, 2015, to October 31, 2016, the municipality became home to 5% of all Government-Assisted Syrian Refugees settled in Canada, and more than 40% of those in B.C.

Equally important, refugees and immigrants face very different situations. Most immigrants to Canada arrive within the economic class and have been selected based on qualifications such as occupation, age, education, and language proficiency that make them strong candidates to succeed. Others arrive within the family

class and their settlement and integration is facilitated by the support provided by their families. They still face obstacles, but are in a better position to be able to overcome them.

Many refugees arrive in large families or single parent families with limited transferable skills and English language skills. Moreover, they would not be refugees if their lives had not been turned upside down, often leaving them with significant health care needs and suffering from mental health and post-traumatic stress disorders. The obstacles that they face in adjusting to Canadian society are of a different magnitude, and often of a different nature, than those of immigrants. As well, in the case of Syrian refugees, Canada has committed to a humanitarian approach that has resulted in the arrival of many refugees with serious medical issues and special needs.

At the same time, Canada's experience as a settler of refugees has been overwhelmingly positive, and both the process of developing this strategy, and the strategy itself, are infused with optimism. The plan stresses asset-based thinking rather than thinking that is deficit-based. The latter can lead to a culture where change is hindered due to a feeling that little can be done. An asset-based approach focuses on what is working, on opportunities, on building strength through positive efforts that move a situation forward.



International Refugee Day booth to sign petition to cancel Refugee Transportation Loan, City Hall, June 2015.

REFUGEES IN CANADA



In recent years Canada has accepted about 25,000 refugees annually; for 2016 the number was about 36,000 or more due to the response to the Syrian refugee crisis. There are two types of refugees, admitted under three classifications.

TWO TYPES

1 Convention Refugees

Persons who, before their arrival to Canada, have been sponsored by the Government of Canada as Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) or by a private group, in keeping with Canada's role as a signatory of the United Nations Refugee Convention. In recent years, Convention refugees have accounted for less than half of refugees to Canada, but in 2016 the proportion is expected to exceed 70% with the majority from Syria.

Convention Refugees fall under three classifications



Government-assisted refugees (GARs) are people who are resettled from abroad and receive financial support from the federal government.



Privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) are people who are also resettled from abroad, but are financially supported by private sponsors.



Blended visa office-referred refugees (BVORs) comprise a hybrid of these categories. The BVOR program provides up to six months of federal government support and an additional six months of financial support by private sponsors.

2 Refugee Claimants

Persons who make their own way out of the country or situation they are fleeing. After reaching Canada by land, sea or air, they apply for asylum. If they are carrying valid identity documents, they can live in the community while they await a hearing to determine their case. If their documents are missing or are suspicious, they may be held in detention until their identity can be confirmed.

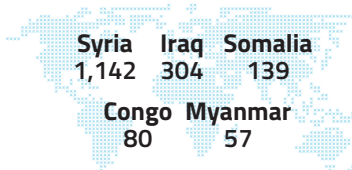
REFUGEES IN SURREY

Between January 2010 and September 30, 2016, approximately 2,200 GARs have settled in Surrey.

YEAR	BC*	SURREY	
2010	763	213	28%
2011	158	63	27%
2012	701	217	33%
2013	641	194	32%
2014	941	207	22%
2015	1,139	261	23%
2016	1,911	1,031	54%

Source: ISSofBC Bulletins
*Including transfers from other provinces.

TOP SOURCE COUNTRIES OF GARs IN SURREY 2010-2016



SYRIANS IN SURREY

Nov 4, 2015 – Dec 15, 2016

2,365 Syrian GARs have arrived in B.C.

- 905 individuals or over 50% of all Metro Vancouver Syrians have settled in Surrey

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS

Approximately 1,200 refugee claimants arrive annually in B.C., representing a 60% increase since 2012.

- China is the top source country
- About two-thirds of claimants are accepted

Not possible to accurately track, but believed as many as half of the total number settle in Surrey.

Our Vision, Mission and Mandate

VISION

Everyone in
Surrey belongs!

MISSION STATEMENT

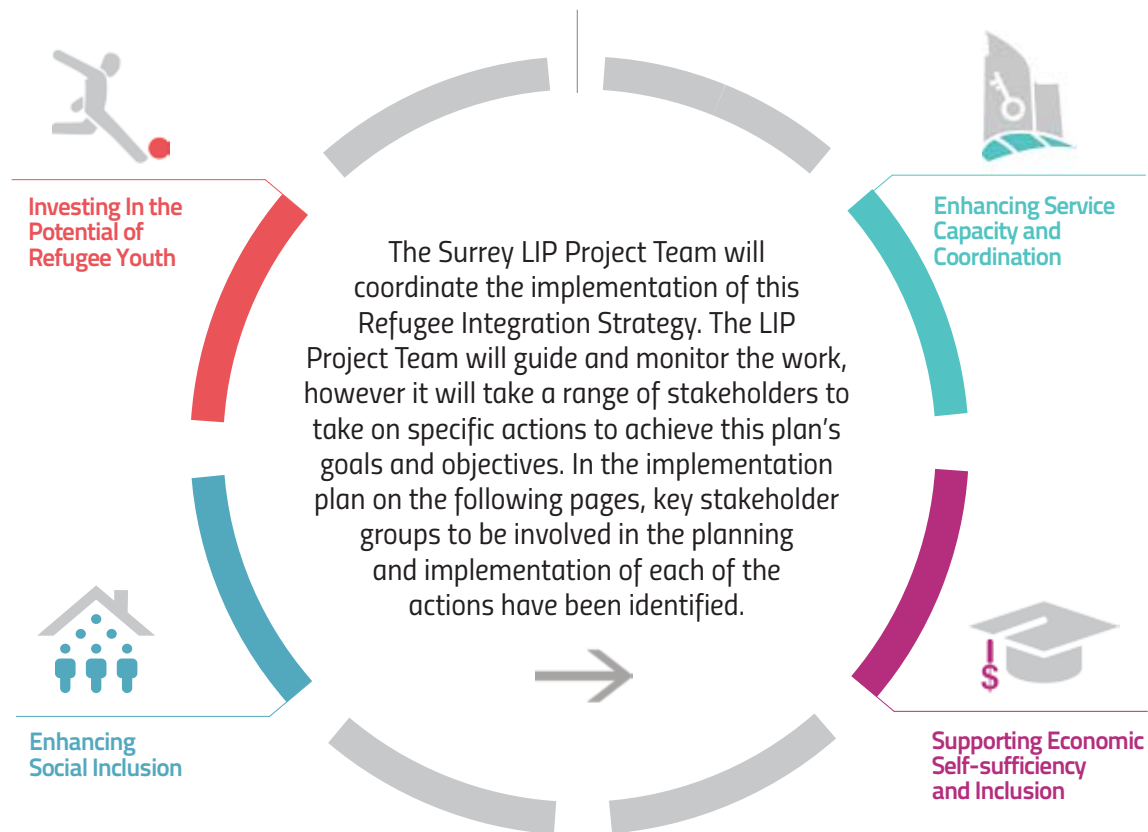
The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership supports a coordinated and strategic approach to immigrant and refugee settlement and integration.

SURREY LIP MANDATE

The overarching mandate of the Surrey LIP is to:

- Strengthen community capacity to work collaboratively and cooperatively, which will result in improved access to immigrant settlement and integration services and reduce duplication among service providers;
- Increase engagement of multiple sectors of the community by including organizations that primarily serve immigrants as well as those that serve the whole community;
- Inform community strategic planning process and increase awareness in the community of immigrant/refugee-related issues as a result of comprehensive community-level research produced by the LIP project; and
- Improve immigrant settlement and integration outcomes, including social inclusion, labour market and civic participation outcomes.

Surrey's Strategic Directions and Implementation Plan



STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1



Investing In the Potential of Refugee Youth

GOAL

All refugee youth have the supports and access to the opportunities that will enable them to thrive and grow; this includes full access to educational, labour market, recreational and family resources and opportunities.



Surrey Welcomes Refugee event, July 2016.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Demographically, Surrey is one of the youngest communities in the province, and among the youngest in Canada—and the refugee population is younger still. As an example, 59% of the recent Syrian refugee arrivals in Surrey are 18 or younger. For the purposes of this plan “youth” encompasses those aged 13 – 25 years. This definition of youth includes school aged teens, and also young adults who are transitioning into adulthood and seeking access to education and or employment, as well as playing a pivotal role in the support and integration of their parents and siblings.

In the settlement and integration process refugee youth represent a crucial link, helping their families understand and connect with Canadian society. Generally able to learn English quickly, they also benefit from immersion in the education system, and can function as translators for adults who are slower to adapt to both the language and the Canadian systems. This is a blessing, but also a curse, in that they are under extreme pressure to help their families.

Refugee youth face barriers that go well beyond those of most immigrant youth. In many cases, refugees are escaping violent wars or severe social and economic collapse, and many youth have spent a significant proportion of their lives near battlefronts or in refugee camps, traumas that are often manifested in emotional and psychological conditions. Some have not learned common social

behaviours due to the environments they have lived in.

There is a high likelihood that they have not benefitted from an education appropriate for their age, and they may live within families with low literacy levels. Here in Canada, cultural norms may limit their participation in everyday activities, both within the education system and outside of it. There is a strong need for more culturally appropriate activities, especially for girls.

Supports for these youth are crucial. They need opportunities to connect with youth from their culture as well as youth from other cultures, in school and in other activities. Supports should be developed and offered to meet the needs of refugee youth in recognition of their different stages of their integration.

The objectives identified are in keeping with the City of Surrey’s Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy, which identifies actions to promote the healthy development of young people, from early childhood, through middle childhood and adolescence. The Strategy emphasizes community connectedness, youth engagement and participation in all aspects of civic life, and access to enriching programs and services that promote their healthy development regardless of their family’s income or background.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1
OBJECTIVES**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
ACTIONS**

<p>1 Gain a better understanding of both the capabilities and the integration barriers of refugee youth.</p>	<p>1.1 Support, compile and disseminate localized research on the integration barriers, challenges and solutions to integration for Surrey’s refugee youth that recognizes the diversity of refugee youth (age at time of resettlement, cultures, LGBTQ, etc.).</p>	<p>1.2 Consult with the Refugee Youth Advisory Group to identify potential research topics and youth specific issues.</p>
<p>2 Support opportunities for refugee youth to convene, connect across cultures, share their experiences and perspectives and build leadership skills.</p>	<p>2.1 Establish a Surrey LIP Youth Advisory Group. 2.2 Support refugee youth to undertake a project or organize an activity (e.g. an annual refugee youth forum).</p>	<p>2.3 Engage community agencies to identify convening spaces / facilities for both younger and older youth (e.g. library).</p>
<p>3 Enhance services and supports for refugee youth to participate in the full range of day to day social and recreational activities available to all young people in Surrey.</p>	<p>3.1 Work with the LIP membership and the LIP Youth Advisory Group to identify what Surrey refugee youth are interested in and what they are able to participate in; e.g. what cultural, intergenerational and other limitations exist and, the available opportunities that respond to those interests, and gaps.</p>	<p>3.2 Conduct a scan to solicit information from LIP stakeholders to identify suitable, affordable and accessible recreational opportunities and distribute findings.</p>
<p>4 Collaborate with Surrey’s education system to identify the specific community needs of recently arrived refugee youth and develop responsive and more accessible programming and supports.</p>	<p>4.1 Identify and share information with refugee service providers about homework clubs, after school programs, post-secondary information, etc. 4.2 Work with the school district to ensure administrators and teachers have access to current Surrey refugee demographic information and refugee needs and challenges.</p>	<p>4.3 Promote refugee youth access to post-secondary by supporting the coordination of an information event bringing together Surrey’s post-secondary institutes and refugee youth.</p>
<p>5 Increase opportunities for refugee youth to access suitable (age and culturally appropriate) employment services and supports, volunteer opportunities and gain work experience.</p>	<p>5.1 Identify employment service models in Surrey that allow youth to attend school or language services while gaining access to employment supports. 5.2 Engage the employer community in a campaign to raise the awareness of refugee youth’s need and requirements for employment and volunteer experiences.</p>	<p>5.3 Coordinate the identification of volunteer opportunities for refugee youth and volunteers that will work with refugee youth. 5.4 Review volunteer application processes and identify means to simplify processes and increase eligibility for refugee youth.</p>



Enhancing Service Capacity and Coordination

GOAL

Surrey stakeholders understand the needs of refugees and have the tools and resources required to provide comprehensive and coordinated settlement and integration services.



Immigrant Advisory Roundtable booth at the Surrey Welcomes Refugees event, July 20, 2016.

HOW WE GOT HERE

The numbers and needs of Surrey's refugees require increased capacity and more coordinated approaches to service delivery. Surrey has become British Columbia's refugee arrival city, settling 25% to 40% of arrivals annually, and almost 50% of Syrian refugees. These figures do not take into account significant secondary migration of refugees from other provinces and cities.

The influx of Syrian refugees over such a short time period has been challenging for service providers and systems of many types. With so many families to support, it has not always been possible to provide services in a timely manner, leaving clients frustrated and affecting outcomes.

Service providers are increasingly called upon to deal with more complex cases. Many refugees have limited education, no English language facility and families with five or more children.

Disabilities and complex health and dental issues are widespread, and many experience some degree of trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder. Compounding this, there is a shortage of doctors and dentists accepting new patients, and not all medical professionals are willing to take on or register for the Interim Federal Health (IFH) program. As well, mental health services and supports are limited.

Lack of English language ability adds a further layer of complication, and English

language training lags. There are long waitlists for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes, especially at lower levels. Not all refugees are getting assessed, leading to under-reported needs and inadequate funding. As well, traditional LINC language classes do not work for many refugees who have limited experience in formal learning environments, creating the need for alternative modes.

With so much good work being accomplished, shortcomings such as these frustrate both refugees and those who support them. Public and private bodies, as well as the population at large, have shown a strong desire to help, but are not always aware of the true situation. A lack of coordinated management of volunteers and donations has also been a serious hindrance.

Higher capacity, better organization and wider communication are essential for refugee settlement to be truly effective.

Canada is a country of opportunity that has given me a chance to change my life for the better.

— Somali-born Ahmed Mohamed, came to Canada from a refugee camp in Kenya

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2
OBJECTIVES**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
ACTIONS**

<p>6 Educate the community about the range of refugee settlement and integration services and supports including both those offered by immigrant and refugee serving agencies and mainstream community agencies and institutions.</p>	<p>6.1 Annually update the Surrey service map to ensure that Surrey’s refugee services are accurately represented.</p> <p>6.2 Develop and implement a promotional schedule to raise awareness and use of the Surrey service map and other Surrey LIP web resources.</p>	<p>6.3 Raise awareness of LBGTQ services within the refugee population(s) by updating and promoting the Surrey service map to include LBGTQ resources.</p>
<p>7 Enhance Surrey’s capacity to coordinate refugee services supports and respond to the demands of the significant refugee population.</p>	<p>7.1 Establish and host an annual forum to discuss and explore emerging refugee integration issues in Surrey.</p>	<p>7.2 Conduct a service scan to identify strengths and weaknesses in Surrey’s refugee service continuum and identify service gaps to be addressed.</p>
<p>8 Educate stakeholders on the services and supports available to address refugee health needs.</p>	<p>8.1 Raise awareness of the need for Fraser Health and Ministry of Children and Family Development to catalogue refugee health services.</p>	<p>8.2 Promote services and supports available to address refugee health needs.</p>
<p>9 Improve coordination of volunteers and donations that support refugees in Surrey.</p>	<p>9.1 Identify resources to support coordination of volunteers.</p>	<p>9.2 Educate the community about the agencies and organizations that accept and/or coordinate donations for refugees.</p>
<p>10 Identify and better address the English language acquisition challenges faced by refugees.</p>	<p>10.1 Raise awareness of language acquisition and literacy challenges faced by refugees.</p>	<p>10.2 Promote all non-LINC language training opportunities available to refugees.</p>



Supporting Economic Self-sufficiency and Inclusion

GOAL

Refugees in Surrey have access to the information and supports required to become economically self-sufficient and included.



City Councillor LeFranc dancing with Somali women, 2015.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Economic self-sufficiency is a struggle for all refugees, particularly in the early years after arrival. They face all of the problems experienced by other low-income Canadians including the very high cost of housing and transportation prevalent in Metro Vancouver.

In addition, many refugees are required to pay back transportation loans with interest to the federal government. According to the federal government, the average loan per person is \$3000 and repayment must begin within 30 days of arrival.

It is a huge challenge for refugees, especially those with large families, to find safe and affordable housing. Many pay rents that consume most of their monthly income, leaving very little money for food and other basic necessities. The cost of transit is burdensome, especially with large families, and when travel is required outside of Surrey and multi-zone fares come into play. Lack of money for food leaves them no choice but to rely on food banks, which themselves are overburdened.

In an ideal world, refugees would soon enter the workforce, alleviating poverty effects, but there are many barriers to this, especially for some of our most recent arrivals. In many cases, refugees need to focus on their settlement and adjustment before considering work. A large majority do not have even the minimal English language skills required in virtually all workplaces, and the skills,

training and work experience that they possess is often difficult to transfer. As a result, those who do obtain employment often remain in low-wage or unstable jobs, in part because having these jobs is a barrier to upgrading language and other skills.

These realities were summarized in the refugee research project conducted by SFU Surrey: "The language training and credential or skills upgrading that would enhance employment opportunities is seen as the way forward, but very difficult to achieve due to multiple barriers: the inequities of the job market, trauma-related psychological impairment, poverty, and complex family care demands." (*Our Community, Our Voice: The Settlement and Integration Needs of Refugees in Surrey, BC, 2016 page 12*)

And yet, despite the many economic challenges and barriers faced by refugees, promising examples of employers stepping up to the challenges and providing opportunities to refugees are starting to emerge across Canada and in Surrey. In recent months there have been examples where employers have offered workplace language training, skills upgrading and even onsite translation and interpretation to alleviate the immediate workforce entry barriers. These practices not only offer a promising attitude and response to individual circumstances, but an opportunity to highlight, share and leverage these experiences more broadly.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3
OBJECTIVES**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
ACTIONS**

<p>11 Work with other Surrey, B.C. and national stakeholders to promote the elimination of Canada’s refugee transportation loan repayment requirements.</p>	<p>11.1 Develop and provide information on the requirements of Canada’s refugee transportation loan and the impacts of those loans on refugees.</p> <p>11.2 Research and identify comparative practices from other countries to share with stakeholders as evidence of the need to revise refugee transportation loan repayment requirements.</p>	<p>11.3 Work with stakeholders to advocate across all levels of government for the elimination of the loan repayment.</p>
<p>12 Work with all stakeholders to reduce immediate financial burdens faced by refugees in Surrey.</p>	<p>12.1 Raise awareness of the need for transit passes for refugees who are accessing settlement services and/or income-based fares for all low-income households.</p> <p>12.3 Ensure that refugee specific poverty issues are identified and included within national, provincial and regional poverty reduction and related plans.</p> <p>12.4 Work with stakeholders to build rationale for longer Refugee Assistance Program support.</p>	<p>12.5 Collaborate with poverty reduction groups to investigate possibilities of changes to social assistance that could allow more part time work.</p> <p>12.6 Promote / acknowledge the range of supports provided by community organizations like Food Banks.</p>
<p>13 Increase availability of and access to programs that support refugee workforce entry, self-employment, and social enterprise.</p>	<p>13.1 Develop and broadly distribute inventory of projects that support refugee workforce attachment in Surrey. (E.g. Somali women’s cooking program).</p> <p>13.2 Conduct research and identify innovative models related to refugee workforce entry, self-employment and social enterprise.</p>	<p>13.3 Identify funding to support innovative employment, self-employment and social enterprise models.</p>
<p>14 Increase Surrey refugees’ knowledge of financial, economic and labour market systems, supports, benefits, requirements and entitlements.</p>	<p>14.1 Work with Surrey’s business and financial sector to build awareness of refugees amongst employer and business communities, so that they can adapt and provide suitable and accessible information to a refugee audience.</p> <p>14.2 Research, develop and distribute easily digestible information on the various types of employment, e.g. full-time, part-time, self-employment, contract employment, so that refugees understand the differences, variations and requirements of each.</p>	<p>14.3 Work with Surrey stakeholders and government to ensure that information is accessible to refugees on the various supports available through income, employment, and insurance benefit programs through the Canadian and provincial social safety net.</p>



Enhancing Social Inclusion

GOAL

Surrey's rich cultural diversity is valued by all Surrey residents and the cultural backgrounds and experiences of refugees are a vital part of Surrey's growth and identity as a global city.



Surrey's annual Fusion Festival celebrates the cultural diversity of Surrey.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Surrey's role as British Columbia's largest refugee arrival city, and the work that is being done and that needs to be done to support this, have been recognized only recently. Better understanding will lead to better supports and outcomes.

Public attitudes are crucial. Canada's humanitarian effort with regard to Syria, along with the generally positive public response, have been heartening, but there are signs that tensions are growing. Antagonism based on racial and cultural differences has always been present and given world events, it appears to be increasing. In a research study carried out with Karen refugees in Langley and Surrey, many of the students reported discrimination, isolation and lack of support from both school personnel and their classmates. An analysis of dropout rates found that they were higher for immigrants than for their Canadian-born classmates, and given the structural barriers and discrimination in the school system, the rates for refugees are even higher. (*OCOV Report, 2016 page 29*)

Negative attitudes and practices will undermine the refugee settlement effort regardless of improvements in services and supports. It is important to ensure that the public is aware that refugees have been and continue to be a positive force in Canadian life.

It is equally important to ensure that morale remains as high as possible within the refugee population, by supporting the development of cultural and

cross-cultural connections within and between communities. Recent academic research suggests that lack of community support and isolation play an important role in mental health. "Refugees talk about home life in Canada as marked by the absence of extended family; increased family conflict; lack of means of resolving conflict; unbalanced gender roles; disabling underemployment; and lack of opportunity." (*OCOV Report, 2016 page 30*)

Refugees need to feel that their new life promises a bright future, regardless of what their current circumstances might be.

Being part of the OCOV research project has been an honor and blessing for me. I've always known that refugees have the strength to overcome anything, but during this research project I really got to see the depth of it. The struggles that led them to flee their countries and come to Canada for a fresh start. I'm thankful that my participants felt safe enough to talk about their experiences.

— Yansie Ardon, Community Peer Research Assistant, OCOV research project on refugee needs in Surrey

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4
OBJECTIVES**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
ACTIONS**

15 Educate and increase understanding amongst community leaders, service providers and the public on the needs, circumstances and experiential realities of Surrey’s refugee populations.

- 15.1** Annually review and update the Surrey LIP distribution lists to ensure all mainstream community organizations are included.
- 15.2** Annually review and expand the Surrey LIP membership to ensure Surrey refugee serving agencies are represented.
- 15.3** Conduct annual research to ensure the Surrey refugee demographic profile is current; this should attempt to include PSR and claimant data.
- 15.4** Create and maintain a list of Surrey specific refugee needs, emerging issues and local service needs to be used to inform and engage government as well as a range of funders, foundations, corporate investors, and private donors.

- 15.5** Provide regular updates to Mayor and Council on key refugee issues in Surrey.
- 15.6** Support the establishment of an annual event related to Surrey refugee settlement and integration e.g. World Refugee Day.
- 15.7** Annually update and share the Surrey LIP inventory of funding sources.

16 Increase awareness of the social, cultural and economic benefits that refugees bring to Surrey.

- 16.1** Dedicate issues of the Surrey LIP fact sheets and bulletins to refugee related topics.
- 16.2** Identify and promote mentorship, host and buddy programs.

- 16.3** Provide space, and support opportunities for long term Surrey residents and refugees to convene, connect across cultures, and share their experiences and perspectives.

17 Increase awareness and disseminate information and resources to reduce incidents of racism, cultural and religious discrimination.

- 17.1** Identify and promote existing programs, services and activities that serve to educate and eliminate racism and cultural and religious discrimination.

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Acknowledgements

Surrey's Refugee Integration Strategy is a direct reflection of the contributions, expertise and commitment brought forward by the membership of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. Over the past three years, 30-plus organizations, representing government, public and private institutions, business, non-profit and community agencies have joined forces to strengthen Surrey's integration of newcomers and build a more inclusive and welcoming city.

The direction provided by the representatives of the member organizations has been central to the formation of this Strategy. Over and above the LIP membership, we would especially like to thank the representatives who stepped forward to form the Surrey LIP's Refugee Strategic Planning Working Group. Their guidance, expertise and input led to the identification of the priorities, objectives and actions of the Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy. The Surrey LIP is privileged to have the commitment of these members and looks forward to working with all of them towards the vision they have outlined.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the research teams and consultants that have played a critical role in identifying Surrey's refugee resettlement and integration needs and in shaping this Strategy's responses to those needs. Immigrant research projects that also played a role in the development of the Refugee Strategy were led by CitySpaces, SPARC BC, and

Human Capital Strategies. The crucial refugee research project was led by Simon Fraser University, Surrey Campus. We are grateful for the insights and recommendations that each of their projects provided, and for their collective contributions.

We also wish to thank our project consultants, Trevor Van Eerden and Jody Johnson, of PEERs Employment & Education Resources who have worked with us throughout our three years of existence and spearheaded the development of this Strategy.

This project would not have been possible without the financial support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. We gratefully acknowledge their contribution and look forward to working with the federal government on the improved settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Surrey for years to come.

Lastly, we wish to acknowledge the leadership and support provided by the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership Co-Chairs, Councillor Judy Villeneuve and Surrey Board of Trade CEO Anita Huberman. Their commitment to community-wide immigrant and refugee integration has helped elevate the work of the Surrey LIP and ensured that we work towards not only addressing the challenges faced by new immigrants and refugees, but toward creating a society where everyone belongs!



Learn more about
Surrey LIP and
our work:

www.SurreyLIP.ca

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Surrey Refugee Forum,
January 2016.

SURREY REFUGEE INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2017-2020





CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R085

COUNCIL DATE: **MAY 12, 2014****REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **May 12, 2014**
 FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **5080-01**
 SUBJECT: **Update on the Surrey Welcoming Communities Program & Local Immigration Partnership**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the:

- completion of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Program; and
- initiation of the Local Immigration Partnership.

From January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, the Province of BC provided funding to the City of Surrey, on behalf of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee, to develop and implement a Welcoming Communities Action Plan. Over the past year a series of projects were undertaken to implement the Action Plan and build Surrey's capacity to be a more welcoming community for new immigrants and refugees.

The City of Surrey has now signed a two-year Contribution Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to establish a Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. Activities will include:

- establishing a partnership council;
- conducting research; and
- developing a local settlement strategic plan.

BACKGROUND

The Welcoming Communities Program was a program of Welcome BC – the Province's strategic framework for settlement services and welcoming communities' initiatives. In December 2012, the City of Surrey signed a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with the Province of BC as the Sponsoring Organization for the Welcoming Communities Program in Surrey.

As the Sponsor or lead agency, the City's role was to establish a Welcoming Communities Committee and, by means of the Committee, to develop and implement a Welcoming Communities Action Plan. The MOU with the Province had a term from January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014.

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee (the "Committee") included approximately 25 members representing diverse sectors of the community including the City, Surrey School District, business community, education sector, and non-profit agencies. The list of organizations is provided in Appendix I of this report.

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Action Plan was based on the Committee's assessment of Surrey's needs and the barriers for new immigrants and refugees to feel welcomed and included in Surrey. The Action Plan focussed on:

- Access to Employment;
- Intercultural Understanding, Relationships & Trust;
- Creating Welcoming Spaces & Services; and
- Limited Understanding of Refugees.

The Action Plan was formally approved by the Province on March 1, 2013.

Corporate Report No. R017 (January 28, 2013) and Corporate Report No. R065 (April 8, 2013) provide further information about the Welcoming Communities Program and Action Plan.

DISCUSSION

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Action Plan was implemented from March 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014. Under the guidance of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee, all of the activities outlined in the Action Plan were successfully completed.

Under the terms of a two-year Contribution Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Surrey will now embark on a Local Immigration Partnership project.

Surrey Welcoming Communities Program

Under the guidance of the Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee, youth, the business and education sectors, service providers, and the community-at-large were engaged in activities to make Surrey more welcoming and inclusive of new immigrants and refugees.

Refugee Myth Busting Campaign

The Refugee Myth Busting Campaign included a multi-faceted series of events and activities to raise awareness of the refugee experience as well as refugees' contributions to the community.

- Information & Resources – Based on research and focus groups with refugees, a number of resources were developed.
 - *Global Voices Newsletters* – Four newsletters were produced focussing on the themes of: refugees (summer 2013) government refugee transportation loan (fall 2013); youth (December 2013) and employment (March 2014);

- *Refugee Newcomers in Surrey – Changing Faces and Neighbourhoods – 2010-2013* – This report provides information on refugees at the international, national, provincial and local level, as well as maps of settlement patterns of government assisted refugees in Surrey; and
- *Refugee Newcomers in Surrey, Approaches to build a more welcoming and inclusive community* – This report highlights the results of a scan of promising practices that support refugees' community integration and summarizes the findings of the refugee focus groups.
- Education Sector Training & Resources – Over 600 education sector staff (elementary, high school and post-secondary) participated in training. Three different types of training sessions were offered.
 - Expressive art therapists used art produced by refugee children to create an art installation. This was used as a focal point for sessions delivered to elementary school staff. The children's art and stories were also compiled into a book;
 - An expressive art therapist provided sessions on refugee trauma. *A Resource Guide for Supporting Children with Refugee Experience* and a 12-minute video were also developed; and
 - A group of six refugee youth developed and delivered a workshop for secondary and post-secondary teachers and support staff. A video was made of interviews with some of the youth involved in developing the workshop.
- Museum Exhibit – The Surrey Museum created a portable exhibit on *Surrey – A Place of Refuge*. The exhibit was presented at Surrey Central Library, Surrey City Hall, School District, SFU Surrey Campus, Kwantlen Surrey Campus, and RCMP Surrey Detachment.

Welcoming Spaces and Workplaces Reviews

Newcomers were recruited and trained to "review" spaces and places in Surrey. The places represent various services or spaces a newcomer would use or visit while settling in Surrey, ranging from service to education, recreation and retail. The reviewers were asked to look for best or promising practices.

In total, the reviewers visited 30 organizations and, using a standardized assessment tool, provided their perspectives and opinions on the welcoming nature of each location. Individual reports were prepared for each participant organization or business. A final report was prepared that summarizes the key findings both in terms of promising and best practices that were identified across the 30 spaces, and recommendations that can be adapted for a range services or organizations in Surrey.

Youth Projects

Three WCP projects focussed on engaging youth in better understanding and taking action to welcome and include their newcomer peers.

- Surrey Leadership Action Conference and Projects – A weekend Surrey Leadership Youth Action Conference was held in October 2013 with over 100 youth in attendance. As a follow-up to the conference, youth developed and conducted seven community service projects. In addition, 17 refugee/newcomer youth from Umoja are being supported to attend a YMCA Youth Leadership Development Conference on the Sunshine Coast;

- Refugee Youth Social Media Project – A group of refugee youth created three films about their experiences settling in Surrey. To date, the films have been showcased at four community conferences/events, as well as being posted online and on various Facebook accounts;
- City of Surrey Volunteer Program Review & Pilot Project – The City of Surrey's volunteer application process requires applicants to complete a Volunteer Criminal Record Check. The Criminal Record Check requires a five year minimum residency in Canada in order to process. This project explored strategies for reducing the barriers and increasing the inclusion of refugee youth who want to become volunteers and have been living in Canada for less than five years.

Three focus groups were held with refugee youth to gain an understanding of their interests relative to volunteering. Based on the youths' feedback, the City recruited and trained seven government assisted refugees as volunteers for a spring day camp program. Since the youth were not able to complete a Volunteer Criminal Record Check, an alternative process and procedures were developed that included additional training and orientation, and the pairing of each refugee youth with an experienced City volunteer. The volunteer experience proved to be rewarding for all the youth involved.

Employer and Business Presentations and Forums

Through a partnership with the Surrey Board of Trade, a number of short presentations were made to the business/employer community at Board of Trade events throughout the year. In addition, in February 2014, a "*Business and Immigrant Workforce Strategies – A Leadership Surrey Dialogue*" was held. This event brought together employers and skilled immigrant job seekers to dialogue on issues related to immigrant workforce integration.

Service Provider Welcoming Communities Events

Two events for immigrant serving and mainstream service agencies were organized – a networking event in June 2013 and a conference in February 2014. These events provided networking and information sharing opportunities, as well as training on current demographics, new programs and services, and changes to immigration policies. Resources and "learnings" from the Welcoming Communities projects were also shared.

Dialogues Inspired By Cooking and Food

Six cooking dialogues were held. Each dialogue focussed on a specific ethnic cuisine including: Korean, Indian, Pilipino, Chinese, African, and Middle Eastern. At the sessions a local chef led an interactive cooking demonstration of an appetizer, main course and dessert related to the region profiled. During the cooking demonstration participants learned about the origins of the ingredients, recipes, preparation traditions and the histories of the people who created them. The dialogues were facilitated by a diversity and inclusion specialist who infused the sessions with information and guided discussion.

Websites

Two websites were regularly updated throughout the project:

- www.wicsurrey.org - This site, which was developed by SurreyCares (formerly the Surrey Foundation), served as the main website for the project; and
- www.getintheknow.ca - This site, which was developed by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, provides information related to welcoming workplaces.

Local Immigration Partnership

On April 1, 2014, responsibility for immigrant settlement services in British Columbia transitioned from the provincial to the federal government. Citizenship and Immigration Canada ("CIC") has a Local Immigration Partnership program that is intended to "enhance collaboration, coordination and strategic planning at the community level".

According to CIC, Local Immigration Partnerships are community-based partnerships that:

- Systematize local engagement of service providers and other institutions in newcomers' integration process;
- Support community-level research and strategic planning; and
- Improve coordination of effective services that facilitate immigration settlement and integration.

While the Local Immigration Partnership has similarities to the BC Welcoming Communities Program, a key distinction is that the Local Immigration Partnership does not fund the implementation of strategies and action plans.

Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

In response to a Call for Proposals in July 2013, the City of Surrey submitted an application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for a Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. The application was successful and on March 26, 2014, the City signed a two-year Contribution Agreement ("Agreement") with the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism for:

- \$313,000 in 2014-2015; and
- \$292,512. in 2015-2016.

According to the Agreement, over the next two years the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership will:

- Establish a partnership council that is broad-based, diverse and representative of the community;
- Conduct research on newcomers needs and services, as well as the community's assets and gaps, and raise awareness of these needs;
- Develop a local settlement strategic plan identifying key priorities in the community; and
- Develop an action plan.

Updates on the Local Immigration Partnership will be provided to Council. A final report and local settlement strategic plan will be forwarded to Council at the completion of the project in the spring of 2016.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Welcoming Communities Program and Local Immigration Partnership assist in achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly the following action items:

- SC5: Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents; and
- SC12: Adapting to Demographic Change.

CONCLUSION

The successful settlement and integration of new immigrants and refugees into the social and economic life of the community is of vital importance to the on-going health and vitality of Surrey.

Over the past year, the Surrey Welcoming Communities Program was successful in establishing a multi-sector Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee and developing and implementing a Welcoming Communities Action Plan. A range of interesting and innovative events and activities were organized, and resources were developed that enhance Surrey's capacity to welcome and include new immigrants and refugees. Surrey will now build on the work of the Welcoming Communities Program and establish a Local Immigration Partnership.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

AM:saw

Attachment:

Appendix I Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee Representatives



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: **R025**COUNCIL DATE: **FEBRUARY 2, 2015****REGULAR COUNCIL**TO: **Mayor & Council**DATE: **February 2, 2015**FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**FILE: **5080-01**SUBJECT: **Update on the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership****RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the activities of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership ("LIP") since it was initiated in April 2014.

BACKGROUND

In March 2014 the City entered into a Contribution Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada ("CIC") to establish a Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. The term of the Agreement is from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2016, and the funding is up to a maximum of \$606,014 over the two-year period (Corporate Report No. R085; 2014, attached as Appendix "A").

The goal of the LIP is to build and enhance community-wide capacity to settle and integrate new immigrants and refugees in Surrey by:

- establishing a Surrey LIP Committee that is broad-based, diverse and representative of the community;
- conducting research and consultations on newcomer needs and services;
- developing a local Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Strategic Plan which identifies key priorities in the community; and
- developing an Action Plan.

DISCUSSION

Surrey is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, and the fastest growing city in Metro Vancouver. The City welcomes approximately 800 new residents each month. Immigrants currently make up 40.5% of Surrey's population. Multi-stakeholders groups, such as LIPs, have

the capacity to strengthen the role of local communities in integrating newcomers and building more inclusive and welcoming cities. The Surrey LIP is one of 19 LIPs funded by the federal government in BC. The City of Surrey and City of Vancouver are the only two municipalities that have assumed a lead role on a LIP initiative in BC.

Surrey LIP Governance

A multi-sector Surrey LIP Committee has been established to guide the LIP initiative. An Immigrant Advisory Roundtable has also been established as a means of actively engaging newcomers in the LIP.

Surrey LIP Committee

The LIP Committee brings together leaders of 30 key institutions, organizations, and/or sectors that have an interest in immigrant integration in Surrey. Its membership was built on the membership of the 2013 - 2014 Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee. A Terms of Reference has been developed and four project-specific working groups have been established. Councillor Villeneuve and Surrey Board of Trade CEO Anita Huberman were nominated by the Committee to serve as the co-chairs. The Surrey LIP Committee membership list is attached to this report as Appendix "B".

Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable

A Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable was established by the LIP Committee as a means of actively engaging local newcomers in the LIP.

An information and selection meeting was held on November 26, 2014 at City Hall. Over 45 newcomer residents attended. To date, 19 members have been selected based on the following criteria:

- are immigrants or refugees living and/or working in Surrey;
- represent the diversity of Surrey (a range of countries of origin, length of time in Canada, immigration status, age, gender, occupational/educational backgrounds, etc.);
- have experience, knowledge, abilities or skills related to immigration integration, community development and/or civic engagement; and
- are non-partisan.

The first Immigrant Advisory Roundtable meeting took place on January 14, 2015. The Roundtable membership list is attached to this report as Appendix "C".

Project Management Team

The City's Senior Social Planner is providing overall contract management for the LIP. In June 2014, an additional Social Planner was hired as the Surrey LIP Coordinator. The Coordinator's role is to support the day-to-day project activities. Project Consultants from PEERs Inc. are providing project management and facilitation services.

Surrey LIP Communications

To ensure that stakeholders, service providers and the community are informed and engaged in the Surrey LIP, a communications plan and tools are required. The Surrey LIP has developed a Communications Action Plan which for 2014-2015 includes establishing brand and identity for the LIP, developing a website and social media strategy, and preparing newsletters and fact sheets to communicate the activities of the LIP and immigrant related information.

Brand and Identity

The brand and identity package for the Surrey Lip was completed by early fall. All materials will include the new Surrey LIP logo, shown below, which symbolizes community connections.



Website

In December 2014, Ion Design Inc. was retained by the City to develop and maintain a Surrey LIP website. In addition to information about the LIP, the site will host an online inventory of settlement services in Surrey. The website is expected to go live in March 2015. In the meantime, an interim webpage has been created on the City's website (www.surrey.ca/lip).

Newsletters and Fact Sheets

Eight newsletters and fact sheets will be produced over the course of the two-year LIP project. To date, two newsletters and fact sheets have been prepared. Issue 1 of the "Engaged & Inclusive" newsletter introduced the project (see Appendix "D"). The second issue focused on the City of Surrey's role in supporting newcomer integration (see Appendix "E"). The two LIP fact sheets that have been prepared provide basic facts and figures about immigrants and refugees in Surrey (see Appendix "F")

Social Media Campaign

The Surrey LIP Project Management Team is working with the City's Marketing and Communications Section to develop a social media plan. The LIP will utilize social media to raise awareness of immigrant and refugee issues in Surrey, as well as to promote the activities of the Surrey LIP. It is anticipated that the social media campaign will be launched in January/February 2015.

Research and Consultation

The development of the Surrey Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Strategy will be informed by four main research and consultation projects:

- Immigrant Integration Research and Consultations;
- Service Mapping Inventory;
- Refugee Settlement Priorities Research; and
- Labour Market Integration Research.

Immigrant Integration Research and Consultations

In December 2014, the City retained CitySpaces to undertake community research and consultations to assess both newcomers (immigrants and refugees) and long term residents' perceptions related to immigration and settlement priorities for Surrey. Four Youth Engagement Advisors are being hired to design and facilitate youth-specific community consultation activities.

The research and consultations on immigrant integration in Surrey include:

- *Research Scan:* A scan of relevant research was conducted in December 2014. Its purpose was to help inform the development of the research and consultation questions;
- *Telephone Survey:* A telephone survey was conducted by the Mustel Group in late December 2014/early January 2015. The short 20-question survey explored residents' perceptions of Surrey as an inclusive community;
- *Focus Groups:* Four to five focus groups will be conducted with immigrant and Canadian-born residents. At least one or two focus groups will be youth-focused and designed and facilitated by the Youth Engagement Advisors. Overall, at least 50 Surrey residents will participate in focus groups, which will take place in late January/February 2015; and
- *Pop Up Events:* Three community "pop-up" events will be organized in January/February 2015 to solicit broader community feedback. Pop up events will be held in public places such as malls and/or recreation centres. At least one pop up event will be designed and facilitated by the Youth Engagement Advisors.

The final report of research and consultation results will be completed by April 2015.

Service Mapping Inventory

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) were retained by the City in December 2014 to undertake a service mapping project. Project components include:

- *Settlement Services Inventory:* An inventory of settlement services in Surrey is being developed. Once completed, the inventory will be presented in an interactive map format on the LIP website; and

- *Analysis of Inventory Content:* An analysis of the inventory data will be conducted to identify existing assets, possible duplications and gaps in service delivery for new immigrants and refugees in Surrey.

The inventory and final report will be completed by April 2015.

Refugee Settlement Priorities and Labour Market Integration Research Projects

Two additional research projects will be undertaken by the Surrey LIP – a Refugee Settlement Priorities project and a Labour Market Integration Priorities project.

The goal of the Refugee Settlement Priorities project is to better understand Surrey refugees' settlement and integration issues and identify priorities for refugee settlement in Surrey. A Request for Proposal for this project was issued in early January 2015. The project will be undertaken in February 2015 to March 2016.

The goal of the Labour Market Integration research project will be to determine Surrey labour market needs and integration barriers for newcomers and employers. A Request for Proposal for the Labour Market Integration Research project will be issued in spring 2015.

CONCLUSION

Surrey is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada and the fastest growing city in Metro Vancouver. Many of the new residents coming to Surrey are new immigrants. While in 2001, immigrants made up a third of Surrey's population; by 2011 this number had increased to 40%. Current projections indicate that that in 10 years, about half of Surrey residents will be immigrants. The mandate of Surrey's new LIP is to build community-wide capacity to attract, settle and integrate these newcomers.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

AM:OS:saw

Attachments:

- Appendix "A" Corporate Report No. Ro85;2014
- Appendix "B" Surrey LIP Membership
- Appendix "C" Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable
- Appendix "D" Surrey LIP Newsletter Engaged & Inclusive Issue 01
- Appendix "E" Surrey LIP Newsletter Engaged & Inclusive Issue 02
- Appendix "F" Surrey LIP Fact Sheets



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R129

COUNCIL DATE: **May 30, 2016****REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **May 17, 2016**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Local Immigrant Integration Strategy 2016-2019 and Update on the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Adopt the Surrey Local Immigrant Integration Strategy 2016-2019: Everyone in Surrey Belongs! a copy of which is attached as Appendix "I" to this report.

INTENT

In March 2014, the City of Surrey ("the City") entered into a two-year Contribution Agreement with Citizenship Refugees and Immigration Canada ("IRCC", formerly known as "CIC") to establish a Surrey Local Immigration Partnership ("LIP"). The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Council on the activities of the first two years of the Surrey LIP (April 2014 to March 2016); and
- Inform Council of the extension of the Contribution Agreement with IRCC for another year (April 2016 – March 2017).

BACKGROUND

In March 2014, the City entered into a two-year Contribution Agreement with IRCC to establish a Surrey LIP (see Corporate Report No. Ro85, attached as Appendix "II").

Council was provided with updates on the activities of the Surrey LIP on February 2, 2015 (see Corporate Report No. Ro25, attached as Appendix "III"), and on July 13, 2015 (see Corporate Report No. R149, attached as Appendix "IV").

On April 18, 2016, Corporate Report No. Ro89 (attached as Appendix "V") updated Council on the arrival of the Syrian refugees and the activities undertaken by the City, in partnership with the Surrey LIP, to welcome the newcomers.

DISCUSSION

According to IRCC, LIPs are community-based partnerships that aim to enhance collaboration, coordination, and strategic planning at the community level in order to foster more welcoming and inclusive communities for new immigrants and refugees and to improve their settlement and integration outcomes. The Federal Government introduced the LIP program into British Columbia in 2014.

The Surrey LIP was initiated in April 2014 with the City as the lead agency. By April 2016, all the activities and deliverables included in the City's 2014-2016 Contribution Agreement with IRCC were completed. This includes:

- establishing a Surrey LIP committee;
- creating communications resources to raise awareness of immigrant and refugee issues, as well as the LIP;
- conducting research and consultations on newcomers' needs and services; and
- developing a local immigrant strategic plan.

Surrey LIP Governance

The Surrey LIP has established a governance structure which includes the Surrey LIP Committee and Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable (IAR).

The Surrey LIP Committee

The Surrey LIP Committee is composed of 30 organizations representing a broad range of community sectors. It is co-chaired by Councillor Judy Villeneuve and by Anita Huberman, CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade. The LIP Committee provided direction on all the LIP activities, including the development of the Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy.

Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable (IAR)

The Surrey LIP IAR was established in December 2014 to bring authentic newcomer voices to the LIP processes and activities. The IAR is currently composed of 19 local immigrant and refugee residents from 16 different countries of origin.

In addition to participating in IAR meetings, the IAR planned and organized a "Welcome to Surrey Centre Block Party" in September 2015, which was attended by over 200 residents. The IAR has recently received \$2,800.00 from the Provincial Government's Gaming Grant to plan and organize another welcoming event for Surrey newcomers in Fall 2016.

Surrey LIP Communications

As a part of its "knowledge transfer" mandate, the Surrey LIP has developed a number of communication resources to raise awareness about the Surrey LIP and educate community stakeholders on immigrant/refugee issues specific to Surrey.

- **Website:** A Surrey LIP website was developed that links to the City’s website. Since its launch in April 2015, the website has received over 31,000 page-views and has had over 1,000 document downloads.

The website is www.SurreyLIP.ca.

- **Newsletters:** Eight issues of the “Engaged & Inclusive” newsletter were produced, featuring the following themes:
 1. Introducing the New Surrey Local Immigration Partnership;
 2. The City’s Role (outlines how the City contributes to welcoming and including newcomers);
 3. The Service Ethic (highlights the work of Surrey’s settlement agencies);
 4. Education that Works and Welcomes (focuses on the role of the education sector in creating an integrated society);
 5. Putting Surrey on the Map (provides an overview of the Service Mapping research);
 6. Part Way There (explores the findings from the Immigrant Integration research);
 7. Getting to Work (provides an overview of the Labour Market research); and
 8. Surrey & Syria (focuses on the local responses to the arrival of Syrian refugees).

Newsletters are available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/engaged-inclusive.

- **Fact Sheets:** Eight fact sheets were prepared using a smart infographics approach. The fact sheets provide Surrey-specific data on the immigrant/refugee population, as well as highlight findings from the Surrey LIP research.

Fact sheets are available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/fact-sheets.

- **Surrey LIP Monthly e-Update:** Beginning in December 2015, a monthly e-update has been distributed. Currently, the e-update is sent to over 800 subscribers.
- **2014-2016 Surrey LIP Progress Report:** The “We Can: We Will” report provides a brief overview of key Surrey LIP achievements in 2014-2016. It is attached as Appendix “VI” to this report.

Research and Consultations

Four research projects were completed over the past two years. The findings from three of the projects were used to inform the development of the Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy. These include:

- Immigrant Integration research project;
- Service Mapping research project; and
- Labour Market Integration research project.

The findings of the fourth research project, focussed on refugees in Surrey, will contribute to the development of a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy to be released in Fall 2016.

Immigrant Integration Research Project

The Immigrant Integration research project explored public perceptions of Surrey as a welcoming and inclusive community for new immigrants and refugees. The project was conducted by CitySpaces Consulting, in partnership with the Mustel Group and Kari Huhtala + Associates. The research included a randomized telephone survey, focus groups, and community consultations. In total, over 500 Surrey residents participated in the research. The following are some of the key findings:

- Overall, Surrey residents (both immigrant and Canadian-born) feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging in the community. Residents feel accepted for who they are (ethnicity/religion), and feel comfortable doing their day-to-day activities (shopping, working, accessing services).
- Generally, immigration is seen as making a positive contribution to the community. The survey revealed that more immigrants than Canadian-born residents believe that immigration is good for Surrey (85% vs. 68%).
- Discrimination was found to be at least "somewhat" of a problem by over half of the survey participants. In focus groups, residents generally downplayed the notion that discrimination is a problem.
- The survey revealed that more immigrants than non-immigrants have difficulty finding employment that matches their qualifications (41% vs. 31%). The survey finding was supported in focus groups where newcomers identified challenges finding suitable employment as one of the key integration barriers.
- Surrey residents who are immigrants are more likely to feel that their cultural/ethnic group are underrepresented in government or authorities.

The full report is available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/strategies-projects/research-and-consultation.

Service Mapping Project

The goal of the Service Mapping research project was to develop an inventory of settlement services and programs in Surrey; create an online map of these services; and to identify trends, duplications, and gaps in settlement services. The project was conducted by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). The following key findings emerged from a survey of social service leaders in Surrey:

- For refugees, mental health services and program delivery features such as transportation, interpretation, and better service coordination were identified as needing the most attention.
- For other immigrants (not refugees), vocational training, employment readiness, and qualification evaluation were identified as the type of services requiring the most attention.

- Inadequate funding was the most cited issue identified by social service leaders.

The full report is available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/strategies-projects/research-and-consultation.

The online interactive map of settlement services is also available on the Surrey LIP website.

The Labour Market Integration Research Project

The Labour Market Integration research project aimed to obtain a better understanding of Surrey's current and future labour market needs. In addition, it identified the barriers faced by local employers to hire immigrants, and by Surrey's immigrants to find jobs. The project was conducted by the Human Capital Strategies Consulting. A total of 175 employers, immigrants, and service providers participated in the research. The following are some of the key findings:

- For new immigrants, the challenges in finding employment include a lack of workplace-specific English language proficiency, a lack of Canadian experience, differences between Canadian and immigrant home countries' hiring practices, and difficulties in having foreign credentials recognized.
- Employers identified the challenges in hiring new immigrants as limited Human Resources capacity (in small businesses), immigrants' perceived lack of understanding of business and company needs, and not being aware of the supports available from settlement agencies to employers that hire new immigrants.
- According to the Province of B.C. Labour Market Outlook, Surrey will likely have more than 8,000 unfilled positions between now and 2022.

The full report is available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/strategies-projects/labour-market-integration-research.

The Settlement and Integration Needs of Refugees in Surrey Research Project

The Refugee research aimed to identify the settlement issues that are specific to refugees in Surrey. The research was led by SFU Surrey working in partnership with 22 other organizations. Twelve Research Assistants (RAs) were hired and trained; seven of those RAs came to Canada as refugees. The following key challenges were identified for refugees:

- **Pre-arrival Settlement Phase**
Pre-departure communications often created an overly optimistic picture of resettlement in Canada.
- **Arrival Settlement Phase**
There are some structural/systemic social barriers that impede refugee integration, such as social isolation; limited access to affordable housing; transportation challenges; and poverty.
- **Settling-in Phase**
Families are forgoing basic necessities to repay transportation loans. Refugees are eager to find work but there are limited pathways to meaningful employment for them. They

highly value education and would like to contribute to community, but they are faced with long waiting lists for English language training.

- **Long Term Settlement Phase**

The impacts of family separation are significant. Employment challenges, trauma, poverty, and complex family care demands delay refugee community integration. Many employment and volunteer opportunities require a criminal record check, which is challenging for refugees to provide.

- **Service Coordination Challenges**

Better integration and coordination of settlement services is required but the current funding model does not foster it.

The full report is available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/strategies-projects/refugee-settlement-priorities-research.

Surrey LIP Stakeholder Consultations

Five stakeholder consultation events were conducted from September 2015 to March 2016 involving over 180 community members and service providers. The purpose of the consultations was to share the research findings and engage the community in identifying priorities and recommendations for action.

A separate consultation event was held for each of the four research themes: immigrant integration, services, labour market integration, and refugees. The fifth consultation focussed on youth. The Surrey LIP partnered with the Vancouver Foundation's Fresh Voices team to organize and facilitate the day-long youth forum held in January 2016, with over 50 Surrey newcomer youth participants.

The consultation summaries are available online at www.SurreyLIP.ca/strategies-projects/research-and-consultation.

The Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy 2016-2019: Everyone in Surrey Belongs!

The research and consultation results were used to develop the Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy ("the Strategy"), titled "Everyone in Surrey Belongs!" The Strategy includes five strategic directions, twenty objectives, and over 80 recommended actions to improve the integration of newcomers into the community. The five strategic directions and associated goals and objectives are:

- **Accessible Services**

Goal: Surrey has a robust and fully resourced settlement service infrastructure where immigrants and settlement stakeholders have ready access to the services, supports and information they need.

- 1) Develop, promote and disseminate information tools and resources to enhance service coordination in order to assist both newcomers and stakeholders to navigate the continuum of programs and services.
- 2) Identify and determine Surrey's immigrant programs and services capacity and demand to better inform service planning and articulate community needs.

- 3) Enhance Surrey's capacity to define and address the demand for English Language and communication skills training required by immigrants to integrate within the workplace and community.
- 4) Increase awareness of immigrant mental health and counselling needs to support healthcare practitioners and service agencies to recognize and appropriately address these needs.

- **Engaged Community**

Goal: Surrey is a welcoming and inclusive city that supports all newcomer residents to belong, make community connections, and actively participate in all that Surrey has to offer.

- 1) Encourage and support the delivery of programs, services and activities to assist immigrants make connections with Aboriginal peoples, residents and longer term immigrants.
- 2) Increase awareness of the specific needs of vulnerable immigrant and refugee populations.
- 3) Increase awareness of and address racial discrimination issues in Surrey.
- 4) Increase access to volunteer leadership opportunities for immigrants and refugees in Surrey.

- **Meaningful Employment**

Goal: Surrey has a vibrant economy where employers and businesses fully realize the benefits of immigration and immigrants are economically integrated.

- 1) Enhance coordination and promote connections amongst Immigrant Serving Organizations (ISOs), immigrants, employers and business and industry organizations.
- 2) Establish partnerships with business, industry and government to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants, enhance workplace integration and ensure understanding of Surrey's labour market and employment service needs.
- 3) Increase mentorship, co-ops, work experience and volunteer programs, initiatives and placements for immigrants.
- 4) Raise the capacity and expertise of the employment service sector to address current and emerging challenges and demands in immigrant employment.

- **Thriving Youth**

Goal: Surrey is an inclusive and supportive community in which all immigrant youth have the opportunity to thrive and grow, while enjoying full access to educational, labour market, recreational and family resources and opportunities.

- 1) Encourage and support opportunities for immigrant youth to connect across cultures, participate in events and activities and share their perspectives.
- 2) Support Surrey's education system to assist immigrant youth to fully integrate and benefit from all the education system has to offer.
- 3) Increase opportunities for immigrant youth to access employment services and supports and gain work experience.
- 4) Enhance supports and services for Surrey's youth to address the intercultural and intergenerational differences they experience.

- **Sustainable Leadership**

Goal: The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership has a diversity of members, partners and resources to fully address immigrant integration issues within the community, to sustain and expand its initiatives and is recognized as a leader in immigrant community and workforce integration.

- 1) Coordinate and sustain the operations of the Surrey LIP.
- 2) Evaluate the Surrey LIP membership to effectively address immigrant integration issues in Surrey.
- 3) Secure and diversify LIP funding to ensure sustainability of the LIP and implementation of its activities.
- 4) Increase public and stakeholder awareness and support of the Surrey LIP.

The Strategy is intended to guide community-wide action over the next three years. As such, the Strategy's implementation plan identifies the stakeholder groups who have responsibility for each of the 83 recommended actions. The City of Surrey is identified as having a role to play in the implementation of 27 of the 83 recommended actions.

Next Steps

The Surrey LIP Contribution Agreement with IRCC has been extended for another year (April 2016 – March 2017) with the City receiving \$248,000.00 to support the work of the LIP. Activities will include:

- continuing to support the LIP Committee and IAR;
- updating and preparing new communications resources;
- developing a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy;
- assessing the capacities and the demand for settlement services;
- organizing another youth forum,
- organizing an event focussed on immigrant employment;
- conducting an evaluation of the LIP; and
- finding other funding sources to support specific projects and actions as identified in the Strategy.

The Surrey LIP will also be undertaking an anti-racism project. In January 2016, the City was awarded a \$20,000.00 grant from the Province of B.C. (Ministry of International Trade, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Unit). The "True Colours of Surrey" project will research existing anti-racism initiatives in Surrey; facilitate a forum; and develop an anti-racism campaign. This project responds to Objective # 7 in the Strategy, which is to "increase awareness of and address racial discrimination issues in Surrey".

CONCLUSION

Over 40% of Surrey residents are immigrants, and this proportion is expected to increase over the coming years. The Surrey LIP provides the City with the opportunity to convene the community in order to develop a coordinated and evidence-based strategy for creating a city that welcomes and includes new immigrants and refugees; a city where "Everyone in Surrey Belongs!"

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council adopt the “Surrey Local Immigrant Integration Strategy 2016-2019: Everyone in Surrey Belongs!”

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

AM:ss

Appendix “I” – Surrey Local Immigrant Integration Strategy 2016-2019:
Everyone in Surrey Belongs!

Appendix “II” – Corporate Report No. R085

Appendix “III” – Corporate Report No. R025

Appendix “IV” – Corporate Report No. R149

Appendix “V” – Corporate Report No. R089

Appendix “VI” – We Can: We Will – Surrey LIP 2014-2016 Progress Report

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CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R089

COUNCIL DATE: April 18, 2016

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **April 18, 2016**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Update on the Arrival of Syrian Refugees**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the arrival of Syrian refugees in Surrey and the City of Surrey's actions to welcome the newcomers.

BACKGROUND

It has been five years since the onset of the civil war in Syria. Today, eleven million Syrians are displaced from their homes and four million Syrians have left their country. The crisis continues to grow.

In November 2015, the Government of Canada committed to resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada. This goal was reached at the end of February, with additional Syrian refugees expected to arrive in Canada throughout 2016. Canada's response to the Syrian crisis is this country's largest refugee resettlement initiative since the 1975 to 1980 period when Canada resettled close to 69,000 refugees fleeing Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Historically, British Columbia has received 10-12% of all Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) coming to Canada. From 2010 to 2015, Surrey was the largest recipient of GARs arriving in the province with approximately 400 arrivals each year, representing 25-30% of all GARs settling in BC.

DISCUSSION

Since the Federal Government's November 2015 announcement of their plans to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada, the City of Surrey has been actively engaged in:

- supporting the successful settlement of refugees by participating in national, regional and local planning processes;
- taking actions that will help to make the Syrian refugees that settle in Surrey feel welcome; and
- continuing to work on the development of a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy.

Arrival of Syrian Refugees

There are three categories of Syrian refugees arriving in Canada. All hold Permanent Resident (PR) status upon arrival.

- *Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)* are identified by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and selected by the Government of Canada on the basis of being most in need of protection. They receive financial and other support from the Government of Canada for up to one year.
- *Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)* are Convention refugees selected from abroad by a private sponsor (often a family member) who agrees to provide financial and other support for one year.
- *Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees (BVORs)* are identified by the UNHCR and matched with a private sponsor. The Government of Canada provides up to six months of income support while the private sponsor provides up to six months of income support and up to one year of social and emotional support.

The majority of Syrian refugees arriving in BC are GARs.

Government Assisted Refugees' Arrival to BC & Surrey

From November 4, 2015, to March 18, 2016, 1,804 GARs, representing 414 family units, have arrived in BC. Sixty percent are children.

The majority of refugees are being settled in Metro Vancouver, however refugees were also sent to 7 communities outside of Metro Vancouver. Finding permanent housing in Metro Vancouver has been a challenge resulting in refugees being accommodated in hotels until permanent housing is found. As of April 12, 2016, of the 1,815 Syrian GARs that have arrived in BC:

- 266 GARs were in temporary accommodation; and
- 1,379 GARs have moved into permanent accommodation (excluding Victoria).

Of the GARs that have been moved into permanent accommodation, 670 individuals (155 families) have been settled in Surrey which represents approximately 49% of all BC GARs in permanent housing so far. The high number of Syrians being settled in Surrey is due to the fact that rental rates in Surrey are more affordable relative to rents in many other areas of the region. (For their first year in Canada, if they are not employed, GARs are provided income support that is equivalent to the provincial income assistance rates.)

More information can be found on the ISSofBC Refugee Response Hub at:
<http://refugeehub.issbc.org>

Privately Sponsored Refugees & Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees Arrival to Surrey

In terms of PSRs and BVORs, from November 4, 2015, to April 11, 2016, the numbers are as follows:

- 49 PSRs were admitted;
- 33 PSRs are in the inventory; and
- 6 BVORs were admitted.

Information is available at: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>

Services in Surrey

The Syrian refugees are housed in apartments and secondary suites throughout Surrey. They are not concentrated in any single neighbourhood. This has meant that the children are attending a number of schools, rather than all being enrolled in a single school or couple of schools.

Surrey's settlement agencies are experienced in supporting refugees and already had Arabic speaking workers. Additional funding has been provided by the federal government to agencies serving the Syrian newcomers. However, responding to the increased demand for their services continues to be a challenge. The Surrey Food Bank has reported a large number of Syrian refugees already showing up at the Food Bank.

The Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team, described later in this report, provides a venue for continued monitoring of the capacity of agencies in Surrey to support the Syrian refugees.

Supporting the Settlement of Syrian Refugees

Municipalities do not have responsibility for refugee policies and programs. This is primarily the responsibility of the federal government and the agencies that they contract to deliver settlement services. As well, provincial services, such as health, education and employment, are involved in refugee settlement. However newcomers settle in communities, and the successful integration of refugees into the social and economic life of the community benefits all.

Over the past five months, the City of Surrey has worked with representatives from the Federal and Provincial Governments, local settlement agencies and other key stakeholders to plan for the settlement of Syrian refugees.

- ***Appeal for Public Support:*** On November 10, 2015, ISSofBC organized a Call to Action media event calling for the public's assistance in providing housing and other supports for the Syrian refugees. Councillor Villeneuve represented the City of Surrey at the event.

- **Federal Government Planning:** In late November, the City's Senior Social Planner was invited by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to participate in a national planning session attended by staff from the federal government, province/territories, municipal governments, and settlement agencies. The City of Surrey was the only municipality in B.C. invited to attend.

On December 2, 2015, Mayor Hepner hosted a roundtable meeting with Minister McCallum at Surrey City Hall. Minister Bond from the Province, along with several local mayors, philanthropists and non-profit executive directors were in attendance.

- **Regional & Local Planning:** Social Planning staff has been participating in regional and local planning processes. This included the City convening two meetings in late 2015 that brought local settlement agencies and other relevant agencies together to be briefed by federal government and ISSofBC representatives on the arrival of the refugees and discuss organizations' capacity to support additional refugees.

The Province has contracted DIVERSEcity Community Services to lead a Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team (FVRRRT) for a one-year period. The FVRRRT's action plan outlines six main issues for action including: data collection and public education; employment; healthcare; housing; and language training. Social Planning staff is representing the City on the FVRRRT.

Welcoming the Syrian Refugees in Surrey

Canadians across the country have welcomed the Syrian refugees with open hearts. The City of Surrey is no exception. Below are activities that have been undertaken by the City of Surrey, in partnership with the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), to ensure the Syrian refugees feel welcomed.

- **Community Forum on Syrian Refugees Settlement in Surrey** was held on January 20, 2016. Hosted by Mayor Hepner in partnership with the Surrey LIP, the forum was attended by over 200 residents who were interested in hearing about the arrival of the Syrian refugees and how the public could assist.
- **How You Can Help Refugees pamphlet and City's webpage** was created in January 2016 to provide information to the general public about the ways residents can get involved and help Syrian refugees. The pamphlet is attached to this report as Appendix "I". It is available online at: <http://www.surrey.ca/files/RefugeeSettlementBrochure.pdf>.
- **Welcome to Surrey pamphlet** was developed in January 2016 for the Syrians settling in Surrey. It includes greetings from Mayor and Council, along with some very basic information about Surrey, its facilities and local settlement services. The brochure includes both English and Arabic text. The pamphlet is attached to this report as Appendix "II". It is available online at: <http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/SurreyLIP-Pamphlet-WebFinal.pdf>.

- ***Guildford Library and Recreation Centre*** supported the refugees who were temporarily housed in local hotels. Facility tours, along with temporary library cards and recreation passes, provided the refugees with access to recreation, as well as books and computers at the library.
- ***Cultural Awareness Information Sessions for City Staff*** were held on March 30 and March 31, 2016. The sessions enabled City staff to learn about refugees and Middle East culture, as well as hear stories from Surrey staff and a young Syrian refugee. Follow-up is being planned to facilitate staffs' interest in volunteering and fund-raising.
- ***Surrey LIP Newsletter on Syrian Refugees*** was released in March 2016. It provides updates on refugee settlement in Surrey, as well as highlights the challenges and successes of local agencies in responding to the arrival of Syrians. The newsletter is attached to this report as Appendix "III". It is available online at: http://www.surreylip.ca/sites/default/files/Newletters/LIPnewsletter-o8-Syrians_Surrey.pdf.
- ***Information Session for Arabic-speaking Refugees*** was organized by the Surrey LIP Immigrant Advisory Roundtable on April 9, 2016 at the Guildford Recreation Centre. The goal of the session was to welcome the newcomers and provide information on "what you should know about settlement in Canada but nobody ever tells you". The session was offered in English and Arabic and attended by 30 refugees.
- ***April 20 – 28, 2016 - Surrey Museum Exhibit: Surrey - A Place of Refuge*** will be displayed at City Hall. The exhibit was developed as a part of the 2013-2014 Surrey Welcoming Communities Project and tells the stories of seven refugees.
- ***Summer of 2016 – Welcoming Event for Refugees*** will be organized by the City of Surrey. It is anticipated that the family-friendly celebratory event will be hosted by Mayor and Council in Surrey City Hall later in the spring.

Developing a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy

The City of Surrey is the lead agency for the Surrey LIP, a federally funded initiative aimed at engaging local communities in immigrant and refugee integration. The LIP identified the development of a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy as one of its initiatives for 2014-2017.

In the spring of 2015, SFU Surrey was contracted by the Surrey LIP to conduct research and consultations on refugees in Surrey. The "Our Community Our Voice" project is being conducted by SFU and Kwantlen researchers, as well as a team of research assistants who are all young people who arrived in Canada as refugees. The final report will be available in April 2016.

The Surrey LIP will be using the SFU research, along with learnings from the recent settlement of the Syrian refugees, to develop a Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy.

An update on the progress of the Surrey LIP will be provided to Council in May 2016.

CONCLUSION

The arrival of Syrian refugees has been a historic event in Canada. While there are many challenges in settling such a large number of vulnerable refugees in a short period of time, Canadians' interest and out-pouring of generosity has been heart-warming and inspiring.

The City of Surrey has been actively engaged in this national effort. Over the past five months, the City has shown strong leadership by supporting settlement planning processes, as well as taking action to ensure that Surrey is a welcoming new home for the Syrian families who settle in our community.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

AM:ss

Appendix "I" – Refugee Settlement in Surrey: Local Resources & How to Help
Appendix "II" – Welcome to Surrey
Appendix "III" – Surrey LIP Newsletter: Engaged & Inclusive, Issue No. 8

NO: R013

COUNCIL DATE: **January 16, 2017****REGULAR COUNCIL**

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **January 9, 2017**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning & Development** FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **True Colours of Surrey – We Are Surrey Anti-Racism
Public Awareness Campaign**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to inform Mayor and Council about the True Colours of Surrey project, and specifically about the *We Are Surrey* anti-racism public awareness campaign.

BACKGROUND

The True Colours of Surrey project followed-up on a finding in the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership's (LIP) *Surrey is Home: Immigrant Integration Research Project* (March 2015). In response to a telephone survey, discrimination was identified to be at least 'somewhat' of a problem by more than half of Surrey residents.

In February 2016, Planning & Development Department received a \$20,000.00 grant from the Province of British Columbia to conduct a project focussed on issues of racism and discrimination. The project timeline was from February 2016 to December 2016. It included three components:

- Research
 - A scan of promising community programs and models in and outside of Surrey was conducted.
 - 500 residents were surveyed to better understand the causes and impacts of racism and discrimination in Surrey.
 - A full report and summary quick study of research results were prepared. The quick study is attached as Appendix "I".
- "We Are Surrey" Public Awareness Campaign
 - Materials (posters and stories profiling Surrey residents) were developed for use in a public awareness campaign to address racism and discrimination.

- Community Forum
 - A one-day community forum was held on November 18, 2016 in City Hall with about 75 participants. Its purpose was to share and discuss the research findings and public awareness campaign materials, and to identify actions and next steps.

DISCUSSION

The *We Are Surrey* public awareness campaign aims to celebrate Surrey's diverse population and to challenge peoples' perceptions and/or stereotypes.

For the campaign, nine posters were created. They feature 18 local residents representing a diversity of ethno-cultural backgrounds and ages. In addition, stories were collected from the 18 residents. The posters are attached as Appendix "II" and the booklet of stories is attached as Appendix "III."

The response to the posters at the True Colours Community Forum was very positive. Many participants indicated an interest in displaying the posters in their organizations. The Surrey Board of Trade has already borrowed the poster boards for a couple of their events, and the Surrey Centre Mall has requested to use the posters for a mall display. Vancity Credit Union has agreed to contribute \$2,000.00 to assist with additional printing costs associated with the campaign.

In January 2017, the City will formally launch the *We Are Surrey* campaign. Planning & Development staff is working with the Web-team and Marketing team to plan a campaign that will feature the posters on the City's social media as well as in civic facilities. The possibility of displaying the posters at bus shelters is also being explored.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The *We Are Surrey* campaign aligns with the following Desired Outcomes (DO) and Strategic Directions (SD) in our Sustainability Charter 2.0:

Inclusion

- DO 1: Surrey welcomes, includes, embraces and values the diversity of people who live here.
 - DO 2: Surrey is a caring and compassionate city that supports its residents of all backgrounds, demographics and life experiences.
 - DO 3: Residents have opportunities to build social connections with people from different backgrounds.
 - DO 5: New immigrants and refugees are supported to settle, integrate and become thriving members of the community.
 - DO 20: Surrey residents are proud of their community.
 - DO 21: All residents have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in civic issues and to contribute to community life.
-
- SD 1: Support the social and economic integration of newcomers through the Local Immigration Partnership, and development and implementation of immigrant and refugee strategic plans.
 - SD 4: Work with the LGBTQ community to ensure a safe and inclusive community that invites gender and sexual diversity.
 - SD 18: Celebrate and build upon what makes us proud of our community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning & Development

AM/ss

Attachments:

Appendix "I" - Quick Study: Understanding Racism & Discrimination

Appendix "II" - *We Are Surrey* Posters

Appendix "III" - *We Are Surrey* Stories Booklet

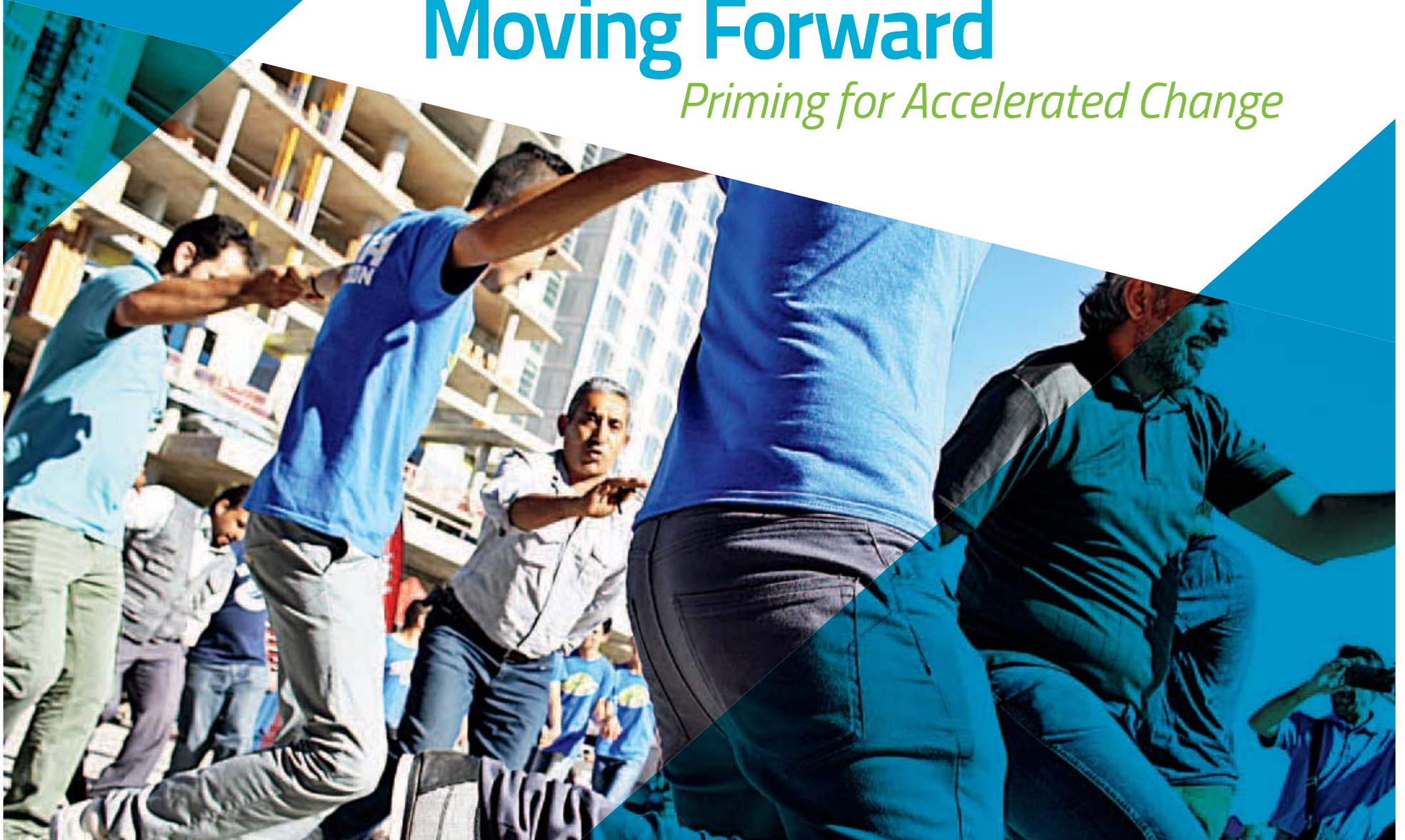
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SURREY
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP

Moving Forward

Priming for Accelerated Change





On the cover and page 2:
Surrey Welcomes Refugees
event, July 2016.

Immigrant Advisory Roundtable

Nina Bazie – *Ivory Coast*
Mohammad Ali – *Jordan*
Faisal Durani – *Pakistan*
Dongmei (Lily) Yang – *China*
YasinMuktar Mussa – *Somalia*
Wafa Al-jabiri – *Iraq*
Piyush Mehta – *India*
Preeti Hiro – *India*
Magdalena Mot – *Romania*
Khaleida Banu – *Bangladesh*
Robert (Jin-Chien) Lin – *Taiwan*
Aydin Nozhat – *Iran*
Kue K'nyawmupoe – *Karen State, Myanmar*
Pranjali Wadkar – *India*
Rehab Marghany – *Egypt*
Margery Cantil – *Philippines*
Drastant Mehta – *India*
Mayyadah Al-ani – *Iraq*
Muna Amir – *Somalia*

LIP Member Organizations

City of Surrey
The Surrey Board of Trade
Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC
City of Surrey, Human Resources
City of Surrey Social Planning (Contract Manager)
City of Surrey, Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture
Surrey Libraries
DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
Douglas College, Training Group at Douglas College
Human Resources Management Association
Fraser Health Authority, Population and Public Health
Fraser Health Authority, Primary Health Care
Immigrant Employment Council of BC
Immigrant Services Society of BC
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society
Options Community Services Society
Pacific Community Resources Society
Progressive Intercultural Community Services
Semiahmoo House Society
SFU Surrey
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Surrey Delta Service Centre
Surrey School District #36
Surrey RCMP
Sources Community Resources Society
Surrey Interfaith Council
Umoja Operation Compassion Society
Vancity Credit Union

Who We Are And What We've Been Doing

We are the **Surrey Local Immigration Partnership**, a consortium of government, public and private institutions, business groups, and nonprofit and community agencies working together to strengthen Surrey's integration of newcomers and build a more inclusive and welcoming city.

2016-2017 was a year of action, as refugees arrived in our community in unprecedented numbers and we joined the campaign to welcome them. Surrey has become British Columbia's arrival city, accepting up to half of all refugees in the province. Even before Canada's Syrian refugee plans were announced, we determined that refugees were such a key element for Surrey that we required a Refugee Integration Strategy distinct from that of immigrants. In 2016-2017, we continued engaging key stakeholders in consultations and development of a 3-year Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy, called **Surrey: Our New Home**.

This report details a busy year characterized by our commitment to make Surrey more welcoming and inclusive to newcomers. It was a year of transition, as we moved from

formulating our Immigrant Integration Strategy to pursuing it. In this document you will find an overview of our activities, arranged according to the Strategic Directions identified in our Immigrant Integration Strategy. We also included a brief summary of our refugee welcoming activities. Finally, we provide a list of all the resources that LIP developed in the past years and showcased some of the resources developed this year.

We have called the report "**Moving Forward. Priming For Accelerated Change.**" in the belief that Surrey is approaching a turning point with regards to the integration of newcomers. We have played a role in helping our city get there, and must now press even harder to help keep it on this positive path.

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5	Strategic Direction 1: Accessible Services	11	Strategic Direction 4: Thriving Youth
6	Strategic Direction 2: Engaged Community	12	Strategic Direction 5: Sustainable Leadership
		13	2017-2020 Refugee Integration Strategy & Welcoming Activities
		15	Surrey LIP Resources Developed 2014 - 2017



Councillor Judy Villeneuve and Anita Huberman.

Message from Co-Chairs

The Surrey LIP turned three in 2017. It was also the year when we completed our **Refugee Integration Strategy** and phased into implementation of our **Immigrant Integration Strategy**. We are proud of what Surrey LIP have achieved from the **We Are Surrey** public awareness campaign that challenges our perceptions about diversity to the **Newcomer Youth Conference** organized by the refugee youth team which brought together close to 70 local youth to learn about leadership and civic engagement opportunities. Our **Sector Dialogues** proved to be a productive opportunity to engage the business community and start building bridges.

We turned a very important point this year. Our **2017-2020 Refugee Integration Strategy**

was developed and adopted by the Surrey LIP Committee. The Strategy provides a blueprint for community-wide actions to welcome one of the most vulnerable newcomer populations in Surrey – refugees. Many challenges and struggles remain in the area of refugee settlement. To cite just one, we continue our multi-year campaign to eliminate the requirement for refugees to repay the transportation loan of up to \$10,000 plus often interest on these loans.

We would like to thank our partners and Surrey LIP members for their dedication in making Surrey more welcoming and inclusive. We are lucky to have so many groups of amazing residents and community agencies here in Surrey who are truly committed to the Surrey LIP vision, **"Everyone in Surrey Belongs!"**

Judy Villeneuve
Councillor
City of Surrey

Anita Huberman
CEO
Surrey Board of Trade

Surrey City Hall.

Upcoming!

The Surrey LIP received funding from the Community Foundations of Canada to explore alternative models of English training to Syrian youth.

Accessible Services

Alternative English Language Learning Project

Of all services required by newcomers trying to adjust to life in Canada, English language training stands out as key. Poor command of the language hampers not just access to other essential services, such as education and even medical, but has reverberations throughout the immigrant experience, adversely affecting integration success and employability.

Anecdotal reports indicated significant strains on English language training opportunities in Surrey, leading to waitlists. However, beyond the federally funded **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** program, no comprehensive inventory of informal English language programs existed and there

was little understanding of which types of language training met newcomers' needs or enjoyed the best outcomes. The Surrey LIP sought to fill these gaps with its **Alternative English Language Learning Project**, which inventoried current service capacity and demand.

Key Suggestions by Newcomers

- South Surrey needs more English language classes
- Offer classes more often and tailor to different levels
- Allocate more time for each session
- Accommodate different literacy levels

“A lot of these programs are delivered by volunteers, which points out the important role of community”

—Aileen Murphy, Senior Social Planner, City of Surrey



Engaged Community

True Colours of Surrey

A three-pronged approach to ending racism and discrimination.

How prevalent are racism and discrimination in Surrey? More importantly, what are the implications, and what can be done to improve the situation?

Our prior research, during the development of our immigrant and refugee integration strategies, found generally positive attitudes toward immigration, but not without some caveats. A majority of both newcomers and native-born Canadians believe that discrimination exists, and both groups expressed reservations about the continued growth of immigrant and refugee populations. The overall message was that there exists a relatively high degree of social cohesion but it could be weakened if problems are not addressed.

Guided by a **Project Advisory Group** representing diverse community sectors, and funded by the Province of British Columbia, the **True Colours of Surrey** project commissioned University of British Columbia researcher and doctoral student **Jacopo Miro**

to lead efforts geared to understanding the extent of discrimination and identifying solutions that have worked elsewhere.

A survey filled out by 500 Surrey residents born outside of Canada revealed that, for example, 41% of visible minorities experienced racism or discrimination at least “sometimes,” and only 22% have never experienced it. Forty percent said that discrimination made it harder to “feel a sense of belonging in the community” and 24% to “participate in community life.”

“Institutional racism is rare. Instead we found more subtle and informal ways of expressing racism.”

— **Jacopo Miro**, PhD candidate, UBC and True Colours of Surrey research leader

“The findings were positive overall,” says Miro. Still, he points out, one of the most common places to experience discrimination proved to be on public transit. “And that has policy implications.” As well, fully 89% of respondents had no knowledge of programs or services dealing with discrimination.

A second element of the program attempted to identify those programs and services, and discovered that, although Surrey is home to

Surrey Welcomes
Refugees event,
July 2016.

Upcoming!

The True Colours project has also sparked a follow-up campaign. MOSAIC has been involved on the Project Advisory Committee and expressed an interest to lead another collaborative initiative, to be funded by the Province of British Columbia. The Surrey OARH Network — Organizing Against Racism & Hate — builds capacity and a community plan to address racism and hate in Surrey.

a number of advocacy and education initiatives, there is a shortage of programs geared to victims of racism or discrimination. A wider-reaching investigation found examples of many programs based elsewhere that could be adapted to local needs, and identified some of the qualities that made them successful (see below).

The third primary element of the project emphasized public consultation and education, in keeping with Surrey LIP's goal of an engaged community. In November 2016, a Surrey stakeholder forum served as the launching ground for an awareness campaign called **We Are Surrey**, profiling 18 local residents and their stories. The posters are being showcased at a number of events hosted by Surrey LIP partners. Additionally, posters were displayed at over 30 bus shelters throughout the city in March-April 2017. In March 2017, SFU Surrey's Philosopher's Cafe devoted an evening of public dialogue to the **True Colours** project and its findings and implications.

Characteristics of successful anti-racism initiatives as identified by the True Colours of Surrey environmental scan:

- Are highly participatory and collaborative
- Emphasize bottom-up, rather than top-down, approaches
- Include and amplify the voices of minority groups
- Promote broader societal discussions about the issue of racism
- Help to break down barriers and bridge cultural divides within communities
- Help bring communities together
- Have clear and targeted goals
- Impact change

Citizenship Ceremony


The goal of the Engaged Community strategic direction is to build a welcoming and inclusive city that supports all newcomer residents to belong, make community connections, and actively participate in all that Surrey has to offer. This year, the Surrey LIP partnered with the **Institute for Canadian Citizenship** and **IRCC** to organize a special citizenship ceremony where new citizens have an opportunity to participate in roundtable discussions to reflect on what it means to be active, engaged citizens.

The ceremony will take place at City Hall in April and will celebrate new citizens with performances from local high school student dance groups. The ceremony was organized by the **LIP Citizenship Ceremony Planning Committee** which brought together representatives from RCMP, Surrey Immigrant Advisory, Surrey Libraries, Vancity, M.O.S.A.I.C. and many others.

"This builds civic engagement," says Rosy Takhar, Manager of Crime Prevention and Community Services with the Surrey RCMP and a Co-Chair of the organizing committee. "These are people who will be active in the community."

Upcoming!

Surrey LIP is looking for members to join Surrey Community Committee to organize the Citizenship Ceremony in 2018.



Madhurima and Jenya, participants of our We Are Surrey campaign.



Meaningful Employment

In the course of several research initiatives leading to Surrey LIP's Immigrant Integration Strategy, immigrants and refugees' difficulty in finding meaningful employment stood out as one of the strongest and most persistent barriers to making a life in Canada. This led to a key goal of the Strategy, that Surrey should have "a vibrant economy where employers and businesses fully realize the benefits of immigration and immigrants are economically integrated." This year several key initiatives were directed toward the goal's attainment.

“What are the gaps between immigrants and employers? Immigrants said, ‘Technical skills and leadership qualities.’ Employers said, ‘Communication skills and fitting in with the work environment.’”

— **Mohammad Ali**, immigrant participant in the Technology Sector dialogue

Sector Dialogues

Identifying the fine details and small changes that could make a big difference.

In 2015, when making public the results of our initial labour market research, we summarized the findings as two sides of the same coin:

“Newcomers living in Surrey experience frustration when attempting to find a job appropriate to their skills and experience. Employers face difficulties recruiting job seekers with necessary skills and experience.”

Those were the broad strokes. Equally clear was the reality that Surrey's labour market is made up of many sectors, and each one is different. Closing the gap between employers and their unfilled labour needs, and newcomers and their job-seeking frustrations, would require greater understanding of these sectors and the unique challenges each faces.

This year we deepened that understanding during the course of four **Sector Dialogues**, a joint initiative of Surrey LIP and the Surrey Board of Trade. In each of **Manufacturing, Construction, Technology and Health** sectors,

Business Sector
Dialogues,
March 2017.

Upcoming!

Building on the findings from the Sector Dialogues, Surrey LIP is planning a collaborative initiative called Newcomer Employment Week scheduled for Fall 2017.

10 employers were brought together with 10 immigrant job seekers for a facilitated round-table discussion.

As co-chair of Surrey LIP and chief executive officer of the Surrey Board of Trade, Anita Huberman was an enthusiastic force behind—and at—the dialogues. “Surrey is unique among Canadian Local Immigration Partnerships because business is at the table,” she says. “It’s a unique opportunity to take things a step further.”

During the course of the dialogues, two things became very clear. One was the degree to which employers and jobseekers in each sector share similar frustrations. But the other was the degree to which situations differ from sector to sector.

For example, in the manufacturing dialogue some employers disputed the common complaint that they overvalue Canadian experience, proposing that, rather, they have found it easier to retain immigrants than Canadian-born workers, and that, with that in mind, they are looking for employees of any kind, and from anywhere, as long as they are willing to learn and understand the culture of the organization. The emphasis of job seekers should be on their transferable skills as much as their experience.

In the health sector, employers and jobseekers each expressed deep frustrations. Employers felt that their hands are tied when it comes to hiring immigrants due to certification requirements inherent in the Province’s Health Act. Employers and immigrants agreed that the certification process is mostly geared to recent graduates, rather than those with out of country experience. This makes it very difficult

for immigrants to qualify for jobs except by returning to school, a difficult if not prohibitive option for those with families. Significant sector-wide changes will be required before conditions improve for either employers or immigrant jobseekers.

In the construction sector, employers proposed that they are less concerned about English-language skills than are many other industries, and strongly value a willingness to work hard and “get dirty,” as well as loyalty and good work habits. At the same time, local experience

“This is something that should be done in every city, all across Canada.”

— **Anita Huberman**, LIP co-chair and chief executive officer of the Surrey Board of Trade

is valued and familiarity with Canadian codes and standards is crucial, so barriers definitely exist. Overall, each group expressed frustrations about the difficulty in finding each other, suggesting the need for a more efficient job market and the potential of enhanced apprentice and internship programs.

Discussions in the technology sector reflected many themes common to immigrants’ experience in Canada’s labour market, though with a more optimistic tone than in some other sectors. Despite significant barriers, there was a common feeling that

opportunities exist and immigrants can take advantage if they are willing to embrace continuous learning and acclimatize to the culture.

Overall, says Anita Huberman, the exercise provided many important insights and pointed out the crucial need for constructive change. “The common theme is that these are very fractured landscapes, for both immigrants and businesses,” she says. “We need to create a place where immigrants can directly connect to employers. There needs to be help with the overwhelming nature of the job search.”

Looking to the future, by identifying both the common themes and the ones that differ from sector to sector, the Surrey LIP will be able to institute and agitate for programs like these that could accelerate positive change.



Business Sector
Dialogues,
March 2017.

Upcoming!

Building on the success of the Connector program within the City of Surrey, the Surrey LIP is working to expand the program to other Surrey-based employers.

Employer Go2 Resources

This LIP-curated resource assembled a diverse array of services and information sources of use to employers, and made them easily accessible through our website—everything from funding sources for workplace training, to alternative recruitment channels, to cultural awareness toolkits. Launched in the spring of 2017, the portal is a prime source of practical help, making it easier for employers to find and hire immigrants and refugees.

Employer Go2 Resources will be updated and expanded as additional resources are discovered or created.

“To many people who are looking for work, it’s a surprise that we will talk to them. If you have a question, reach out to us and chances are we can help you with it.”

Harbinder Mann, Human Resources, City of Surrey

Train the Trainer session

This acclaimed session in the fall of 2016 brought together more than 40 settlement and employment counsellors to learn from the experience of two of Surrey’s most successful employers of newcomers, the City of Surrey and Vancity Credit Union. Presenters such as the **City of Surrey’s Harbinder Mann** and **Vancity’s Shayne Sankar** walked attendees through the policies and processes they employ, answering questions and providing insights that can be passed on to immigrant jobseekers. “They were hungry for that kind of information,” says Mann. Attendees were virtually unanimous in their enthusiastic approval and expressed the view that “We need more of these type of sessions.”

Connector Program

The City of Surrey is in its third year of an **IEC-BC** program that matches immigrant and refugee jobseekers to a City employee with a similar professional background. In the program’s first two years, close to 30 immigrants were matched with City staff. The advice, mentorship and referrals provided led to 70% of participants finding employment commensurate with their qualifications.

Train the Trainer session, Vancity staff, October 2016.

Thriving Youth

Newcomer Youth Voices

Surrey is one of British Columbia's youngest cities, and refugee and immigrant populations are much younger still, so the concerns of youth are central to all LIP activities. During the past year, projects geared specifically to youth have been prominent, especially since the creation of a **Refugee Youth Planning Team** that brought together twelve newcomer youth.

Consisting of residents aged 18 to 25, the teams have been involved in the planning and organization of events including a full-day **Surrey Newcomer Youth Leadership Conference**, attended by more than 60 young people on March 18, 2017. In addition to art, fashion, music, dance, food and cultural components, the day featured talks and workshops led by Simon Fraser University Surrey campus Executive Director Steve Dooley, refugee activist Jorge Salazar, Ilhan Abdullahi of the Pacific Community Resources Society, and Kevin Kelly, representing Kwantlen First Nation.

“Jorge told us ‘Don’t be afraid of being the face of your cultural group.’ He said we have so much to share that we don’t need ‘experts’ to tell us what to do. We need to step up and take on leadership roles. Represent!”

—from the *Newcomer Youth Newsletter*

Participants shared stories of their journeys as newcomer youth and how they wish to be leaders in their communities and advocate with and for other newcomer youth, to support their positive integration into Canadian society.

“The day started with Kevin Kelly of the Kwantlen First Nation giving the indigenous welcome with his son, Michael Gabriel Kelly. Kevin and Michael reminded us not to lose our cultures and languages. This is who you are, don’t ever lose that!”

—from the *Newcomer Youth Newsletter*

Refugee Youth Planning Team

Ahmad Alzoubi – *Syria*
Aya Abdel-Dayem – *Iraq*
Ayah Al-Hasan – *Canada/Palestine*
Ayat Al Krad – *Syria*
Dacious Richardson – *Liberia*
Dahir Abdi Mohamed – *Somalia*
Fadia Jouni – *Syria*
Kamar Aljohmani – *Syria*
Kue K’nyawmupoe – *Karen*
Nargis Babrakzai – *Afghanistan*
Noor Alshhadeh – *Syria*
Samia Ghannoum – *Syria*



Newcomer Youth Conference, March 2017.

Upcoming!

Surrey LIP will continue supporting newcomer youth engagement through the Newcomer Youth Leadership Team and by providing a number of opportunities for youth to lead, connect and learn.

Upcoming!

Surrey LIP received 3-year (2017-2020) federal funding to continue bringing stakeholders together to develop innovative approaches to collaboration, coordination and program development in Surrey.

Surrey LIP will conduct an annual evaluation of its progress.



Sustainable Leadership

During the fall of 2016 and winter of 2017, the LIP undertook an intensive evaluation process in relation to partnership development and to assist in building organizational strength for the upcoming implementation phase of the strategic plans.

A survey of LIP members provided several insights:

- **84%** of LIP members felt that Surrey LIP is contributing to making Surrey more welcoming and inclusive
- **100%** of LIP members felt that LIP made the most progress to date on its objective to conduct community-based research
- **80%** of LIP members said that participating on the LIP was a good use of their time
- **80%** of LIP members supported the LIP's provision of leadership and oversight of a larger partnership in the implementation phase

Six recommendations were developed based on survey results and facilitated discussions with members of the LIP committee and Immigrant Advisory Roundtable.

1. Creation of an operations committee
2. Membership modifications to the larger LIP committee
3. Clarify the Working Groups' processes
4. Incorporate the Immigrant Advisory Roundtable into more LIP activities
5. Integrate youth voices into the LIP
6. Update all LIP groups' terms of reference

These recommendations will be considered by the LIP in the upcoming 2017-2018 year.

“The Surrey LIP is a complex partnership encompassing multiple sectors, which created a unique evaluation experience.”

—**Etta Broderson**, PhD candidate, Simon Fraser University and LIP leadership review co-facilitator

84%

of LIP members felt that Surrey LIP is contributing to making Surrey more welcoming and inclusive

100%

of LIP members felt that LIP made the most progress to date on its objective to conduct community-based research

2017-2020 Refugee Integration Strategy Development

A Refugee Integration Strategy was completed in the spring of 2017. The Strategy marked the culmination of an extensive program of research and consultation with service providers and refugees and identified four key strategic directions, further broken down into 17 specific objectives:



Investing in the Potential of Refugee Youth



Enhancing Service Capacity and Coordination



Supporting Economic Self-Sufficiency and Inclusion



Enhancing Social Inclusion

The strategy provides a tightly focused template to guide our activities through 2020.

“Surrey is a largest recipient of refugees in British Columbia. Last year, close to 50% of Government Assisted Refugees arriving in British Columbia settled here.”

Somali Youth Organization, Newcomer Youth Conference, March 2017.

Welcoming Refugees to Surrey Activities

Spring 2016

In the spring of 2016, Surrey Immigrant Advisory Roundtable organized “**Connecting with Your Neighbours**,” an information session that was delivered in English and Arabic and attended by over 40 Arabic-speaking newcomer/refugee residents.

March and April 2016

In March and April 2016 the LIP and the City of Surrey’s Human Resources department partnered to provide sessions on Surrey’s refugees, attended by more than 200 City of Surrey employees.

As a result the City donated over **40 boxes of food** and household items, along with many furniture items, to refugee families. Additionally, thanks to the City Manager’s support, close to **\$4,000** was raised through employee donations and over **1,800 transit passes** were distributed to refugee families.

June 2016

On June 13, 2016 Councillor Villeneuve and Aileen Murphy (City’s Senior Social Planner) appeared before the **Standing Committee on Refugees and Immigration** to advocate on termination of the **Refugee Transportation Loan**.

MP Randeep Sarai presented the Surrey petition signed by **1,000+** community members to the House of Commons in June 2016.

July 2016

In July 2016 the City of Surrey partnered with the LIP to organize a **Surrey Welcomes Refugees** event, which featured over 25 fun activities led by community partners as well as free food and entertainment. More than 500 people attended the event, most of them newly arrived refugees.

“*Simply put, the refugee transportation loan is counterproductive. While the federal government makes significant investments in the settlement and integration of GARs, the transportation loan negatively impacts this process. It does not make economic sense.*”

Councillor Villeneuve, presentation to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.”

Surrey Welcomes Refugees event, July 2016.



Surrey LIP Resources Developed 2014 - 2017

* Denotes developed in 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Strategies

2016

Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy.



2017

* Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy: Surrey, Our New Home.

Research

2015

Surrey is Home: Immigrant Integration Research Project. *March 2015.*

Service Mapping Project. *May 2015.*

Immigrant Labour Market Research Project. *November 2015.*

2016

Our Community Our Voice: The Settlement and Integration Needs of Refugees in Surrey, B.C. *March 2016.*

* True Colours of Surrey Environmental Scan: Anti Racism Programs and Models. *November 2016.*

* True Colours of Surrey Project: Survey Report: Understanding Racism Discrimination in Surrey. *November 2016.*

2017

* Surrey LIP Evaluation Report: Partnership Development. *March 2017.*

* Informal English Language Learning: A Review of Service Capacity and Demand in Surrey, B.C. *April 2017.*

* Business Sector Dialogues Report: Construction, Manufacturing, Health and Technology. *April 2017.*

Annual Reports

2016

Surrey LIP Progress Report: We Can We Will.

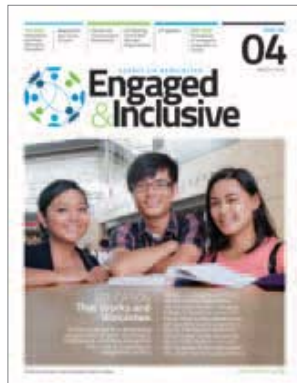


2017

* Surrey LIP Progress Report: Moving Forward. Priming for Accelerated Change.

SURREY LIP RESOURCES DEVELOPED 2014-2017

* Denotes developed in 2016-2017 fiscal year.



Engaged & Inclusive Newsletter

2014

No. 1: Introducing the New Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. *October 2014.*

No. 2: The City's Role. *December 2014.*

2015

No. 3: The Service Ethic. *February 2015.*

No. 4: Education that Works and Welcomes. *March 2015.*

No. 5: Putting Surrey on the Map. *June 2015.*

No. 6: Part Way There. *September 2015.*

2016

No. 7: Getting to Work. *January 2016.*

No. 8: Surrey & Syria. *March 2016.*

2017

* No. 9: Newcomer Youth Voices on Surrey LIP. *March 2017.*

* Denotes developed in 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Fact Sheets

2014

1. Who Are Surrey's Newcomers? *October 2014.*

2015

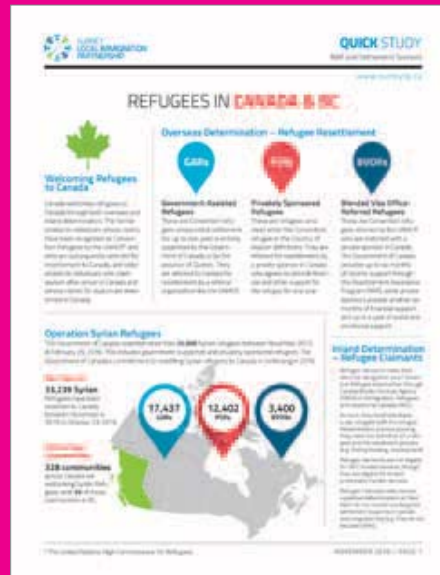
2. The Big Picture: Why Do Immigrants Matter to Surrey? *January 2015.*
3. Recent Changes to the Immigration Process and How They Affect You. *March 2015.*
4. Refugees in Canada and B.C. *March 2015.*
5. Surrey's New Settlement Services Map. *June 2015.*
6. How well are Immigrants being integrated? *September 2015.*

2016

7. Newcomers and Employers. *January 2016.*
8. Our Refugee Settlement Plan: Progress Report on Research and Consultations. *April 2016.*
9. Our Immigrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan. *April 2016.*
10. * Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for Refugees in BC. *November 2016.*
11. * True Colours of Surrey: Understanding Racism & Discrimination. *November 2016.*
12. * Refugees in Canada & BC. *November 2016.*
13. * Settlement Services to Newcomers in Surrey. *November 2016.*

2017

14. * Informal English Training in Surrey. *March 2017.*
15. * Business Sector Dialogues. *April 2017.*



SURREY LIP RESOURCES DEVELOPED 2014 - 2017

* Denotes developed in 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Booklets & Brochures

Welcome to Surrey brochure translated into Arabic. *Winter 2016.*

* We Are Surrey booklet: Stories of 18 Residents. *Fall 2016.*

* We Are Surrey: 9 posters to celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes. *Fall 2016.*

Web-based Resources

Online Map: Settlement Services in Surrey. *March 2015.*

* Online inventory: Anti-Racism Programs. *March 2017.*

* Online inventory: Funding Opportunities. *March 2017.*

* Online inventory: Ethnic Organizations and Professional Immigrant Networks. *March 2017.*

* Microsite: Employer Go2Resource. *March 2017.*

All resources are available at
www.surreylip.ca



Surrey LIP Project Team

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Ashleigh Rajala, Social Planning (Surrey LIP support)
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Margaret Jetelina, Jetediting
Nathalie Gagnon, Professor, KPU
Trevor Van Eerden, PEERS



“ I wanted to create a group whereby youth of Arab origins will be able to exhibit the beautiful and peaceful nature of our home cultures”

— **Ebraheem Abo-Korj**, a participant of the We Are Surrey campaign

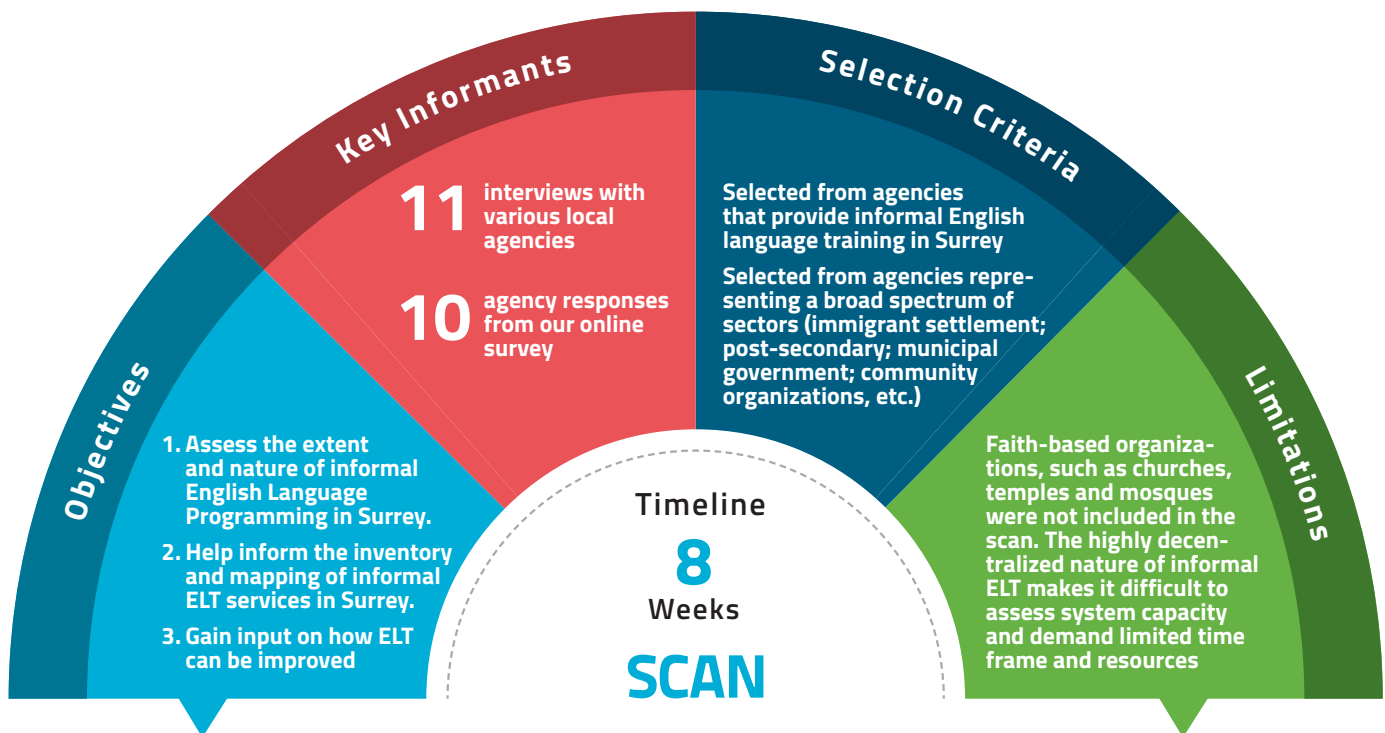


SURREYLIP.CA



Surrey Welcomes Refugees event, July 2016. Mayor Hepner and SFU-Surrey's Executive Director, Steve Dooley with the Ethar Organization youth.

INFORMAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING (ELT) IN SURREY



KEY FINDINGS

Agencies Identified

15

agencies were identified that deliver informal English language programming including immigrant settlement agencies, post-secondary, municipal government, school district, public libraries, and youth services.

Location

Like other immigrant settlement services, informal English language classes tend to be clustered in Newton, Whalley and Guildford

Types

50% are drop-in and 50% require advanced registration

Frequency

30-50 types of programs are offered on a weekly basis

Time of the Day

Available on most days both a.m. and p.m.

Class Size

5-15 students/class

Challenges

Monthly Attendance

A few hundred students (without considering faith-based organizations)

High Demand

Most agencies report "having a hard time keeping up with demand" for informal English language services

Attendance

The number of participants fluctuate considerably

Instruction

Difficult to find qualified people who can teach and attend to special needs

Literacy Levels

Challenging to address high need for informal English programming for English learners with low literacy

Value

Flexibility

Curriculums can be tailored to individual needs; no attendance requirements;

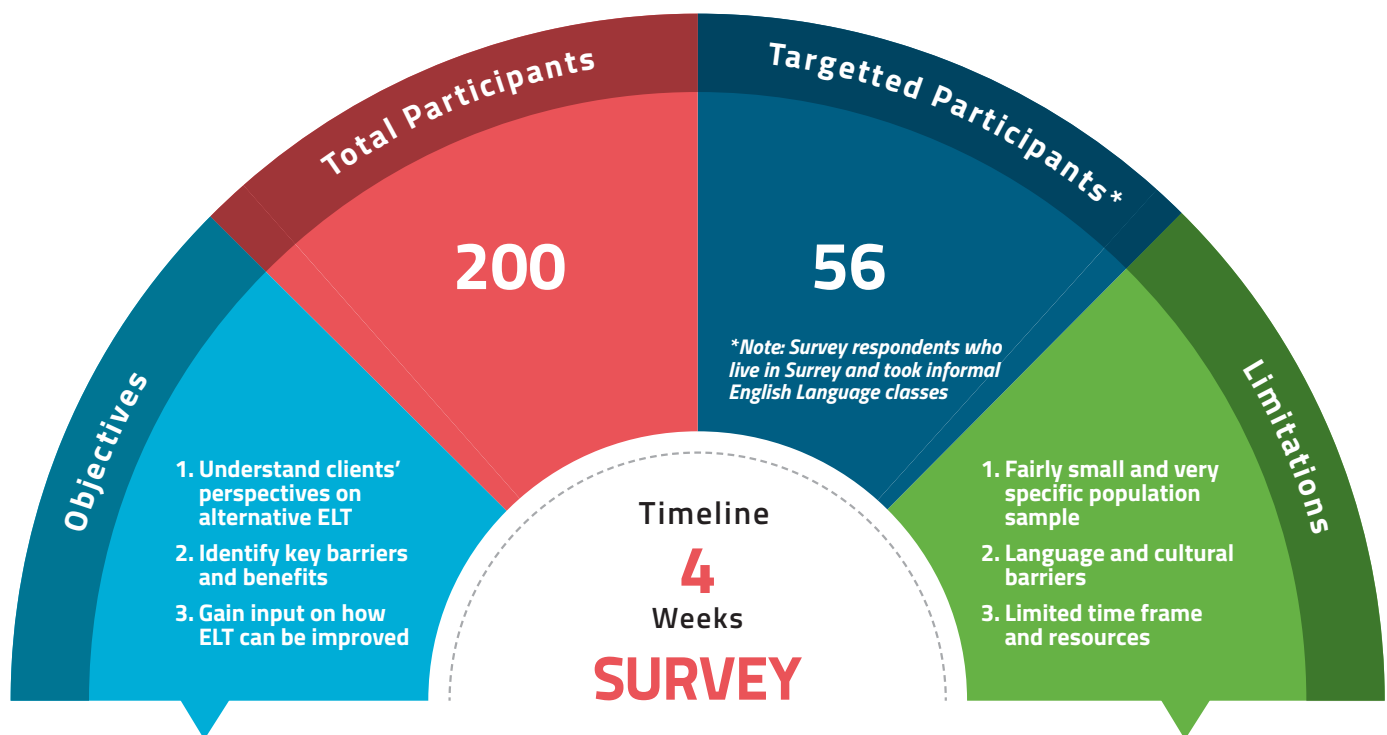
Cultural Sensitivity

Gender-specific classrooms; provide support in other languages; instructors are often familiar with cultures/languages

Classroom Size

Smaller classes; more opportunity for one-to-one learning

INFORMAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING (ELT) IN SURREY



KEY FINDINGS

■ Clients Identified

Refugees, family sponsored immigrants and women are more likely to access informal English language training than other newcomers.

■ Good News

Benefits

60% are "satisfied" with their progress and learning of English in Surrey

Participation

Every third respondent: participates both in informal ELT and LINC** classes

Attendance

Over 2/3 of respondents taking ELT have visited an authorized Language Assessment Centre

Top 4 Things People Like Best

1. Meet and socialize
2. Good instructors
3. Convenient location
4. Convenient hours

■ Challenges

High Demand

20% taking informal English language classes reported being on LINC waitlist

Among them 60% of refugee respondents are on waitlists

Long Waitlists

40% reported facing difficulty attending or signing for English language classes

Among them only 17% of skilled immigrants and 90% of refugee respondents

Top 3 Barriers

1. Long waitlists
2. Employment and work duties
3. Transportation

50% of refugees report "long-waitlists" as a main barrier for attending or signing up to English classes

■ Suggestions for Improvement by Survey Respondents

1. South Surrey needs more English language classes
2. Offer classes more often and tailor to different levels
3. Allocate more time for each session
4. Literacy levels

****LINC** – The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

TRUE COLOURS OF SURREY

UNDERSTANDING RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

Scan of Promising Community Models & Programs

The Aim of the Scan is Two-Fold

1. Identify existing initiatives in Surrey that help combat and address racism, and racial discrimination.
2. Identify programs and models outside of Surrey that can serve as examples and catalysts for expanding local community capacity.

Scan At-A-Grance

Over 50 initiatives were found with many serving more than one function (for example, the Fresh Voices refugee youth project with the Vancouver Foundation).

29 found in B.C. and 8 specific to Surrey.

Only 20 are confirmed to be still active and ongoing.

Types of Programs Identified



Status & Institutions

36 ACTIVE	14 GOVERNMENT	4 SCHOOL BOARD	2 POLICE
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Key Findings

1. There are a number of anti-racism initiatives in Surrey and the broader Metro Vancouver region, but not as many as initially expected.
2. For some initiatives, addressing racial discrimination and racism is but one goal among many others. Sometimes, it is only peripheral to the main mission of the project in question.
3. Anti-racism initiatives take many forms, ranging from annual events such as the Community March Against Racism, to longstanding initiatives such as AMSAA's Safe Harbour project.
4. The majority of initiatives, in Surrey and Metro Vancouver, focus on 'advocacy', 'education' and 'empowerment' with a strong emphasis on youth-related projects.
5. Only a small number of initiatives focus explicitly on providing support to victims of racism and/or racial discrimination.
6. Racism and racial discrimination tend to be framed as immigrant issues. Indigenous people tend to be overlooked in conversations about racism and/or racial discrimination.

About the Project

The True Colours of Surrey project aimed to better understand the issues of racism and discrimination in Surrey, highlight some of the promising community models in addressing these issues and engage local stakeholders in working together and exploring innovative approaches to address racism and discrimination in Surrey.

The one-year project was funded by the Province of British Columbia and led by the City of Surrey in partnership with the Surrey LIP Committee and True Colours of Surrey Working Group.

This fact sheet summarizes the findings from the online survey of local residents and from the scan of programs and models aimed to address racism and discrimination in Surrey and other jurisdictions.

Survey of Local Residents

The main goal of the survey was to expand our understanding of what kind of racism and discrimination incidents local residents are experiencing, where and why.

Who Are Survey Respondents?

Over 500 residents

have participated in the online survey that took place in June-July 2016

70% of respondents

were born in Canada, **30%** are immigrants

A majority of immigrants

surveyed have been in Canada for more than 10 years

23% are visible

minority (predominantly South Asians)

2% have

identified themselves as "Aboriginal Person"

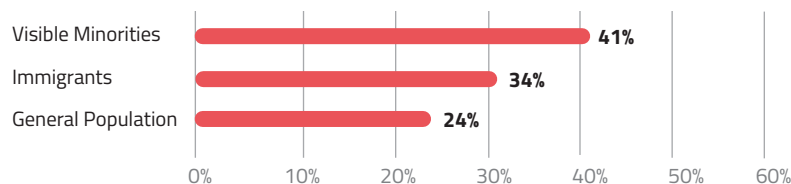
Only 4%

16-24 year old

Key Findings

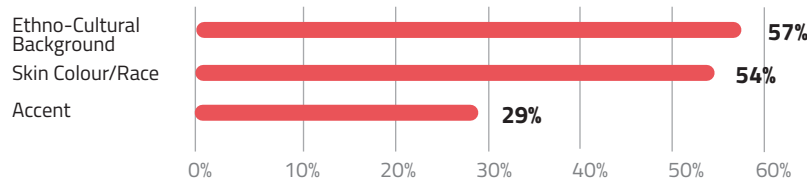
A significant percentage of people report witnessing (**80%**) or experiencing (**55%**) racism/discrimination in Surrey.

Percentage of respondents who experienced racism/discrimination often & sometimes:



Why?

The most common basis by which racism and/or racial discrimination is experienced/witnessed:

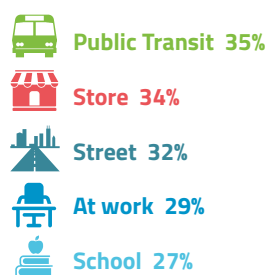


Where?

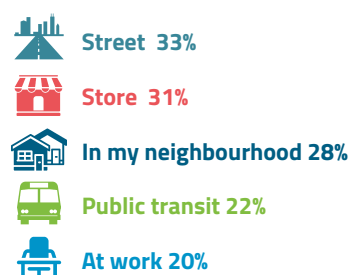
A significant segment of people surveyed (**27%**) experience racism/discrimination on public transit (more so than in other places).

Top 5 places where respondents experienced or witnessed racism/discrimination:

Visible minority



Non-visible minority



How?

- The most common institutional forms of racism/discrimination include:
 - receiving "poor customer service"
 - "unfair treatment in the workplace"
- The most common, non-institutional ways in which people experience or witness racism/discrimination are:
 - "stereotyping"
 - "unwelcome staring"
 - "name calling"

What is the impact?

- Impacts of racism/discrimination tend to be informal. Most notably, lacking a "sense of belonging in the community" (**33%** response rate), and interfering with "participation in community life" (**15%**).
- The overwhelming majority or respondents (**90%**) have no knowledge of services and programs that can help victims of racism/discrimination.

What are the solutions?

- The two top services to support victims that survey respondents were aware of were:
 - the BC Human Rights Tribunal
 - the RCMP

About **200** people provided feedback as to what would help address the racism and discrimination experienced or witnessed in Surrey. By far the most common suggestion is to:

- Educate more people about issues of racism/discrimination;
- Promote cultural awareness;
- Educate people about how to prevent racism/discrimination.

ABOUT THE SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

Established in 2014, Surrey LIP is led by the City of Surrey and governed by a committee drawn from 30 community organizations. The Surrey LIP works on making Surrey more welcoming and inclusive.

WE ARE SURREY



WE ARE SURREY

A campaign to celebrate Surrey's diversity and challenge perceptions

It is said that Surrey is one of the fastest growing cities in B.C., but the city is not just growing, it is evolving. It's a community of increasingly diverse people, cultures and religions. Some people are Canadian-born, others are immigrants, but all have chosen Surrey as their home. Surrey is an example of Canadian multiculturalism in action, where people from all walks of life, from all corners of the world, are becoming neighbours.

With this new reality can come certain challenges, however. Differences can lead to insecurity, misunderstandings and stereotypes.

Enter the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), a collaboration made up of 30 community organizations, working together to make the community welcoming and inclusive. It is this mandate that led to the development of the "We are Surrey" diversity campaign, featuring a selection of Surreyites from varying perspectives and backgrounds.

Their stories reveal that there is much more than meets the eye. And, despite first impressions, we all have a lot more in common than you'd think, in terms of personality traits, career ambitions, hobbies, lifestyle and love of family.

Combining print posters, social media and online articles, the Surrey LIP hopes to inspire dialogue and connection among all Surreyites by asking the question: "Who do you think we are?"

The answer?

We are all, in our own way: *caring, giving, strong, nurturing, ambitious, inspired, proud, resilient ...*

And, beyond that, we are *all* Surrey.

#WEARESURREY
www.SurreyLip.ca

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE AMBITIOUS

RANIA

BUSY DENTIST
SYRIAN FROM ABU DHABI
MARRIED WITH 2 KIDS
LOVES HIKING
BRYAN ADAMS' FAN



Wafa

BUSINESS OWNER
HOCKEY MOM
OF 3 DAUGHTERS
CAME FROM IRAQ
4 YEARS AGO
OUTDOORS
ENTHUSIAST
MEMBER OF THE
CITY'S SOCIAL
POLICY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

RANIA ATAIA**Dynamic Dentist**

The first thing non-Muslims might notice about Rania Ataia is her hijab — the head scarf traditionally worn by women of Muslim faith. Hijabs, often made of lovely colours and prints, aim to cover a woman's hair for modesty for religious and cultural reasons. In Arabic, hijab means "cover."

Rania says the hijab is "a part of my identity."

She's of Muslim faith, obviously, and of Syrian ethnicity, but born and raised in the cosmopolitan city of Abu Dhabi (UAE). In 2010, Rania, a dentist by profession, moved to Canada, sponsored by her new husband, Tammam Kbeili, who came to Canada as an international student and is now a leader on Vancouver's tech scene as founder of CodeCore. They met while he was visiting Abu Dhabi. "His roommate [at Dalhousie University] in Halifax was the fiancé of one of my friends," she says.

After they got married, Rania was excited to come to Canada, and re-establish herself as a dentist here. But she was aware that it was a challenge for internationally trained professionals like herself to start practising in licensed professions in Canada.

"I knew that it would be hard," she says. "After arriving in Canada, it took me 3 years to relicense as a dentist." Although she had studied dentistry in English, and passed the Canadian dental equivalency exam without having to go back to university, the Canadian system limits the number of internationally trained dentists accepted per year. "There might be hundreds of foreign dentists, but only a few get [their Canadian credentials]," she says.

Today, Rania is pleased with what she's achieved working for two dental clinics, one in the Guildford area of Surrey, one in Vancouver. "I work two-and-a-half days in Surrey and two-and-a-half days in Vancouver."

She also feels fortunate that the dental practice she works for in Surrey lets her support the recent community of Syrian refugees with access to dentistry services.



"People are very nice here. Surrey is very multicultural and my experiences have been good so far."

"People are very nice here," she says. "Surrey is very multicultural and my experiences have been good so far."

One day, Rania hopes to perhaps open her own practice, but with two young daughters at home, aged two and four, she is going to hold onto that ambition until they are in school full time.

"My husband already has his own business and is working long hours. So I'm going to wait a little bit for the kids to grow up more; I need him to help me more with the kids," she says with a laugh.

Rania is happy with her life as a busy Canadian working mother today. As she drives between her clinics, you might find her singing along to the gravelly vocals of her favourite singer, Vancouver native Bryan Adams, and when finished with a long day of work, she will come home and play with her beautiful daughters.

Rania's life as an ambitious and caring professional, wife and mom reads like the ultimate Canadian success story.

**BUSY DENTIST
SYRIAN FROM ABU DHABI
MARRIED WITH 2 KIDS
LOVES HIKING
BRYAN ADAMS' FAN**

Wafa Al-Jabiri

Entrepreneurial Mom

You could call Wafa Al-Jabiri your typical Canadian hockey mom. She’s used to getting up in the early hours of the morning to take her daughters to hockey practice. She cheers from the sidelines at games as her kids skate up and down the ice at the Surrey Sport and Leisure Complex, and enjoys chatting with the other parents on her team. It’s so Canadian!

And a very long way from Iraq. That’s where Wafa emigrated from under the skilled worker category with her husband and three daughters just three years ago in 2013.

The transition from an Arabic Muslim country like Iraq to Canada was not always as simple for Wafa and her family, however. For most newcomers to Canada, there is a lot of uncertainty about settlement, culture, language and the job hunting process after first landing. Both she and her husband had technology backgrounds, but neither had jobs lined up in Canada.

“My husband fortunately found a job in his field in IT after a few months,” says Wafa. But, between focusing on helping her three daughters adjust to their new life and school in Guildford, and taking classes herself to polish her English skills, Wafa’s path took a different turn.

It began with volunteering. “I started volunteering with community provider services helping newcomers and refugees in English conversation programs to improve their language.”

Wafa has since continued her volunteerism, with a focus on helping immigrants on a broader basis. “I am volunteering right now with Immigrant Advisory Roundtable, also with the Social Policy Advisory Committee of the City of Surrey, which provides advice to Surrey City Council to enhance the social well-being of Surrey residents,” she says. “I volunteered because I not only wanted to give back to my community, but also to create connections with people.”

Her immersion in the immigration realm as a volunteer led to a business idea focused on another group of migrants: international students. Suddenly, Wafa was an entrepreneur.

Her consulting business, Leadership Education



“I volunteered because I not only wanted to give back to my community, but also to create connections with people.”

Consulting, is a Canadian agent that offers educational services to students around the world who want to study at language schools and universities in Canada, U.S.A. and Spain.

“The whole journey of launching my business was challenging and exciting. I had a good network in the Middle East that helped me to promote Canadian education overseas,” she says.

Entrepreneurship has become an essential part of who Wafa is, so when asked to describe herself, it’s not surprising the word “ambitious” comes up. Entrepreneurial dreams are even part of her downtime: she loves being inspired by watching *Dragons’ Den*.

When not on the go, you might find Wafa recharging in the beautiful outdoors; Tynehead Regional Park is her favourite spot. But the people she meets are what make Surrey such a welcoming place for Wafa: “I like the diversity in Surrey. I find people so nice and helpful. When my kids started playing hockey, I had no idea about the equipment or even the game. I found huge support from the other parents who were very helpful.”

**BUSINESS OWNER
HOCKEY MOM OF 3 DAUGHTERS
CAME FROM IRAQ 4 YEARS AGO
OUTDOORS ENTHUSIAST
MEMBER OF THE CITY’S SOCIAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE CARING

AMRIK

DOTING DAD

OF SIKH FAITH

**WORKS HARD AT
TWO JOBS**

PIZZA LOVER

**RECEIVED 2014
CARING CANADIAN
VOLUNTEER AWARD**

DAVID

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

**HELPS CHILDREN
AND SENIORS**

PLAYS GUITAR

**DEDICATED TO
COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**CO-FOUNDED
SURREY INTERFAITH
COUNCIL**

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

AMRIK SINGH AULAKH

Caring about the Community

Surrey’s Newton neighbourhood is a popular choice for Sikh immigrants from the Punjab region of India, and Amrik Singh Aulakh is among those who have chosen to call this area home. Upon first meeting Amrik, you’ll notice his brightly coloured turban, long beard and often serious expression. But look beyond, and you’ll see the warmth in his eyes, the caring in his heart, and the desire to reach out beyond his Indian community to make Surrey a better place for all. Amrik is so much more than initially meets the eye.

Amrik has been in Canada — and Surrey specifically — since 1991, giving the simple answer that he came here from India for “a better life.” He’s been working hard ever since, as a full-time operations worker for the Richmond School Board and more recently as a part-time insurance advisor with Westland Insurance Group. He starts his day in insurance mode, from 9 a.m. to noon, heads home for lunch — pizza is his favourite! — before leaving for his full-time job. Most nights, he comes home close to midnight.

Amrik is determined to make a good life for his family. At age 50, he is a busy parent of a toddler and loving every minute of it, enjoying showing his three-year-old daughter his favourite local spots like the Cloverdale Rodeo. His goal is to raise her to be a strong, smart and happy girl.

While there are often impressions that girls are undervalued in Indian culture, Amrik’s devotion to his daughter proves that stereotype doesn’t apply here. On his nightstand, you can even find his favourite book — *I am Malala*, which follows the journey of the brave Pakistani girl who was shot for fighting for the rights of girls.

Life gets hectic, juggling two careers and raising a child, but Amrik is committed to making Surrey more welcoming and safe for all. He has dedicated thousands of hours to volunteering, primarily in the area of crime and safety, including as a Surrey RCMP Auxiliary



“I am always eager to help those who need some support, I believe that you must not give up; only work hard toward your goals and you will be successful.”

**DOTING DAD
OF SIKH FAITH
WORKS HARD AT
TWO JOBS
PIZZA LOVER
RECEIVED 2014 CARING
CANADIAN VOLUNTEER
AWARD**

Constable, and a volunteer with the Surrey Crime Prevention Society.

“No one wants to live in a troubled neighbourhood. I want my city to be a safe and better place to live in,” says Amrik, who received the Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award (2014). “Be the change you want to see in the world” said Gandhi,” he says as the reason behind his volunteerism.

While Aulakh admits he has faced discrimination in his volunteering efforts, recollecting how one of his volunteer co-ordinators openly doubted his ability to pass the training, it has only made him more determined to do good. “Professionalism, patience and dedication are all qualities that helped me to overcome these challenges,” he says.

“I am always eager to help those who need some support,” he adds. “I believe that you must not give up; only work hard toward your goals and you will be successful.”

And for him, Surrey is the perfect place to fulfill his dreams. “Surrey has diversity and is the best place to live and work.”

DAVID DALLEY

Connecting People of Diverse Faiths in Surrey

Canadian-born David Dalley wants to help connect people of different faiths in Surrey. As co-founder of the Surrey Interfaith Council, David cares about bringing people together, and ensuring the community of Surrey — specifically Newton — where he’s lived for 14 years, is a welcoming and harmonious place to live for all.

The goal of the Surrey Interfaith Council is to create respect and understanding among different religious and spiritual communities, through education, making connections and demonstrating compassion and social justice.

That’s no easy task. As world events show, religious differences can be a divisive force. But in a country like Canada that is committed to multiculturalism and religious freedom, it’s imperative that bridges are built between people of different faiths. And that’s what David, who defines himself as a Humanist Unitarian, hopes to do.

“I am drawn to people and projects that create a safe space for all of us to work collaboratively across differences of race, culture, power and status,” he says.

Despite his desire to effect positive change, David understands that the issues are complex, that systemic racism exists, and that, as a Caucasian male, he is coming from a place of privilege.

He remembers a pivotal moment that put this into perspective for him. “I was talking to an acquaintance who is a visible minority who was encountering difficulties in organizing a community event. She attributed the difficulty she was having to racism and people not wanting to work with her because of her ethnic background. She said, ‘But you are white, so you wouldn’t understand.’”

David wasn’t sure how to react.

“There is truth to this in that no one can fully understand the experience of another, especially across cultural and racial differences.



“I am drawn to people and projects that create a safe space for all of us to work collaboratively across differences of race, culture, power and status.”

However, the comment seemed to say that my ideas were of less value and I felt that it limited possibilities for dialogue and trust-building rather than to build them up. While I know that we do not all share the same experiences, I want to understand the experiences of others as much as I can. I am grateful for people that invite me into their stories and perspectives in ways that allow us to work more effectively toward justice and equality.”

David, who is a physiotherapist by profession, cares deeply about making a difference in his community. Through his work, he strives to improve the health of kids and seniors.

David, a dedicated family man who loves spending time with his kids, is also a leading volunteer with two other Surrey organizations: Village Surrey Transition Initiative and the Friends of the Grove.

Based on all of his experiences and efforts, David says he sees Surrey as a community in transition, with people from all corners of the globe trying to understand how they fit together.

**PHYSIOTHERAPIST
HELPS CHILDREN
AND SENIORS
PLAYS GUITAR
DEDICATED TO
COMMUNITY SERVICE
CO-FOUNDED SURREY
INTERFAITH COUNCIL**

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE GIVING

MAINU

HAILS FROM
SOUTH AFRICA

HEADHUNTED TO
CANADA 8 YEARS AGO

FINANCIAL MANAGER

SPEAKS ENGLISH
AND AFRIKAANS
(DUTCH)

DIRECTOR OF
MUSLIM FOOD BANK
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

JEFF

CHARTERED
PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANT

GREAT-GREAT
GRANDFATHER WAS
FROM SCOTLAND

WORLD TRAVELLER

FAVOURITE CITY
IS BARCELONA

CHAIR OF SURREY
CARES COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

MAINU AHMED

Giving Businessman

When you meet Mainu Ahmed, you'll notice a few things right away. He is a bundle of energy, wrapped in a stylish suit, and topped off with a quick grin. You may also think that he is of South Asian origin. But, when he introduces himself, you hear a surprising lilt to his English. The quick-to-assume might say his accent is "British," which is an easy guess given the colonial history between Britain and India. But pay closer attention, and you'll recognize his sophisticated twang is actually of South African origin.

"Well, perhaps it's a little mixed now, as my wife is from England!" he says with a chuckle, adding that he also speaks Afrikaans (Dutch) and a smattering of German, but no Punjabi or Hindi.

Mainu was, in fact, born in South Africa, a country that Canadians may not typically associate with a large Indian population. But, for Mainu, growing up in the African country as a second-generation Muslim South Asian was his everyday normal.

While Mainu did his post-secondary studies overseas in the U.K. and Germany, he never expected to emigrate from South Africa on a permanent basis, let alone to Canada. But when an opportunity came knocking from a headhunter in Canada for the accounting professional with retail expertise eight years ago, he decided to give it a chance.

"I was internationally recruited by Best Buy Canada to their head office in Burnaby, to lead their operational accounting team," says Mainu, who also has a post-graduate diploma in management from the University of Cape Town.

Mainu, who had built a solid career in financial management with Woolworths in Cape Town, decided to give Canada a shot, and made the move with his wife, and their two children.

Mainu's skills were quickly put to use first at Best Buy and then at Great-West Life, where he currently leads a team of 20 staff. "My key strengths are people leadership, motivation and staff development," he says.

The generous Panorama Ridge resident has



"One of my passions has always been to support the uplifting of the community I live in."

also utilized his expertise to give back to his new community. "One of my passions has always been to support the uplifting of the community I live in," he says. "Since moving to Canada, I have been involved as the director of the Muslim Food Bank Community Services/ASPIRE."

The Muslim Food Bank distributes food hampers that cater to specific dietary needs; all food items are halal (produced in accordance with Islamic law), and most of the clients are refugees or new immigrants. To complement the food hamper program, the Muslim Food Bank adopted Mainu's brainchild, ASPIRE Community Services, which helps food bank clients take the next steps to integrate into Canada.

**HAILS FROM SOUTH AFRICA
HEADHUNTED TO CANADA 8 YEARS AGO
FINANCIAL MANAGER
SPEAKS ENGLISH AND AFRIKAANS (DUTCH)
DIRECTOR OF MUSLIM FOOD BANK COMMUNITY SERVICES**

"During the past year, the Muslim Food Bank has been closely involved with the resettlement of hundreds of Syrian refugee families into Surrey," he says. "I have been thrilled by the great compassion and generosity shown by the Surrey community in welcoming the Syrian newcomers — from the large number of donations to the volunteer support in our community support programs."

JEFF HECTOR

Legacy in Action

Canada is called a nation of immigrants, because unless you're of Aboriginal origin, you can trace the generation that your ancestors "immigrated" to the New World. For Surreyite Jeff Hector, that generation was pre-Confederation.

"It was my great, great-grandfather who came over. He was born in Scotland and then was educated in England," says Jeff. "He was a lawyer in Toronto, a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada in the mid-1800s."

That would have been a prominent position for his ancestor, John Hector. In fact, he was a bencher — a member of the society's board of directors — at the same time as John A. MacDonald — another Scottish-born immigrant whom we all know as the first Prime Minister of Canada!

Coming from such a long lineage in Canada, Toronto-born Jeff is proud of his country and particularly his adopted community of Surrey, in which he has resided for 24 years. A chartered professional accountant (CPA) working as a senior wealth advisor with the Legacy Family Office at Assante Financial Management, Jeff uses his financial knowledge to better his city through philanthropy.

He devotes countless volunteer hours as the chair of SurreyCares Community Foundation, a member of the Community Foundations of Canada, which strives to build a resilient and resourceful community. Otherwise known as a "charity for charities," the foundation raises contributions to a community endowment, money that is then used to offer grants to fund community causes and charitable programs.

Jeff had been looking for giving opportunities for his legacy clients when he first heard about SurreyCares. It was a fledgling foundation at the time, and Jeff stepped in to help lead the non-profit organization to new growth. Its endowment fund has risen from its initial \$200,000 in 1992 to \$4 million today.

Jeff has always focused his giving efforts locally. When his four children were school-aged, he co-founded Southridge School. Jeff served on the school's board for six years, and as its chair



"It was my great, great-grandfather who came over. He was born in Scotland and then lived in England."

**CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT
GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS FROM SCOTLAND
WORLD TRAVELLER
FAVOURITE CITY IS BARCELONA
CHAIR OF SURREY CARES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

for three. With a slogan of "We Are All ONE," the school aims to foster a sense of belonging and caring for others, and teaches its students to build community wherever they go in life.

One of his sons went to live and work in Cambodia, and it's become one of travel-loving Jeff's favourite places to visit. Jeff talks avidly about the history and the sites he visited there, including the Temple at Angkor Wat, which is a UNESCO Heritage Site, and a film site for the Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom movie.

Living in such a multicultural city as Surrey, Jeff has a keen interest in other countries and cultures. Now that he and his wife are empty nesters, they definitely have more flexibility to travel and explore other cultures. Spain and Italy were two other favourite spots.

Next on his list of travels? France, Germany, Austria, Belgium and the home of his ancestors, Scotland.

"Soon!" Jeff says, enthusiastically. But he will always return to his favourite place of all — his home, Surrey.

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE INSPIRED

ZHAN-ZHAN

BORN IN CHINA

AWESOME 13-YEAR-OLD

DOES COMPUTER
PROGRAMMING FOR FUN

RECEIVED A
COMMUNITY GRANT

ORGANIZED SUMMER
BASKETBALL FOR
COMMUNITY KIDS



EBRAHEEM

PALESTINIAN-
SYRIAN REFUGEE

LEFT SYRIA ON HIS
OWN AT 18

WANTS TO GIVE BACK
TO CANADA

RECEIVED A
COMMUNITY GRANT

FORMED A PEER GROUP
FOR ARABIC YOUTH
IN SURREY

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

ZHAN-ZHAN GE

One Awesome Kid

Zhan-Zhan Ge doesn't remember much about his time in China; he was just two years old when his parents decided to immigrate to Canada. But the now 13-year-old understands that, "they moved here because they wanted me to live in a better environment."

The family chose to live in Surrey, and Zhan-Zhan says he feels right at home. Now in Grade 9 at Fleetwood Park Secondary School, he adds that he has never experienced any real racism. He can recount only one account of bullying in his life: "One day I wore pink pants to school and got picked on," he says.

If that's the only moment of bullying he can remember, Zhan-Zhan is well ahead of many other kids. It could be because he is well-liked and positive, or that he's just plain awesome (at seven years old, he gave himself the moniker of Zhan-Zhan the Awesome, and it still sticks!)

These days, a more mature Zhan-Zhan defines himself as curious and intellectual. He is definitely a little more inspired than many youth his age. While he enjoys playing video games as much as the next kid, he might be one of only a handful who actually started teaching himself computer programming to improve his game. "I taught myself modding for Minecraft through Javascript," he says.

It's not his computer programming skills that are most impressive, however; it's the way he engages with other youth, his neighbours and the community at large.

At just 10 years old — just 10! — he planned a community event called Diversity in Art. "I just had an idea to show art from different cultures," he says. "My mom told me about a program where you apply for a grant to make the community a better place." So, with his mom Mary's guidance, he applied for a Neighbourhood Small Grant from the Vancouver Foundation. These small grants of up to \$500 aim to build community at the neighbourhood level.

With the grant, he rented the clubhouse in his townhouse complex and set up different



"My mom told me about a program where you apply for a grant to make the community a better place."

**BORN IN CHINA
AWESOME 13-YEAR-OLD
DOES COMPUTER PROGRAMMING FOR FUN
RECEIVED A COMMUNITY GRANT
ORGANIZED SUMMER BASKETBALL FOR COMMUNITY KIDS**

stations featuring art from various cultures. The industrious boy printed up flyers and handed them out among his neighbours and fellow students. "We had a lot of people coming in. Most of them were kids, with some parents, too," he says. "I feel kind of good about helping out the community."

In the last three years, he went on to apply for several other grants for more of his inspired ideas, and, most recently, Zhan-Zhan became a mentor in the grant process. He helped a friend who had an idea for a community basketball program to co-apply for a grant.

"My friend wanted to see younger, elementary kids learn basketball," says Zhan-Zhan. "We mostly did games and some drills to sharpen their skills."

Soccer is Zhan-Zhan's preferred sport, however, and he plays with the Surrey United Soccer Club. In school, IT and science are his favourite subjects. "I want to be an electrical engineer when I grow up," he says.

There's no doubt that Zhan-Zhan will work hard to achieve any goals he has in the future.

EBRAHEEM ABO-KORJ

Inspired to Action

The arrival of 25,000 government-sponsored Syrian refugees to Canada between December 2016 and February 2016 raised much debate about whether it was the right thing to do, about the Syrians' Islamic faith and the country's ability to handle this influx of new immigrants. Most of the refugees also didn't speak any English. So how would they integrate? Would they be happy to become Canadian?

To help answer some of these questions, they could have looked at the examples of Syrian refugees who had already arrived in Canada months prior. One of them is Palestinian-Syrian Ebraheem Abo-Korj.

He's a motivated youth who is learning English and working hard to give back to his new community of Surrey.

"I left Syria in the beginning of 2013 escaping the war to Lebanon, where my asylum seeking journey started," he says. "I stayed in Lebanon for nine months until I decided to leave to Malaysia. There I stayed for two years until my Palestinian travel document expired and I was detained by the Malaysian authorities and told that I was to be deported back to Syria, where it was likely that I would face torture and possibly be killed."

Ebraheem spent 62 days detained in the airport in Malaysia, not knowing where to go or where he belonged. "This is when the UNHCR [The UN Refugee Agency] stepped in and notified me that I would be leaving to Canada as an asylum seeker."

He landed in October 2015. "When I got to Canada, I was able to sleep at night and have a sense of security that I haven't felt for a long time," he says. "I was at peace knowing that I was far moved from war, torture and death."

He made a promise to himself and his new community that he would show his gratitude by giving back to Canada. "I will give back to Canada as much as it has given me, especially that sense of security that I was not able to feel elsewhere," he says.



"I wanted to create a group whereby youth of Arab origins will be able to exhibit the beautiful and peaceful nature of our home cultures"

Despite still learning English and settling in himself, Ebraheem was inspired to start giving back as soon as possible. He decided to form a group for other Arabic-speaking youth like himself to support and learn from each other, and to connect with their Surrey neighbours.

"I wanted to create a group whereby youth of Arab origins will be able to exhibit the beautiful and peaceful nature of our home cultures," he says.

Ebraheem learned about the Neighbourhood Small Grant program from the Vancouver Foundation, which provides small grants of up to \$500 for community-building projects, and he successfully applied and launched the Ehar Organization group.

It's a small first step for Ebraheem, but one that foretells many good things to come from this young refugee in the coming years. "I long for the day that I get my Canadian citizenship, because it is this country in the whole world that has given me back my sense of humanity and dignity."

PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN REFUGEE

LEFT SYRIA ON HIS OWN AT 18

WANTS TO GIVE BACK TO CANADA

RECEIVED A COMMUNITY GRANT

FORMED A PEER GROUP FOR ARABIC YOUTH IN SURREY

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE MARRIED

JENYA

BORN IN RUSSIA

AUTO TECHNICIAN

A BIT OF A PERFECTIONIST

LOVES MAKING AND EATING BREAD

MET WIFE ON MEDITATION RETREAT IN INDIA



MADHURIMA

MOM OF 2 TEEN BOYS

LAWYER IN INDIA

CAN SPEAK RUSSIAN

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR

TEACHES SAHAJA YOGA MEDITATION

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

**MADHURIMA AND JENYA
MARYCHEV**

**Love, Marriage
and Meditation**

When people of different cultures live together in a multicultural country like Canada, there will no doubt be a few who fall in love. That happened to Madhurima and Jenya Marychev, although their love story began long before they immigrated to Canada.

In fact, they first met in Madhurima's homeland of India at a meditation retreat. Madhurima, a lawyer, and Jenya, a successful heavy duty machinery businessman from Russia, were both practitioners of Sahaja Yoga meditation, a unique method of meditation based on an experience called self-realization (kundalini awakening).

Seeing beyond their different races, cultures and languages, Madhurima and Jenya connected over their meditation practice and fell in love.

Madhurima joined him in Russia in 1997. "In those days we had broken many cultural barriers and taboos," she says. "Indian people did not trust someone outside the culture to be married."

But the couple followed their hearts, got married and started a family, blending their two cultures. They have two sons, one with a Western name, Gabriel (now 17), and one with an Indian one, Chaytanya (now 15).

Fortunately, in Russia, they didn't face many challenges as an interracial couple. "When people found out I was from India, we were always welcomed," she recalls.

But Madhurima had to make a lot of adjustments, including learning the Russian language. "I had to adapt to the language and culture of the country," she says.

Reciprocally, Jenya started learning more about her Indian culture, finding a deep appreciation for its music. (These days, you can find him learning and playing Indian classical music on a tabla and harmonium.)



**MOM OF 2 TEEN BOYS
LAWYER IN INDIA
CAN SPEAK RUSSIAN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATOR
TEACHES SAHAJA
YOGA MEDITATION**

"Canada was also country of choice for me as it enjoys one of the highest standards of living. I also wanted to educate my children in English."

**MADHURIMA AND JENYA
MARYCHEV**

Love, Marriage and Meditation cont.

But something for the family was missing in Russia — the Maryshevs wanted a modern, multicultural setting in which to raise their children.

In 2005, moving to Canada was the answer.

“We moved to Canada in search for a better social life where cultures of the world unite,” says Jenya. “I enjoy being surrounded by people from a different culture than mine.”

Madhurima adds: “Canada was also country of choice for me as it enjoys one of the highest standards of living,” Madhurima says. “I was also wanted to educate my children in English.”

They found their home in Surrey, now living in a duplex in Fleetwood.

“With Canada being so multicultural, there was no barrier at all for us,” Madhurima says of their integration. “People are usually delighted to find out that we are an interracial couple.”

On the career front, Madhurima decided not to go through the many hoops to relicense as a lawyer in Canada. Instead she chose a path as an early childhood educator. “I work with preschool-aged children who are just starting to speak and understand the world around them,” she says.

Jenya is an automotive service technician with Murray GM, building on his electrician and automotive background from Russia.

Outside of work and family responsibilities, the couple stay connected through their shared commitment to Sahaja Yoga. They volunteer with the Vishwa Nirmal Dharma Education Society, where she gives free meditation classes, and he helps promote the practice.

“Our life is firstly dedicated to the culture of the spirit. We believe that we need to connect to our inner being, therefore practising Sahaja Yoga together gives us immense pleasure,” says Madhurima.



**BORN IN RUSSIA
AUTO TECHNICIAN
A BIT OF A
PERFECTIONIST
LOVES MAKING AND
EATING BREAD
MET WIFE ON
MEDITATION RETREAT
IN INDIA**

“We moved to Canada in search for a better social life where cultures of the world unite. I enjoy being surrounded by people from a different culture than mine.”

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE NURTURING



SILVIA

BORN IN ARGENTINA
PROUD OF HER 2 SONS
CAREER AND LIFE COACH
GROWS OWN VEGGIES
SUSTAINABLE
FOOD ADVOCATE

MUNA

SOMALIAN-BORN,
OTTAWA-RAISED
SINGLE MOTHER TO 4 KIDS
READS SHAKESPEARE
LOVES TO COOK
HELPS NEWCOMERS
FIND HOMES

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

SILVIA DI BLASIO

Nurturer by Nature

Silvia Di Blasio is a powerhouse of knowledge about living a sustainable, authentic life. She has credentials on a myriad of topics from permaculture to food sovereignty to community resilience to emergency preparedness.

Silvia is what you might call an engaged citizen. Her motivation? Making the planet, her country and her community of Surrey, a better place for all. "I'm passionate about truly sustainable and simple living," says the Argentinean-born mother of two boys.

On evenings and weekends you might find her running a workshop on pickling vegetables, helping people to prepare for emergencies or working in the community garden she co-ordinates for the Surrey/White Rock Food Action Coalition. "I grow most of my vegetables and all my herbs at home and experiment with making my own cheese, yogurt, bread, fermented foods, vinegars, soaps ... you name it!"

All her community work is in addition to her day job as a certified career practitioner with Immigrant Services Society of B.C. "I help people in their career planning and job searching as well as thinking outside the box to create their own jobs or going solo as entrepreneurs," she says.

This inspired community builder has come a long way since first arriving in Canada in 2004, with no job, almost no English, no connections and no prospects.

"My first two days were spent inside a basement with my kids. I was scared of going outside!" she admits. "All that I do today wouldn't be possible if I didn't have the amazing love and support of my partner."

Silvia, who had experience in adult education and training, started looking for work soon after arriving, but to no avail.

With her teaching experience, she decided to open a family daycare, allowing her to be at home for her own young children as well. "However, the feelings of isolation and frustration didn't go away. I started to feel really old and thought my career and professional



"I believe that what we do for a living ('career') is deeply attached to 'life,' which includes values, ethics, intentions, relationships, causes and communities."

life were over. Not talking to adults all day long and the lack of separation between work and home took a toll on my health."

When her youngest started school, she closed the daycare and started looking for jobs. But, again, she didn't have much luck. "When it didn't work as expected, I decided to go to a career planning workshop that saved my life. There, looking at the facilitators and counsellors, I saw myself. My goals of social justice and empowering people could now be achieved through a slightly different role. And I became an employment counsellor."

As she coaches new immigrants to re-establish their careers in Canada, she uses all her perspectives to help them find the fulfillment she has achieved for herself, with what she calls the "right livelihood."

**BORN IN ARGENTINA
PROUD OF HER 2 SONS
CAREER AND LIFE COACH
GROWS OWN VEGGIES
SUSTAINABLE
FOOD ADVOCATE**

"I believe that what we do for a living ('career') is deeply attached to 'life,' which includes values, ethics, intentions, relationships, causes and communities. Our careers shouldn't be disconnected to who we are or are called to be." As her Ethical Pathways coaching services motto says: "Let your life be your message."

MUNA AMIR

Surmounting Struggle

To look at Muna Amir, you might not guess that she was born in Somalia. “When I talk in Somali, people often look confused. They ask, ‘You’re Somali, really?’” She is, in fact, part of the African country’s Arabic ethnic minority population from the city of Mogadishu.

But she has actually lived in Canada for most of her life. “I came to Ottawa when I was 15 as a refugee,” says Muna. “During the war in Somalia, my family got separated, and I came to Canada with my grandmother.”

Muna came with very little formal education — “because of the war, we had to move around a lot” — and no English skills. “I struggled a lot when I came to Canada, especially in high school because of the language,” she says. “My grandma was trying her best to help me, but it was tough.”

Muna had dreams of going to university and working with newcomers, but her life path veered into a different direction. She got married and had four children — Amira, 11, Ahlam, 9, Aadil, 8, and Adnan, 6. She found work at a local Tim Hortons in Ottawa to help support her family. But she had to apply to five Tim Hortons locations before she got hired. “They said no to me wearing the hijab while working,” she says, referring to the head covering she wears according to Islamic religious teachings. “Finally, one location had a manager from Iran who understood.”

But Muna wanted more out of life, and she and her husband decided to move to B.C. for new opportunities and to be closer to her parents and siblings who had found their way to Portland, Oregon, from Somalia.

Muna started looking for a new job here in Surrey, but then faced yet another daunting struggle: her husband left her.

She was now an out-of-work single mother living in a city she didn’t know. “I didn’t know where to turn. But, finally, I gathered myself and started to build a life,” she says.

She did some volunteering doing Arabic



“I understand what newcomers go through. I was once struggling in my life, too.”

and Somali interpretation for a settlement organization. “The manager there told me I was talented and that I should get paid for my work,” she recalls. “Sometimes you just need someone to tell you how talented you are and that you can do this.”

She later volunteered with the Somali Youth Association of B.C. and the Muslim Food Bank in Surrey, which trained her as a case worker, and her dreams of a career as an immigrant settlement worker came that much closer. When a position opened up at Immigrant Services Society of B.C. as a house search worker, everything came full circle. Muna was hired.

“I understand what newcomers go through,” she says of her suitability for the job. “I was once struggling in my life, too.”

**SOMALIAN-BORN,
OTTAWA-RAISED
SINGLE MOTHER TO 4 KIDS
READS SHAKESPEARE
LOVES TO COOK
HELPS NEWCOMERS
FIND HOMES**

While juggling being a single mother and having a career is no easy feat, Muna has created a very special life for her family in North Surrey. They play a lot of games together, visit the city’s many parks and enjoy baking cookies and cakes together. “The kids love all that sweet stuff,” she says with a smile.

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE PROUD

GARY

FILIPINO

46-YEAR-OLD
COLLEGE STUDENT

ADORES HIS SHIH TZU
POODLE, GUCCII

PINOY PRIDE
VANCOUVER CO-CHAIR

MR. GAY SURREY 2015

ALEX

BORN IN ENGLAND

HAS 2 MASTER'S
DEGREES

SOCIAL WORKER

LOVES THE MOVIE
GLADIATOR

FOUNDER OF LGBTQ
SUPPORT GROUP,
SHER VANCOUVER

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

ALEX SANGHA

Point of Pride

It isn't easy to be "out" in a traditionally conservative culture. Indo-Canadian Alex Sangha is all-too familiar with the stigma that can come with it, but he hasn't let it stop him from proudly sharing his story and advocating for the LGBTQ community. In fact, it has inspired him to found Sher Vancouver, a social, cultural and support group for LGBTQ South Asians and their friends and families.

"With Sher, we would like to help bring about more acceptance and cross-cultural understanding surrounding LGBTQ issues including bullying, racism, homophobia and transphobia. We hope to reduce the alienation, isolation, loneliness, depression and suicidal ideation of people dealing with sexuality, gender and coming-out issues," says Alex, a Sikh Punjabi who was born in England and raised in Canada, specifically Surrey, since the age of five.

Alex says his experiences overcoming discrimination in his own life, including some tough years being bullied as a teenager, has led him to become an advocate for others. "It was hard for me to come out of the closet [in my community]. And, as a person of colour, I used to feel like an outsider in the mainstream gay-lesbian community as well," says Sangha, who was the first Sikh to ever be a grand marshal at the Vancouver Pride Parade this past summer. "But I feel that if you give back and help others, then you reap rewards of positive energy, positive feedback, and an intrinsic feeling of health and wellness."

That belief explains why he chose the profession of social work, which demands the compassion to understand others and the courage to fight passionately on their behalf. Alex has plenty of both qualities, displaying it both in his work as a registered clinical social worker with Fraser Health Authority and his LGBTQ advocacy.

"I felt it was necessary to make the most of my opportunities in Canada and fight for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed," says Sangha, who earned two master's degrees, one in public administration and public policy from the London School of Economics and the other in social work from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.



"I felt it was necessary to make the most of my opportunities in Canada and fight for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed."

"I have my grandfather's spirit in me," Alex adds. "My grandfather spent his whole life helping South Asian immigrants in England settle in that country. My mother was also devoted to giving back because it was a tenet of her Sikh faith. And I learned values of caring, sharing and collective goodwill through my career as a social worker."

His current professional focus is on working with seniors with dementia, Alzheimer's and mental health concerns.

Alex is also an avid writer on social issues, including blogging for Huffington Post – B.C. Edition, and writing non-fiction books, including his latest called Catalyst.

After a busy week of work, writing and advocacy, you'll likely find Alex relaxing in his chic Surrey Central condo or opening up his space to host a party for his friends.

Beyond his own four walls, Alex considers Surrey his home. "Surrey is an example to the rest of the world on how to live with people of all backgrounds, religions, and races," he says.

**BORN IN ENGLAND
HAS 2 MASTER'S DEGREES
SOCIAL WORKER
LOVES THE MOVIE
GLADIATOR
FOUNDER OF LGBTQ
SUPPORT GROUP,
SHER VANCOUVER**

GARY LISING

Pinoy and Proud

When Gary Lising was named Mr. Gay Surrey of 2015, only three years after moving to the city in 2012, he couldn't have been prouder. It was a joyful moment of celebration crowning many years of advocating for the LGBTQ population, specifically among his Filipino community.

Gary is a founding member and co-chair of Pinoy Pride Vancouver, a social support group started in 2011 for Filipinos who are LGBTQ. It is, in fact, the first Filipino-Canadian gay and lesbian group in B.C.

Gary helped form the group to support understanding and acceptance of LGBTQ people in a community known for its traditional family values and strong Catholic foundation. Over its five-year history, the group has become a safe place and advocate for gay Filipinos, whether first-generation Canadians or immigrants, who have faced cultural backlash because of their sexual orientation.

Born in the Philippines, Gary was only four years old when his own family came to Canada. "When they knew I had some gay, feminine attributes when I was growing up here in Canada, they really went after that, correcting those behaviours," Gary says about some of his relatives back home.

Despite the stigma, a Gary came out as gay in his 20s, and quickly began advocating for others, including on the radio as a host with Vancouver Co-op Radio, in addition to launching Pinoy Pride Vancouver.

"We do have many supporters in the Filipino community, whom we treasure," says Gary, who lives with his loving partner and their Shia Tzu poodle, Guccii, in a condo in Whalley. "We promote acceptance and inclusiveness, and the support we receive shows that our community is ready to recognize and embrace diversity."

Gary's experience in LGBTQ social activism has not only been a profound personal journey, but it has given him inspiration to



"I have seen people from diverse backgrounds like myself spearhead change and address social challenges. Immigrants will continuously help grow this country."

**FILIPINO
46-YEAR-OLD
COLLEGE STUDENT
ADORES HIS SHIH TZU
POODLE, GUCCII
PINOY PRIDE
VANCOUVER CO-CHAIR
MR. GAY SURREY 2015**

effect change in other ways as well. A retail manager for 20 years, 40-something Gary recently returned to college to launch a new career focused on community building.

"I have decided to pursue further education toward addressing 'impoverishment,' which I define as a lack of emotional, physical, mental, social and including spiritual human basic needs," says Gary, who completed a basic counselling skills course at Vancouver Community College, and is now a full-time community service worker student at Discover Community College in Surrey.

It's not clichéd to say that Gary wants to make his community a better place. "After living in Canada for the last 42 years, I have seen this country grow and change," he says. "I have seen people from diverse backgrounds like myself spearhead change and address social challenges. Immigrants will continuously help grow this country."

And Gary, a 2014 Vancouver Pride Society Legacy Award nominee, can definitely count himself among that group of diverse community builders.

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE RESILIENT

AHMED

SOMALIAN REFUGEE

FUN DAD

MASTER SMOOTHIE
MAKER

PLAYS SOCCER

VOLUNTEERS WITH
SOMALI YOUTH
ASSOCIATION OF B.C.

CANDACE

REFUGEE FROM
MYANMAR

SCHOOL SETTLEMENT
WORKER

LOVES TIM HORTONS'
ICED CAPPS

PHOTOGRAPHY BUFF
CHAIR OF KAREN CULTURAL
SOCIETY OF B.C.

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOUS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

AHMED MOHAMED

Resilient Refugee

Somalian-born Ahmed Mohamed is a security officer in Canada. True, it's a stereotype that immigrants tend to fill security jobs, but to Ahmed, his work is a stable, respectable position that is helping him to build a safe new life in Canada just three years after arriving as a government-sponsored refugee.

The 27-year-old had been living in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, the largest in the world, since he was three years old after his parents fled the brutal civil war in Somalia. "At Dadaab, life was very difficult, with inadequate resources for basic human requirements, scorching heat — 37 degrees Celsius daily — and limited freedom of mobility," Ahmed says.

"Frankly, life there was kind of like a jail. So I felt so happy and excited when accepted as a refugee to Canada. It was the country that most people in the refugee camp wished to go."

So working as a security officer in his new country, even on the graveyard shift, is a welcome opportunity to Ahmed.

It is also helping him build a foundation here for his wife, Asha, and five-month-old daughter, Suham, who are still in Kenya, as they await their family sponsorship application to be approved. "I am confident they will land in Canada as permanent residents soon," he says with hopefulness. Ahmed and Asha had met at Dadaab one year prior to his coming to Canada and they kept in touch. He went back to Africa in 2015 for three months during which time they got married. "Now we communicate daily and she sends me new pictures of our daughter on a weekly basis."

Ahmed's security job has also inspired his dreams to one day work in law enforcement. "I have in mind the dream of being a law enforcement officer particularly in policing," he says. "Every time I attend a meeting for newcomers organized by the community or the police force, they encourage the need for minority people to join the force and this accelerates my hopes and dreams."

Ahmed attends quite a few of these kinds of meetings, as he's a regular volunteer in his



"Canada is a country of opportunity that has given me a chance to change my life for the better."

community of Surrey. "My volunteer work involves being an active member of the Somali Youth Association of B.C., where I'm involved in mobilizing youth, organizing outdoor and indoor soccer games, and welcoming new Somali immigrants to Surrey by helping them to integrate, find jobs and provide translation when necessary."

When not at work or volunteering, you might find Ahmed happily kicking a soccer ball on one of the local Newton soccer fields. He plays with an adult league team called Somali Stars.

While coming to a new country as a refugee can be a huge culture shock, Ahmed has taken a positive approach to the daunting transition. "Canada is a country of opportunity that has given me a chance to change my life for the better," he says.

**SOMALIAN REFUGEE
FUN DAD
MASTER SMOOTHIE MAKER
PLAYS SOCCER
VOLUNTEERS WITH
SOMALI YOUTH
ASSOCIATION OF B.C.**

"It will be my first country to issue me legal documents that will provide me equal freedom and rights like other Canadian citizens. God bless Canada and the Canadian people for the warm welcome they showed to me from my landing days until today."

CANDACE MARVEL

Beautiful Determination

Talking to the young and vibrant Candace “Candy” Marvel, you might not guess that she spent 21 years of her life stateless, and five years living in a refugee camp before coming to Canada as a student refugee.

The 33-year-old beauty is S’gaw Karen, a minority ethnic group of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) that was persecuted by the governing military in the Southeast Asian country.

“The Karen in Burma have suffered oppression at the hands of successive regimes of that country for decades. Forced resettlement and labour, incarceration, and denial of political representation and citizenship status rights, among other human rights violations, have led thousands of Karen to move into Thailand and many other countries,” she explains.

“My grandfather and father were actually involved in the revolution that fought against the Burmese military dictatorship. As a result, they fled and lived in exile in Thailand. That’s where I was born and raised until our village was invaded and attacked by the military soldiers. My family then went to live in a refugee camp in 1995,” she says.

After five years, Candace was determined to leave. “I decided to get out of the refugee camp to explore educational opportunities,” she says. “I left in 2000, got my GED certificate, upgraded my English and completed a distance-learning community management diploma before furthering my studies abroad in New Delhi, India. But I basically took risks because I didn’t have any proper papers or legal status then.”

Fortunately, she was able to resettle in Canada under the sponsorship of World University Service of Canada at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. “I not only wanted to seek refuge, but to also obtain higher education and contribute back to society in any way I can.”

She has definitely been doing her part ever since. After studying for a Bachelor in interna-



“I just love the fact that I am free to spread my unique tradition and culture while living in Canada. It feels good to be able to be ‘myself’ and not have to try to be someone else.”

tional development studies at Dalhousie, she came to B.C. 10 years ago, settling in Surrey. Today, she is a settlement worker for the Surrey School District 36.

“I provide settlement support to immigrant students and families who are new to the community, to ease their integration,” she says.

Candace wants to improve the lives of others and make a lasting impact in the community. “I find my job very rewarding and meaningful,” she says. “I continue to learn and grow from all aspects, especially from each and every individual I encounter on a daily basis.”

Candace has also stepped up as chairperson of the Karen Cultural Society of B.C., where she helps raise cultural awareness about Karen people, promotes multiculturalism and unity in the community, and helps resettled Karens adapt to Canadian culture.

“I just love the fact that I am free to spread my unique tradition and culture while living in Canada. It feels good to be able to be ‘myself’ and not have to try to be someone else.”

**REFUGEE FROM MYANMAR
SCHOOL SETTLEMENT
WORKER**

**LOVES TIM HORTONS’
ICED CAPPS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BUFF

**CHAIR OF KAREN CULTURAL
SOCIETY OF B.C.**

WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE?

WE ARE STRONG

TROY

GITXSAN FIRST
NATION / GERMAN
SKATEBOARDER
FAMILY MAN
GOURMET CHEF
CONSTABLE,
SURREY RCMP

MONIQUE

OJIBWE DESCENT
WIFE AND MOM
FORMER TEACHER
LOVES '80S MUSIC
RCMP OFFICER
IN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

WE ARE SURREY

CURIOS? LEARN MORE ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT WWW.SURREYLIP.CA

TROY DERRICK

**Skateboarder
Constable**

Upon meeting Troy Derrick, the first thing you might notice is the skateboard that's been a permanent fixture in his hands since his early teens. You might also catch a glimpse of the skeleton Mountie tattoo on his arm.

That image is a popular skateboarding graphic, so it's a bit of a coincidence — or perhaps serendipity — that Troy would one day become a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Troy, a proud member of the Gitksan First Nation, could have potentially pursued a career in skateboarding had he not blown out his knee. So, instead, the man of many talents became a trained gourmet chef.

While teaching a First Nations culinary program in Surrey, he kept telling his students that you can do whatever you want in this country and strive for any career. Then one of his students puts up his hand and asked: "Hey, Chef Troy, what about you? Can you change and do whatever you want?"

So I asked, "What do you think is the hardest thing a First Nations person could do in this country?"

The student answered, "Why don't you try becoming a cop? We all hate them anyway."

Within two weeks, Troy found himself at an RCMP information session.

As a kid growing up in Prince George, B.C., Troy remembers being hassled by the cops for not only being Aboriginal, but also for being a skateboarder. The parent coach on Troy's youth baseball team was also an RCMP officer, and his son frequently taunted Troy with racist jokes. "His actions rubbed off on the other players and they began to say things, too." It took an emotional toll on Troy. "I knew I would never want anyone to feel that way."

Today, as an RCMP officer in Surrey, working with the First Nation Community Police Service, Troy says, "I am able to 'be' the change in the community." In other words, he's become



"I felt it was necessary to make the most of my opportunities in Canada and fight for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed."

**GITKSAN FIRST NATION / GERMAN
SKATE BOARDER
FAMILY MAN
GOURMET CHEF
CONSTABLE,
SURREY RCMP**

a role model — an example of the "potential" anyone can achieve.

Troy has twice been nominated for Police Officer of the Year for the City of Surrey. He not only regularly speaks to groups, he also spearheaded a program for high school youth called Code Blue, aimed at building inner strength, self-discipline and confidence.

"There are no winners or losers in this program," says Troy. "The only way you can compete is competing against yourself."

Troy sees great potential in the youth he meets in Surrey. "As 'proud Canadians,' we don't always live up to what it means to be Canadian in terms of being polite and multicultural. We are not always as polite as we think we are and there are multiple pockets of different cultures only sticking to ourselves," he says. "It is the children that have taken the initiative to question why that is. Children are not born rude or racist; that is a learned behaviour. These days, the children's voices are growing and we are starting to see their efforts impact the community in a positive way."

MONIQUE CRAIGEN

Strength in Identity

Monique Craigen didn't know that she was of Ojibwe descent until she was a teenager.

"Growing up people always asked me 'what I was.' They couldn't figure out what my physical look represented. But I didn't know how to answer that question," say Monique, who was born in northern B.C.

"My grandmother had not wanted her grandchildren to know our truth because of the discrimination she faced. She felt like she was protecting us." Before she passed, her grandmother did share the truth about their indigenous roots. "Today, I proudly know not only 'what' I am, but 'who' I am," Monique says.

As she became an adult, Monique learned more about her Ojibwe heritage, a bloodline that goes back through territory in Quebec and Manitoba. "It really came full circle when I lived and worked in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I connected with the Aboriginal teachings and traditions," she says. "It felt right, and it felt like home. It just fit."

She learned that the Ojibwe people are divided into a number of clans and she was part of Bear Clan, which is responsible for protecting their people. That clicked. Although she had gone to university to become a teacher and had a successful career teaching ESL to adults, she had always had some thoughts of becoming a police officer. She just never felt she could do it.

"I had done a really, really good job of talking myself out of it. I told myself that I was not smart enough, not strong enough," she says. "And there were also some doubts based on the historical relationship between First Nations and the police, which was not necessarily positive. I realized that I wanted to help change that dialogue, and if I'm on the inside, then maybe I could help move things forward."

It took the encouragement from her little brother to give it a go. "I did and here I am, 19 years in the RCMP," says Monique, who was also on the RCMP Musical Ride for years and even co-authored a book on



"It really came full circle when I lived and worked in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I connected with the Aboriginal teachings and traditions. It felt right, and it felt like home. It just fit."

**OJIBWE DESCENT
WIFE AND MOM
FORMER TEACHER
LOVES '80S MUSIC
RCMP OFFICER
IN COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

the longstanding tradition, called *The Spirit of the Ride*.

Today, the constable works in the area of diversity and community engagement for the Surrey RCMP, a role in which she reaches out to not only indigenous people, but also diverse and ethnic communities.

Not smart enough? Not strong enough? Not possible. Monique — also a wife and mom of a busy four-year-old — exudes a strength that comes from truly knowing who you are. And she represents that power not only in her life and work, but also in her hair!

"When I part my hair, I do it in a distinctive zigzag pattern. Well, I was at a Bear Clan gathering in uniform and I was talking to this kid who asked me: 'Hey, is that your symbol?'"

"I wasn't sure what he meant at first, maybe something on my uniform?" The boy then pointed to Monique's hair and said it looked like a lightning bolt. "In indigenous culture, lightning is a powerful image as it's the thunderbirds that bring lightning. So, I said: 'Yeah, I think that is my symbol .'"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About this We Are Surrey booklet

This booklet is a compilation of nine posters and stories of 18 Surrey residents who opened up their lives and shared their experiences living in Surrey. The **WE ARE SURREY** public awareness campaign was launched at the True Colours of Surrey Forum in November 2016 at Surrey City Hall.

About the True Colours of Surrey project

The True Colours of Surrey project aims to better understand the issue of racial discrimination in Surrey through a resident survey, a scan of best practices and the creation of the **WE ARE SURREY** public awareness campaign.

The need for the project was identified through the Surrey LIP consultation processes that took place in 2014-2016, which identified that discrimination was an issue in Surrey. The findings have informed the development of the 2016-2019 Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy.

The True Colours of Surrey project aimed to support the implementation of the strategy by increasing awareness of and addressing racial discrimination issues in Surrey. Project findings and materials can be found at www.SurreyLIP.ca.

The project was funded by the Province of British Columbia, led by the City of Surrey, supported by the Surrey LIP project team and guided by an Advisory Committee drawn from the Surrey LIP / Immigrant Advisory Roundtable members as well as other community partners and local residents.

Thank You!

We would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of the Province of British Columbia in providing funding for this project. We would like to acknowledge the time and commitment of the True Colours of Surrey Advisory Committee:

Neil Fernyhough	Manager, Community Programs	Alex Neighbourhood House
Paul Hayes	Sergeant, Diversity & Community Engagement	Surrey RCMP
Jasvir Kheleh	Regional Director, Community Member Services	Vancity
Eva Touzard	Manager, Project Based Language Training Program	PICS
Erin Desautels / Brianna Collis	Diversity Coordinator	Healthy Communities, City of Surrey
Nav Chima	Project Director, Strategic Engagement	SFU-Surrey
Rehab Marghany	Local resident	Surrey IAR member
Aileen Murphy	Senior Social Planner	Social Planning, City of Surrey
Nada Elmasry	Fresh Voices team member	Fresh Voices, Vancouver Foundation
Jennifer Marchbank	Associate Professor, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Politics	SFU-Surrey
Ninu Kang	Director, Communications & Development	MOSAIC
Jorge Salazar	Manager, Fresh Voices	Vancouver Foundation
Sheryl Thompson	Student	SFU-Surrey

Finally, the **WE ARE SURREY** campaign would not have been possible without the professionalism, expertise and passion of the project's creative team:

Project Lead: Olga Shcherbyna, City of Surrey
Photographs: Jon Benjamin Photography
Stories: Margaret Jetelina
Creative/Design: Doris Cheung Art + Media

WE ARE SURREY



SURREY
LOCAL IMMIGRATION
PARTNERSHIP



Funded by:  Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Financé par:  Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada



THECITYOFSURREY

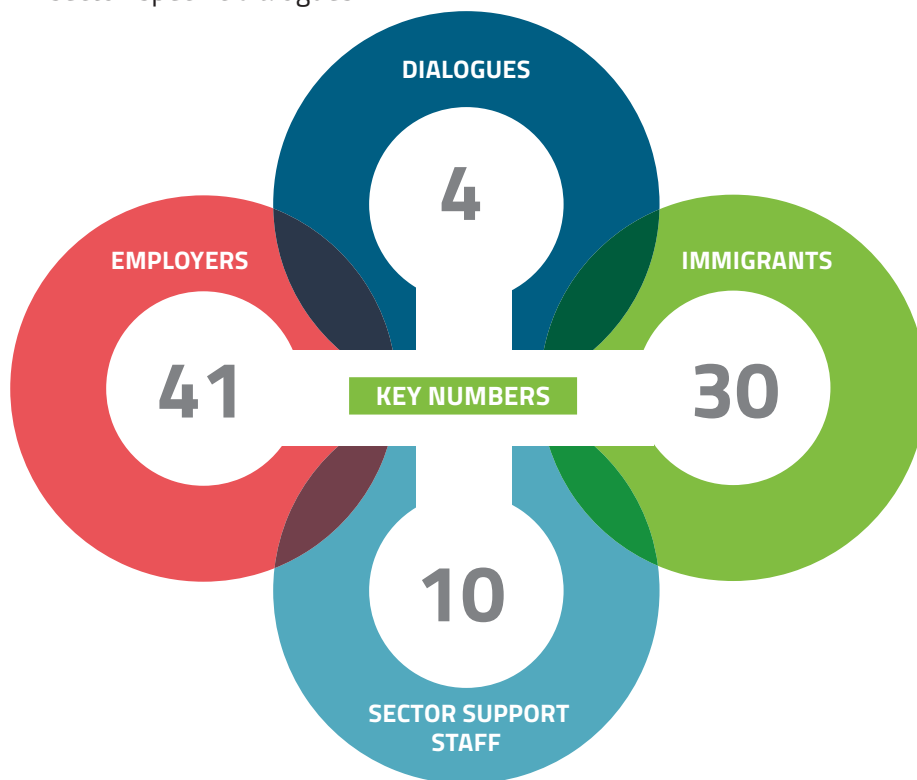


CITYOFSURREY

#WEARESURREY

SURREY INDUSTRY DIALOGUES OVERVIEW

In March 2017, Surrey Board of Trade and Surrey LIP brought together employers and the immigrant workforce to discuss labour market challenges and brainstorm solutions in four sector-specific dialogues.



"What are the gaps between immigrants and employers? Immigrants said, 'Technical skills and leadership qualities.' Employers said, 'Communication skills and fitting in with the work environment.'"

—Technology sector dialogue

INDUSTRY SECTORS

Construction
Health Care
Manufacturing
Technology

KEY ORGANIZING PARTNERS

Surrey Board of Trade
and Surrey LIP

KEY PROMOTION PARTNERS

Immigrant Employment
Council of BC (IEC-BC)
BC Construction Association
Douglas College
WorkBC
ISSofBC
Association of International
Medical Doctors of BC
(AIMD BC)
Iranian Engineers of BC
Associations
DiverseCity Community
Resources Society
Applied Science Technologists
& Technicians of BC (ASTTBC)
PICS
Library Champions

PARTICIPANTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED

89%

Session helped me to become more aware about immigrant challenges specific to this sector

88%

I would like to be involved in the future innovative bridging initiatives for this sector

75%

Session helped me become more aware about immigrant challenges specific to this sector

55%

Session helped me gain valuable insights into industry best practices



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

ADVOCACY & PUBLIC AWARENESS

Employer Champions

Encouraging employers to bring issues to the attention of industry associations and government.

Did you know...?

Industry Training Authority (ITA) BC has 11 Industry Advisory Groups composed of employers aiming to better understand, communicate, and respond to each industry's needs in B.C.

Who Needs Canadian Experience?

Conducting a myth busting campaign about what "Canadian experience" actually means.

Did you know...?

In 2013, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) introduced a policy questioning "Canadian experience" requirements as the OHRC believes that asking for it can result in discrimination.

"We need to create a place where immigrants can directly connect to employers. There needs to be help with the overwhelming nature of the job search."

—Anita Huberman, CEO, Surrey Board of Trade and Surrey LIP Co-Chair

More Bridging Programs

Engaging post-secondary institutions in addressing skill shortages and labour market challenges.

Did you know...?

In Ontario, there are over 100 bridging programs for internationally-trained professionals, while in B.C. we have very few of these programs.

Connected Service Delivery

Working with service providers and other stakeholders to improve inter-services referrals and ease immigrant job seekers' pathways to employment.

Did you know...?

There are a number of WorkBC Centres in Surrey providing employment support to job seekers. Additionally, many Surrey-based settlement agencies run employment-support services to employers and newcomers.

ACCESSING TALENT

Sector-specific Job Fairs

Organizing job fairs to support employers with skills shortages.

Did you know...?

Construction sector is a major employer in the City. Thousands of construction-related companies are located in Surrey while the retirement rate over 21%.

Networking

Improving opportunities for employers to meet immigrant job seekers.

Did you know...?

IEC-BC's Connector program helps new immigrants build professional networks and connect with local job opportunities.

Online Supports

Improving access to information for employers and immigrant job seekers in Surrey.

Did you know...?

SurreyLIP.ca has a Service Map with over 260 services to support immigrants, while the Surrey LIP Go2Resource webpage provides Surrey-specific information to employers.

KEY FINDINGS

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

KEY CHALLENGES BY EMPLOYERS

Finding Labour

There is a disconnect between what immigrants offer and what employers need. It is hard to find labour in Surrey and apprenticeship programs are weak in B.C.

“Immigration system encourages highly educated individuals. This is not necessarily what is needed. There is a high need for basic labour skills but there are misconceptions around what a high paying job is.”

Expectations vs. Retention

Immigrants should be ready to lower their expectations. Employers are willing to train people but need to know if a new hire will stay in the job afterwards. Many employers in this sector do not care about certifications but need to see that a new hire wants to work for them.

KEY CHALLENGES BY IMMIGRANTS

Understanding the System

Immigrants do not understand the options available to them, for instance what to do, where to go, and who can help.

Showcasing My Skills

Immigrants do not mind starting from the bottom but just want to be given a chance.

“I am an architect in my country but got local certification in basic drafting here... got a call for an interview for a drafter job... did not get a job because I did not have local experience. It has to change.”

HEALTH CARE SECTOR

KEY CHALLENGES BY EMPLOYERS

Regulations

As an employer, there are very limited things you can do, as everything is highly regulated.

Lack of Industry Champions

The sector needs champions who will advocate to the government about equivalency ranking.

“This is a tough and long road... but we need enlightened employers.”

KEY CHALLENGES BY IMMIGRANTS

Systemic Flaw

There is no difference between a fresh grad and an immigrant with 20+ years of experience. Everybody is competing for limited MD placements.

Lack of Innovation

The U.S. and Australia allow highly educated post-docs to enter into fellowships. Canada does not.

KEY FINDINGS

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

KEY CHALLENGES BY EMPLOYERS

Essential Skills & Safety

Reading and understanding technical data is critical. Safety is paramount for employers.

English Language

Immigrants should be ready to lower their expectations. Employers are willing to train people but need to know if a new hire will stay in the job afterwards. Many employers in this sector do not care about certifications but need to see that a new hire wants to work for them.

Apprenticeship

Exposure to the Canadian working environment is vital.

“I do not mind training for our special niche, [but] there needs to be a base.”

KEY CHALLENGES BY IMMIGRANTS

Meet Employers In-person

Immigrants are having a hard time connecting with employers in-person.

Disconnect in Services

Services seemed to be scattered and disconnected. There is a need for a centralized database that immediately informs immigrants and connects them to employers.

“Each organization has their own unique client base and they do not seem to be connecting with each other.”

TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

KEY CHALLENGES BY EMPLOYERS

Canadian Experience

Employers believe that Canadian experience is needed if it is for a management position. It is an important indicator about how well a person might integrate into a company's culture.

High Industry Competition

Immigrants have high expectations but competition is vicious amongst everyone in this sector, including Canadian-born employees.

Retention

Some employers are forced to sell their businesses because many employees would rather work for a big company.

“Huge training cost and then we lose the employee...”

KEY CHALLENGES BY IMMIGRANTS

Myth of Canadian Experience

There is a need for a clearer definition of “Canadian experience,” as...

“coding is the same from Timbuktu to Taiwan.”

Credential Verification

For many immigrants there is a huge disconnect between credentials in their home country and Canada.

“It is very hard to get our credential verified. There is no... embassy, consulates, association.”

SURREY LIP NEWSLETTER



Engaged & Inclusive



NEWCOMER YOUTH VOICES ON SURREY LIP

Youth-led conferences are nothing new, but newcomer-led conferences are pretty unique! Inspired by the Vancouver Foundation's Fresh Voices initiative, the Surrey Refugee Youth Planning Team hosted their own! This newsletter highlights our experiences at this awesome event! >



(Newcomer Youth Voices on Surrey LIP cont.)

➤ Surrey LIP strongly believes in bringing authentic voices from newcomer communities to our activities. Since 2014, Surrey LIP has supported the Surrey Immigrant Advisory Roundtable, a community group composed of local immigrant/refugee residents who provide feedback on Surrey LIP activities and who have organized a number of community events for newcomers.

Youth were identified as a priority in both of Surrey LIP's Strategic Plans on Immigrant Integration and Refugee Integration. Hence, the move to form a newcomer youth group that will lead the implementation of the youth-related activities such as youth conference and intercultural exchange activity. By forming the Youth Planning Team and continuously engaging with newcomer youth, LIP believes in enhancing youth's leadership capacity.



The 2017 Refugee Youth Planning Team Members

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Ahmad Alzoubi | Fadia Jouni |
| Aya Abdel-Dayem | Kamar Aljohmani |
| Ayah Al-Hasan | Kue K'nyawmupoe |
| Ayat Al Krad | Nargis Babrakzai |
| Dacious Richardson | Noor Alshhadeh |
| Dahir Abdi Mohamed | Samia Ghannoum |

Thanks to our adult ally: Zahrae Al-Zaim

Visit SurreyLIP.ca to learn more about how to get involved with the Surrey Newcomer Youth Team!

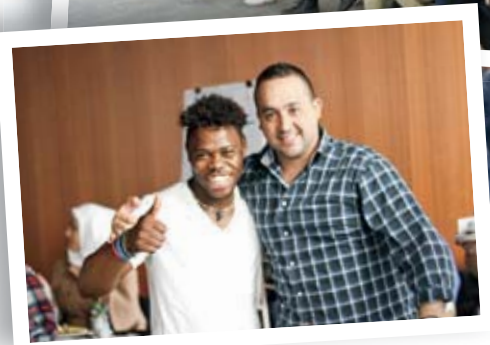
INSPIRING, LEARNING AND DANCING TOGETHER

On March 18, 2017, the Youth Planning Team hosted a full-day Surrey Newcomer Youth Leadership Conference. Over 60 newcomer youth showed up and represented over 20 cultural groups. One of the main objectives of the day was to inspire newcomer youth to take leadership roles in their communities. While we gathered for a busy day of learning, of course we also had lots of fun mingling, laughing and dancing!

The day started with Kevin Kelly of the Kwantlen First Nation giving an indigenous welcome with his son Michael Gabriel Kelly. They shared songs and stories with us. Kevin and Michael reminded us not to lose our cultures and languages. "This is who you are, don't ever lose that!"

As a planning group, we felt strongly about including cultural and art exchanges at this conference. We wanted to share our cultural music, clothing, food and languages. It was important for us that people see the beauty of our backgrounds. Cue the music!

We all agreed that the highlight of the conference was the Cultural Fashion Show and Dance Performances that took place over lunch as we enjoyed a meal together. Our youth models showcased clothing from diverse communities: Syrian, Liberian, Karen, Iraqi, Afghani and Somali. We saw dabke dance by the Ethar BC organization and a performance by the Somali Youth Association of BC. We also put on cultural music and grooved to Latin and Arabic music!



Did you know...?

Surrey is located on the traditional territories of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen First Nations.

Jorge Salazar, Director of Inner Activist and former Manager of Fresh Voices, inspired us with his opening keynote on "Being Yourself." What the heck does that mean? Jorge shared his family's migration journey to Canada from Colombia as refugees. As a teenager starting over in a new place, there was a lot to take in. With his own experience, he dedicated his work in helping and advocating for newcomer youth. Jorge showed us his favourite candy called Bon Bon Bum (awesome name, right?) and he showed us on the world map where Colombia is.

Jorge told us "Don't be afraid of being the face of your cultural group." He said we have so much to share that we don't need "experts" to tell us what to do. We need to step up and take on leadership roles! REPRESENT!

THE SUMI INK CLUB INVITES PEOPLE TO PAINT TOGETHER WITH A SINGLE COLOUR

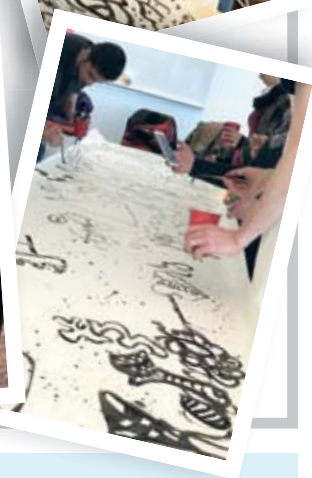
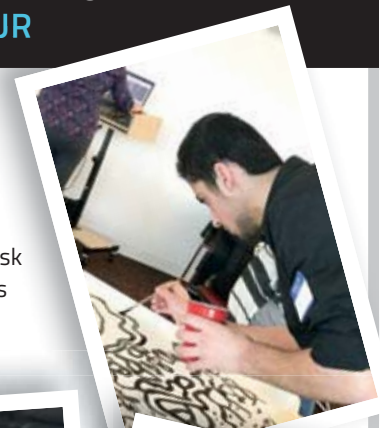
Our closing keynote, Steve Dooley, spoke with youth about "making a change starting with your education." Learning can mean English training and post-secondary education, but also community events like the conference.



Steve made it to a few of the workshops. He mentioned to us that newcomer youth had told him about how barriers to further education are also barriers to wider integration. As the executive director of SFU Surrey, Steve promised to take these concerns back and share these voices and areas of concern with faculty members and the SFU committee that he is involved with.

Edward Westerhuis, with the City's Arts Services, had been a champion in working with the Youth Planning Team! He came to our meeting and showed us the activity called Sumi Ink Club. Edward helped us host this activity as part of an Art Collaboration Event on March 13th at the Surrey Central Library. Participants felt this activity was meditative, expressive and unique! We loved it so much that we brought it back to the conference! We walked around the table, adding lines

over each other. This hands-on activity created an inclusive space for shared discovery and creative risk taking. The result was these giant paintings full of surprises!



YOUTH PLANNING TEAM HOORAY, WE DID IT!

Youth Planning Team Reflections

By Kue K'nyawmpoe

The Youth Planning Team was a positive experience and I am grateful for the opportunity we had. I learned from each and every person in the team and we share the same passion of helping others, especially refugee youth like ourselves. I appreciate the opportunity of getting to know one another and I enjoyed each and every valuable conversation we had. I believe that we, as refugee and new immigrant youth should work together, support one another and thrive. My experience with the Youth

Planning Team taught me to reach out to other youth in the community and connect.

By Aya Abdel-Dayem

Being a part of the Refugee Youth Planning Team was a great experience. It allowed for the opportunity to meet new people and gain insight as to how a large scale event is planned. Furthermore, it allowed for the chance to learn about the many different refugees and their challenges in Canada who came from Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Karan (Burma/Thailand), Liberia, Afghanistan and Somalia.





SESSION ON LEADERSHIP

Community involvement and capacity building is what is needed to influence change and share our voices

By *Ilhan Abdullahi*, Workshop Facilitator

Youth were engaged in activities and discussions that were reflective of the idea that leadership can take any form, starting in your home, in your neighborhood and within your communities. It was agreed upon that leaders need to be reflective of the community they wish to support and advocate for and with.

All leaders have different styles of influencing a group and bringing about change. In this workshop, the youth were able to reflect on this by choosing their favorite leadership quotes that were most relatable to them. As a result, a few youth shared that they can now see how each individual brings a unique characteristic and vision and the impact these voices and traits can have when we come together.

Two great examples of leadership within our communities were Sanctuary Cities movement www.sanctuarycityvan.com



and the Somali Youth Association of B.C. (find us on Facebook).

Both initiatives demonstrated the importance of leadership and advocating for a change you believe in. Throughout the guest speakers' discussions, it was concluded that although it is important to focus on individual leadership roles and skills, community involvement and capacity building is what is needed to influence change and share our voices. Youth can make a difference and attending the Newcomer Youth Voices conference showed that they are all leaders.

The workshop was concluded with youth sharing stories of their journeys as newcomer youth and how they wish to be leaders in their communities and advocate with and for other newcomer youth with similar experience to support their positive integration into Canadian society.

SESSION ON SOLIDARITY WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: ALLYSHIP

By *Nada Elmasry*, Workshop Facilitator

Allyship "is not an identity – it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people."

In the Allyship workshop, youth were taken on a journey to learn about the history of the land. Our guest facilitator, Anna Soole, engaged the youth in games and storytelling in which she shared stories about the life her ancestors have led in the past and the struggles they have faced. Youth Learned about residential schools and colonization and the impact that they continue to have on the indigenous people.

Youth reflected on the impact of wars and colonization that took place in their countries and how there are many similarities to what the indigenous people have experienced. To conclude the session, youth were invited to reflect on ways in which they, as newcomers, can stand in solidarity with the indigenous peoples.

WHAT YOUTH CAN DO IN SURREY

Did you know that you could get free space and funding to realize your dream projects?

Youth can be leaders in our communities. There are many resources available in Surrey!

Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG)

www.neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca

- NSG fund residents to work together to build more connected community.
- Projects like block parties, community games, movie night can be funded.

- You can get up to \$500 through this grant.
- Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub managed NSG in Surrey.
- You can apply each year in February - March.

City of Surrey - The Neighbourhood Team

www.surrey.ca/neighbourhoodteam

- You can book a space free of charge at rec centres or City Hall for your dance rehearsal or event.

- You can borrow City's Event Equipment Kit that includes a sound system, tables, chairs, tents and more.
- Neighbourhood Enhancement Grant is available all year for projects in open space that brings people together. Ask City's Neighbourhood Team for more info!

The session was facilitated by City staff and representative from the Oak Neighbourhood House.

