



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

# **Bridging Two Worlds: Trauma-Sensitive Schools and Best Practices for Supporting Refugee Children and Youth**

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Social Sciences and Humanities  
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Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada



**ceric**

CANADIAN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR COUNSELLING  
INSTITUT CANADIEN D'ÉDUCATION ET DE RECHERCHE EN ORIENTATION

**Canada**

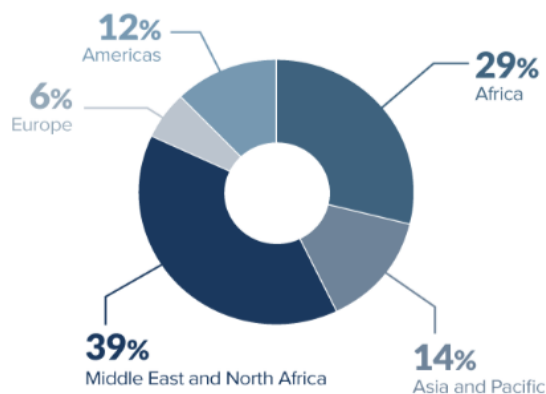


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0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Unit: million



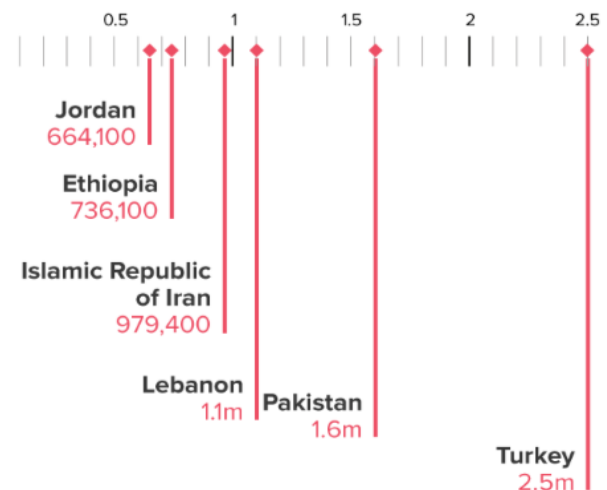
## Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



## 54% of refugees worldwide came from three countries



## Top hosting countries



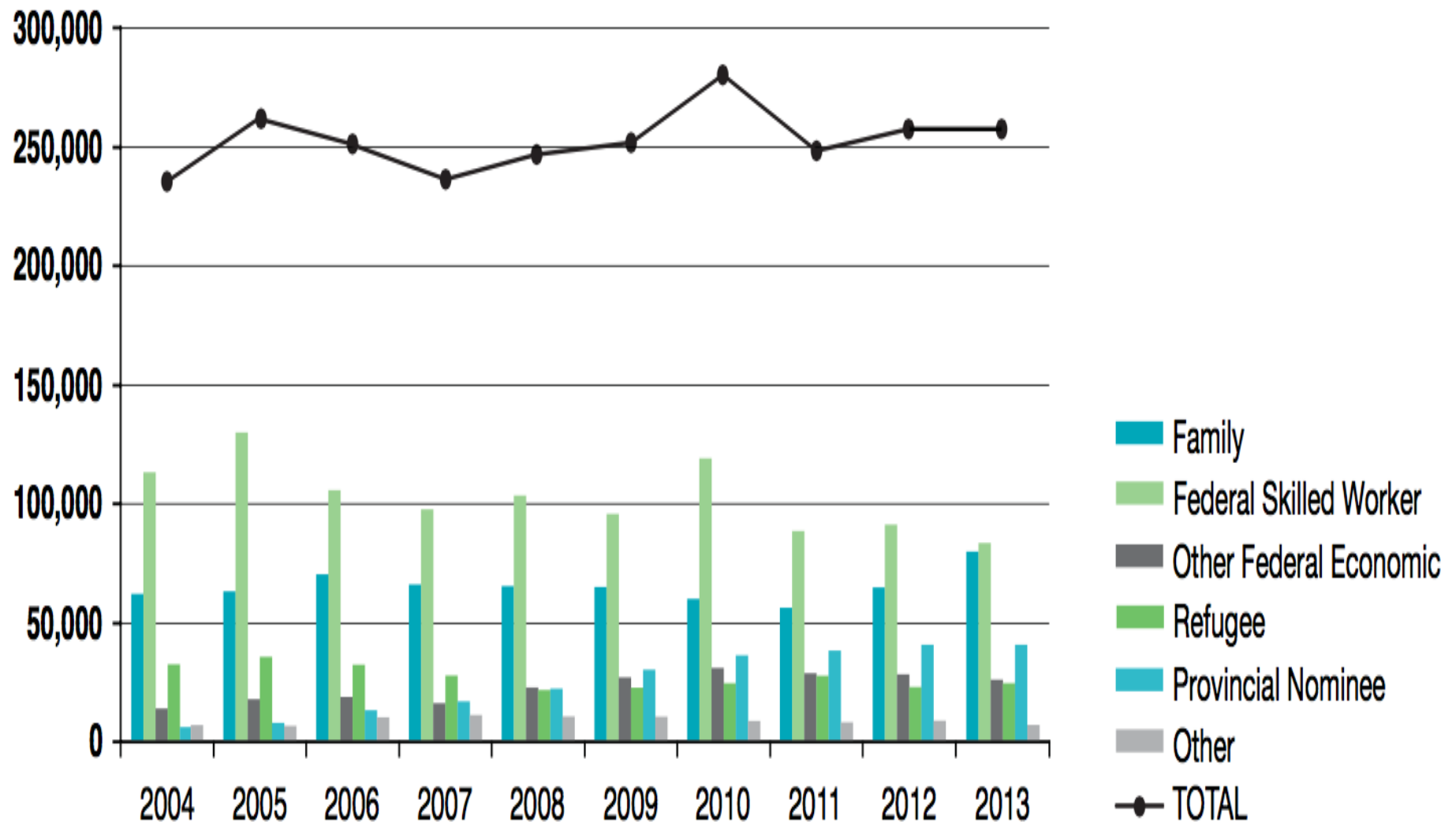
**33,972 people**  
a day forced to flee their homes  
because of conflict and persecution

**9,700 staff**  
UNHCR employs 9,700 staff  
(figures from December 2015)

**126 countries**  
We work in 126 countries

We are funded almost entirely by  
voluntary contributions, with 86 per  
cent from governments and the  
European Union.

# IMMIGRATION TO CANADA IN THE PAST DECADE



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# Welcomed in Canada

40,081

Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada since November 4, 2015

Data as of January 29, 2017

Additional [data on the Syrian refugee resettlement](#) is available through the [Open Data Portal](#).

## Breakdown by category

Data as of January 29, 2017

Refugee category	Number of refugees
Government-Assisted Refugee	21,876
Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee	3,931
Privately Sponsored Refugee	14,274
TOTAL	40,081

# Welcoming communities

350

[communities across Canada are welcoming Syrian refugees](#) (not including Quebec – see the [list of communities in Quebec \(PDF, 338.37 KB\)](#), which is only available in French)

Data as of December 18, 2016

Out of the 40,000 Syrian refugees who have recently arrived, 60% are under the age of 17 and 20% are under the age of 5.



“**Mental health is one of the most prevalent health concerns**, as much of the Syrian refugee population has experienced some form of trauma, including losing family members, being subject to or witnessing violent acts, or suffering from conflict-induced physical disabilities due to the use of barrel bombs and torture” (CIC, 2015, p.9).

The prevalence of mental health conditions are particularly high among children and adolescents and the UNHCR (2013) reports that mental health conditions are the **most prevalent health concern for children ages 5 to 17** who have come from Lebanon and Jordan.



# Bridging Two Worlds: Purpose

- Best Practices for Supporting the Integration of Refugee Children and Youth
- How to Support Career Development for Refugee and Newcomer Youth
- What is the Role for Canadian Youth?
- Intercultural Competence and Practical Strategies



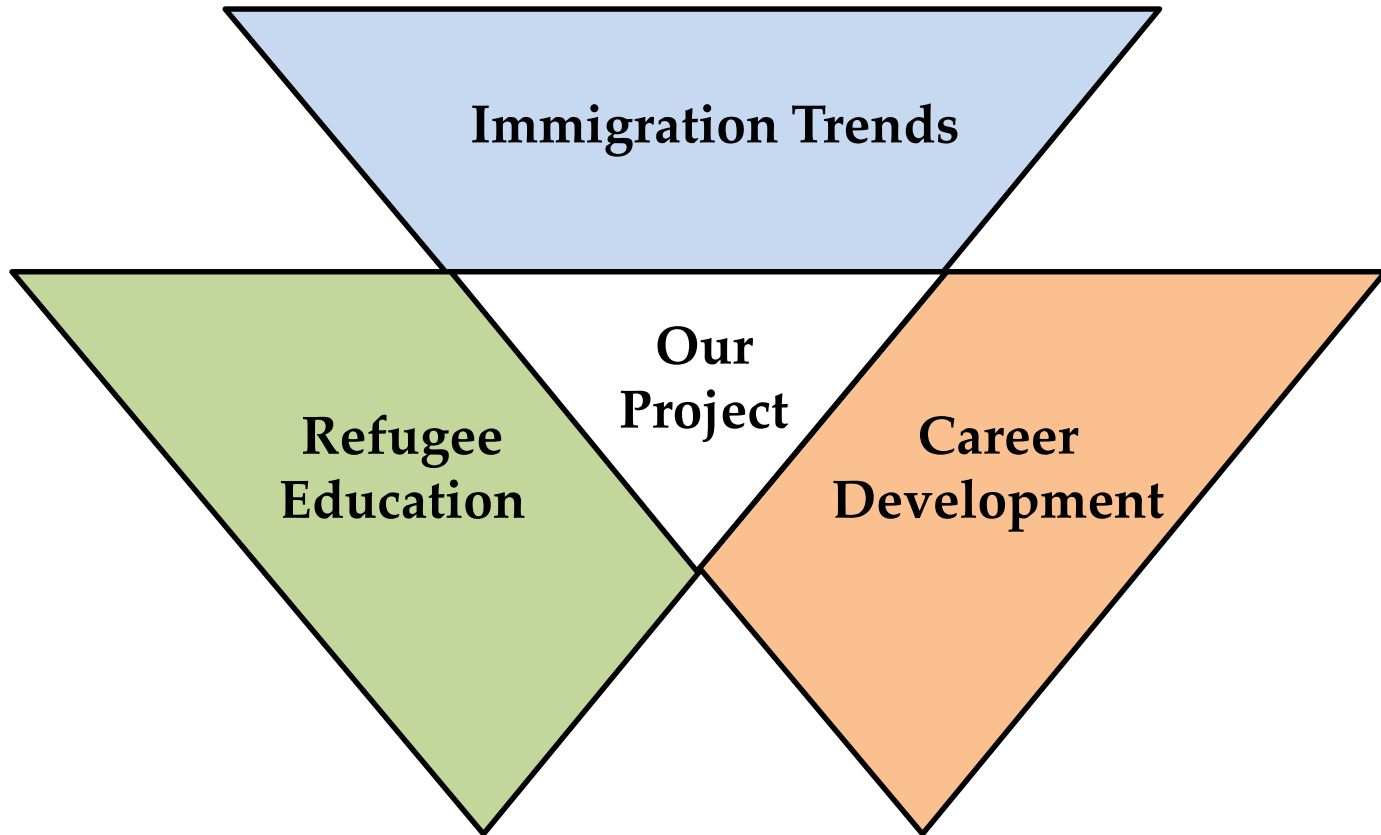


# Supporting Organizations

- **Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning**
- **Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth**
- **Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services**
- **Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council**
- **Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**







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# Primary Goals

- (1) Conduct a **needs assessment** of the current career development and counselling programs for newcomer/refugee youth in settlement organizations and middle/secondary schools.
- (2) Examine **best practices** for early intervention to foster informed career decision-making for newcomer/refugee youth.
- (3) Develop **recommendations** and **professional development activities**/lessons to prepare counsellors to assist with career decision making for youth from newcomer/refugee backgrounds.



# Phase 1: Settlement Agencies

- Total of 42 participants interviewed individually
- Accessed 24 agencies who work with newcomers/refugees during Phase 1
- 2 government & 22 non-government
- Executive Directors, Program Managers, Instructors, Youth Support Workers, Mentors, School Liaisons, Cultural Support Workers
- All considered “Settlement Workers”



## Phase 2: School and Community

- Total of 118 participants interviewed individually
- Access to 6 schools in Manitoba (2 elementary, 1 middle, 3 high school)
- 51 students (middle and high)
- 10 parents
- 57 school staff (administration, EAL teachers, Liaison officers, teachers, educational assistants, support workers)



# What Did We Learn?

Nine key themes and 11 sub-themes emerged  
for best practice



# Theme 1: Conflict Awareness

- “Teachers need to know where kids are coming from, what is the history of conflict in their home country and how students have been affected by war.”
- Awareness is critical to relationship-building and alliances that encourage learning and growth.
- Even more pertinent to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health and learning concerns in individual children.



## Theme 2: Social Determinants

- Understanding inequities in access to community services and supports, adequate housing, food, and employment and potential solutions to inequities helps schools and school systems to support teachers as they work with refugee and newcomer students
- Counsellors play a key role in providing insights to faculty and to the student population.





# Theme 3: Peace and Sustainability

- Restorative practices and justice:
  - Counsellors can support teachers in learning the language and principles of restorative practices and restorative justice, including how to introduce these concepts into classrooms.
  - Conflicts and misbehaviour should be viewed as opportunities for social and emotional learning.
  - Teachers need to know how to help students repair and restore relationships; a major skill of trained counsellors
- Equity training
  - Recognizing inequalities to level the playing field for learning, developing, and integrating
  - Recognizing cultural disparities



# Theme 4: Refugee Characteristics

- Underlying conditions common across most migrants:
  - limited and/or interrupted schooling
  - protracted and negative experiences during the exodus journey
  - interrupted social and academic development.

These factors create challenges: educational, psychosocial, environmental, and academic hurdles that must be overcome.

- Teachers need training for anger management, stress reduction, resiliency enhancement, EAL/FAL techniques



# Theme 5: Connections

- Building personal and community connections:
  - When schools build connections with the refugee community, personal connections with and for students are increased, a sense of belongingness is enhanced, and opportunities for creating success for refugee and newcomer students are increased.
  - Use of school counsellors and cultural brokers expedite and enhance the process.



# Theme 6: Cultural Competencies

- Culturally safe and responsive teaching:
  - Policies and procedures within classrooms result in diminished incidents of violence, exclusion, bullying, and absenteeism.
  - When schools are able to provide safe and caring environments that are sensitive to the needs of culturally-, linguistically-, and religiously-diverse learners, a more inclusive school and classroom results.
  - Listening, empathy and perspective-sharing
  - Classroom-based counselling skills
  - Expressive arts training
  - Storytelling



# Theme 7: Trauma Sensitivity, Mental Health Awareness & Crisis Response

- Recognizing and responding to mental health issues: the need for established procedures and identified personnel
- Loss and grief
- Levels of crisis and levels of timely response



# Theme 8: Teacher Self Care

- Role of the teacher, administrator, counsellor
- Ability to support students is contingent on the professionals' ability to be resilient, to be forward-thinking, and to find healthy ways to address their own stress levels.
- Avoiding or mitigating vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue was a key factor in the ability of teachers to better support students



# Theme 9: Career Planning and Career Development

- Career planning is life planning.
- Teachers in the study indicated a need for information pertaining to apprenticeships, internships, mentoring and the world of work – information that school counsellors possess.
- They also articulated a need to know about how to uncover the values, interests, skills, and attitudes of students; a skill of school counsellors.





# Moving from Research to Practical Application

- The project used the research findings and presented them to experts in refugee settlement, teaching, learning, educational psychology, and counselling.
- With the assistance of subject matter experts, an informational guide was created.
- The Guide included lesson plans for teaching teachers, and lesson plans for teaching students about the refugee and newcomer experience and inclusion needs.



# What We Know...



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# What We Know...

## **SOCIAL WELL-BEING**

- Acceptance
- Actualization
- Contribution
- Coherence
- Integration

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

- Self-acceptance
- Personal growth
- Purpose in life
- Environmental mastery
- Autonomy
- Positive relations with others

Redekopp, 2017 


# What We Know...

## WORK AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Opportunity for personal control
- Opportunity for skill use and acquisition
- Externally-generated goals
- Variety
- Environmental clarity
- Contact with others

## WARR'S VITAMINS

- Availability of money
- Physical security
- Valued social position
- *Supportive supervision*
- *Career outlook*
- *Equity*

Redekopp, 2017 

# Canadian Context

- Little is being done to support the psychosocial and adjustment issues affecting newcomer youth.
- There has been an abundance of talking about “refugee issues” and a lack of action that directly supports the long-term adjustment of newcomers.
- Many programs rely heavily on literacy, numeracy and language development.
- Paucity of resources to foster psychological and social development.
- A piecemeal approach to providing newcomers the appropriate programs and services.
- Canada needs a long-term strategy.



# Canadian Context

- Youth who have come from countries where civil war has been in existence for most, if not all of their lives, have unique needs and tremendous adjustment challenges after locating to Canada.
- When needs are not met, youth can easily become disconnected from school, family and the community.
- Disenfranchised youth can be easily lured to criminal activity, drug or alcohol use, or gang life.



# Career Development in Schools

- Career Development needs to be **Transformational**
- Career Counselling is Largely **Non-Existent** in Schools

*Counsellors are typically the things that get cut. They are usually doing crisis intervention; they are not worried about career counselling. It is often our thing. Part of the reason we do it the way we do is that we try to show people that career development is not something you do in Grade 12. It is a life-long process. It is not just about a good job, it is "life development."*

**- NGO Program Director**





# Challenges-Career Development

*We are not meeting the career development needs of newcomer youth.... They are actually integrated, in that sense. They are being ignored equally with their peers. So, it could be one of the times they achieve true equality status - by being ignored equally with everybody else!*

**-NGO Executive Director**



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# Challenges: Meaning of Work

- Job vs. Career
- Too much emphasis on employment preparation (resume writing, interviewing)
- Not enough emphasis on career development
  - Personal development
  - Career exploration
  - Career discovery



# Challenges:

## Immigration Points System

- Credentials not recognized
- Abandon original career trajectory
- Too much time spent upgrading



# Educational and Environmental Challenges

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES	ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES
Provide opportunities for mentoring.	Implement more community and school partnerships.
Provide academic and vocational tutoring.	Provide more liaison workers.
Coordinate a re-entry program to help bring students back to school after they have dropped out.	Designate specific teachers as case managers who provide links to the ecological systems.
Teach pre-service courses in EAL strategies for all teachers and on refugee issues.	Designate a person who is able to advocate for the student.
Coordinate provincial and division policy development.	Implement multi-agency partnering on projects (justice and education, and non-government agencies, immigration).
Conduct leadership seminars on teaching in multi-ethnic cities and on utilizing community sources and resources.	Coordinate a sustained and intensive anti-racism and discrimination campaign in the school, community, private sector, and public services.
Acknowledge foreign-based professional programs.	Provide information for newcomers in video format in several languages.
Set up a school-based resource site that links to agencies.	Develop parent modules for helping children through school and for identifying signs of trouble.
Teach basic skills and social development.	Provide more student-to-student assistance.
Offer scholarships and bursaries to encourage involvement in sport.	Create and implement a culturally and linguistically appropriate assessment process.
Teach career development and awareness programs for all students.	
Train immigrant and refugee students to be mediators and peer counsellors.	
Provide training and education for refugee parents on issues related to discipline, personal safety, and adolescent development.	



# Educational and Psychosocial Challenges

EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES	PSYCHOSOCIAL CHALLENGES
Build in an incentive program for staying in school, so students do not have to work full-time.	Provide more preventative programming.
Prepare students for independent living.	Provide group support programs to assist with the integration of the person with the community.
Provide more information on work skills and employee rights.	Implement initial screening and ongoing screening to identify psychosocial challenges.
Provide volunteer placement programs for refugee students who transition to job placements.	Provide arts-based activities (film, play, theatre, videography, dance) in school and the community.
Teach EAL programs for parents outside of school hours.	Train clinical staff on issues related to refugees.
Utilize technology-based communication and support.	Implement language and literacy programs that include trained professionals who know how to recognize and respond to psychosocial issues.
Remove government loan for the cost of airfare from country of origin.	Train all students in conflict prevention.
	Provide integrated emotional, spiritual, and health care.



# Best Practice: Cultural Brokers

- Resource people or professionals with in-depth knowledge of the specific cultural and social background of the refugee/newcomer as well as knowledge of medical systems who can function as go-betweens, brokering mutual understanding and collaborations

(Kirmayer, Laurence J. et al. 2012)



# Best practices: Need for In-School Changes

We need to think more about what we are doing in the regular school day and how we can make changes to better meet the needs of refugee students.

While the practices are good examples, we need to also think about programs and strategies we can incorporate into our daily practices.





# Best practices: Need for In-School Changes

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# How Can Research Findings Assist School Counsellors Supporting Refugee and Newcomer Students?

- Use data to create one stop information guide
- Link existing comprehensive and development guidance and counselling program learning outcomes to the findings
- Link existing career development guidelines and standards of practice to the findings
- Link existing Blueprint for Life/Work Design to the findings



# Creating an Evidence-Based Pragmatic Resource

- FOR EDUCATORS:

Themes from the research were clustered into the *Career Development Guidelines and Standards* to structure activities to build teacher competency related to newcomer and refugee children and youth

- FOR STUDENTS:

Themes from the research were clustered into the career development competencies of the *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* and core curriculum learning outcomes



# Career Development Guidelines and Standards of Practice:

## CORE COMPETENCIES RELATED TO NEWCOMER AND REFUGEE CHILDREN IN CANADA

- ***C2. Interpersonal Competence***
  - C2.1 Respect Diversity
  - C2.2 Communicate Effectively
  - C2.3 Develop Productive Interactions with Clients
- **C3. Career Development Knowledge**
  - C3.1 Possess Career Development Knowledge
- **C4. Needs Assessment and Referral**
  - C4.1 Refer Clients to the Appropriate Sources



# Thematic Lessons for Educators (1)

- Conflict Awareness
- Social Determinants of Health
- Peace and Sustainability
  - Restorative Practices and Justice
  - Equity Training
- Refugee Characteristics
  - Anger Management
  - Stress Reduction
  - Resiliency
  - The EAL/FLA student



# Thematic Lessons for Educators (2)

- Building Personal and Community Connections
- Cultural Competency Training
  - Listening, Empathy and Perspectives
  - Classroom-Based Counselling Skills
  - Expressive Arts Training
  - Storytelling
- Trauma Sensitivity, Mental Health Awareness and Crisis Response
  - Responding to Loss and Grief
- Career Planning and Career Development
- Teacher Self-Care



# Blueprint for Life/Work Designs: Career Development Competencies

- **Competency 1:** *Build and maintain a positive self-image*
- **Competency 2:** *Interact positively and effectively with others*
- **Competency 3:** *Change and grow throughout one's life*
- **Competency 4:** *Participate in life-long learning supportive of life/work goals*
- **Competency 5:** *Locate and effectively use life/work information*
- **Competency 6:** *Understand the relationship between work and society/economy*
- **Competency 7:** *Secure/create and maintain work*
- **Competency 8:** *Make life/work-enhancing decisions*
- **Competency 9:** *Maintain balanced life and work roles*
- **Competency 10:** *Understand the changing nature of life/work roles*
- **Competency 11:** *Understand, engage in, and manage one's own life/work building process*



# Career Development



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# Where are Career Development Competencies?

- *Comprehensive and Developmental Guidance and Counselling Program*
- *Health Education Learning Outcomes*
- *Social Studies Learning Outcomes*
- *Language Arts Outcomes*
- *Group Guidance and Counselling*
- *Individual Guidance and Counselling*
- *Community Resources and Referrals*
- *After School Programs*
- *Sports Programs*

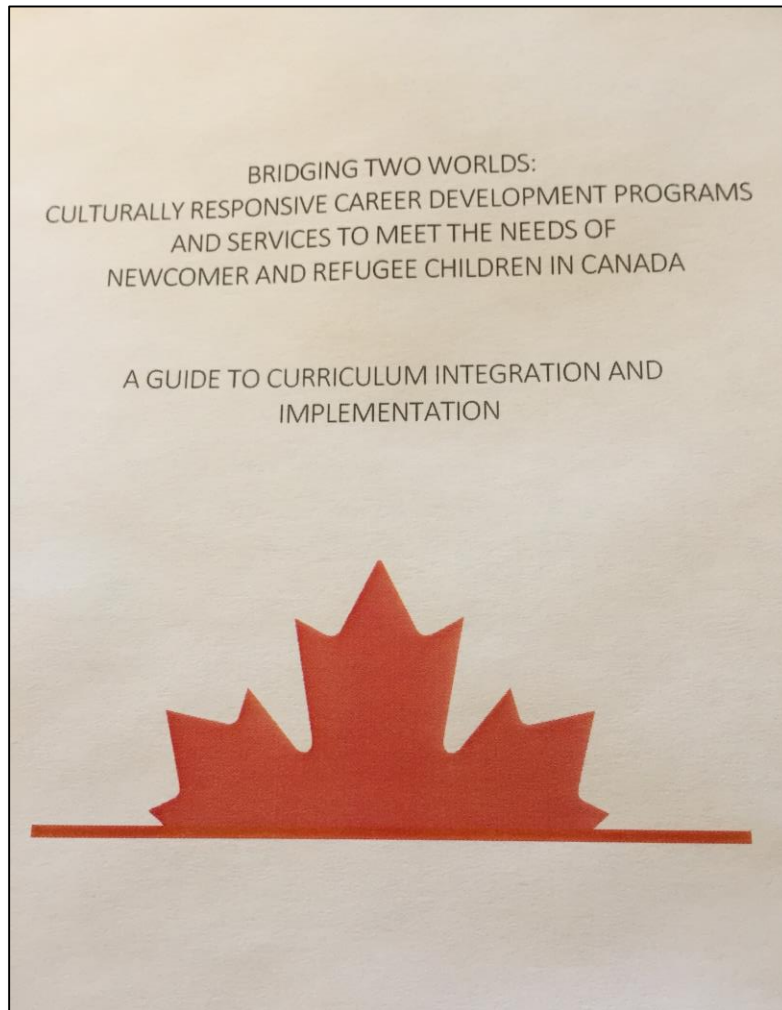


# Thematic Lessons for Students

- Refugee and Newcomer Characteristics – Reaching Out and Reaching In
- Listening, Empathy, and Perspectives
- Building Personal and Community Connections
- The Role of Peace and Sustainability
- Awareness of Self, Others, and Conflict Resolution
  - Expressive Arts, Friendships, and Storytelling
- The Emotional Self: loss, grief, anger, justice, trauma
- Career Development in Canada: Resiliency and Building on Strengths



# THE PRODUCT



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