

Yazidi Resettlement in Canada-Final Report 2018

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University of Manitoba

January 2019

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



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List of Acronyms

AAISA - Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

BVOR - Blended Visa Office Referrals

CCIS - Calgary Catholic Immigration Services

CCLC - Cross Cultural Learner Centre (London)

CLB – Canadian Language Benchmarks

CMHC Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

COA – Canadian Orientation Abroad

COSTI - Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane (Toronto)

C-PTSD - Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

EAL – English as an additional Language

EU - European Union

GAR - Government Assisted Refugees

IMDB – Longitudinal Immigration Database

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IRCC - Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada

ISIS - Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

KRI - Kurdish Region of Iraq

LCCLC – London Cross Cultural Learner Centre

MANSO - Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organization

MIIC - Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council

PSR - Privately Sponsored Refugees

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

RAP – Resettlement Assistance Program

SPO – Settlement Provider Organizations

UN – United Nations

UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Education Fund

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ABSTRACT

In 2017, Canada resettled 1,215 Yazidis (IRCC personal communication) refugees who have experienced extreme violence, torture, and displacement at rates that astonished the international community. Early reports from settlement agencies in Canada reveal that the high degree of trauma Yazidis have experienced has made their resettlement and integration very difficult. Almost all the Yazidis destined to Canada are from Sinjar, Kirkuk and Erbil in northeastern Iraq, and now reside in Toronto, London, Calgary and Winnipeg. Our colleagues at COSTI Immigrant Services (Toronto), Cross Cultural Learner Centre (London), Calgary Catholic Immigration Services, Welcome Place and Accueil francophone (Winnipeg), along with an advisory panel made up of settlement service providers, federal government and academic members, participated in the planning of this project. The study examines the following questions: *1) what settlement services do Yazidi refugees require? Do they have access to these services?; 2) what has their experience in attaining language training been like?; 3) what might their job prospects be?; and 4) what are their housing conditions?* The purpose of the project is to collect information to inform practice and resettlement policy for refugees in Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not be possible without the assistance and advice of many people who willingly gave their time and expertise to assist us in various aspects of this study.

We gratefully acknowledge the professional and efficient work of our interviewer, Aryan Ghasemiyani from Lethbridge Family Services. Her willingness to put her life on hold to travel across Canada to conduct all the interviews in only 11 days exemplifies her superior commitment to the successful resettlement of newcomers to Canada. Her interpretation and transcription of the interviews was efficient and her willingness to share her commentaries and knowledge of the Yazidi community greatly informed this report.

Khosrow Hakimzadeh at the University of Manitoba provided translation work in the initial stages of the project. His willingness to do this work on short notice is greatly appreciated.

Our thanks go to the advisory committee members who spared their time and shared their observations and expertise with us from the development of the interview guide to participant selection to arranging meeting places for us and then in helping us sort out and interpret the findings. Members of this committee are:

- Monica Abdelkader, COSTI Toronto
- Elisha Astles, IRCC Edmonton
- Seid Oumer Ahmed, MANSO Winnipeg
- Rita Chohal, MIIC Winnipeg
- Leslie Cramer, AAISA Calgary
- Fadi Ennab, MANSO Winnipeg
- Joe Garcea, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
- Caroline Hemstock, AAISA Calgary
- Jan Jasnos, LCCLC London
- Marta Kalita, MIIC Winnipeg
- Valerian Marochko, LCCLC London
- Bindu Narula, CCIS Calgary
- Boris Ntambwe, Accueil francophone Winnipeg
- Milton Ortega, AAISA Calgary

- Tanaz Pardiwala, COSTI Toronto
- Felicien Rubayita MIIC Winnipeg
- Suresh Shrestha, LCCLC London
- Vicki Sinclair, MANSO Winnipeg
- Margaret Styczynska, CCIS Calgary

In the analysis stage of the project, we called upon several experts to help us better understand our results. We would like to thank John Smyth (Aurora Family Therapy Services, Winnipeg), Teresa Burke (MANSO, Winnipeg), Bozana Sljuka (Lethbridge Family Services), Fadi Ennab (MANSO, Winnipeg) and Hani Al-Ubeady (Immigrant Partnerships of Winnipeg) for their assistance.

Several representatives from IRCC have helped in various aspects of this project. They are: John Biles, Elisha Astles, Diane Holden, Shila Housmand and Brigitte Desrosiers.

Funding for this project was received from Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada-Integration Branch (Prairies and Northern Territories Region).

We humbly dedicate this report to the hard-working volunteers. Their work is often “behind the scenes” and unrecognized but the services they provide are integral to the successful resettlement of newcomers and to making Canada a much better place to live.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As this is a qualitative study of 35 Yazidi refugee adults living in Toronto, London, Calgary and Winnipeg conducted in 2018, the results must be understood as observational. The qualitative data collection strategy has uncovered and clarified some of the confusing findings of other recent quantitative surveys on refugees in Canada. Most of our observations are backed by previous research and many of our findings support the recent House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration's (2018) Report, *Road to Recovery: Resettlement Issues of Yazidi Women and Children in Canada*. Many of our findings would apply to other recently arrived refugee groups.

Out of the 35 participants, a majority Yazidi (91.2%) lived in Iraq prior to arriving Canada, with two respondents who lived in Turkey and one person living in Lebanon. Almost all respondents (94%) belong to the active "working age" group (age 20 to 49 years). A majority of the respondents are married (51.4%) with considerable numbers of widowed respondents (28.6%). Of those who are married but currently not living with their spouse, a large number were unsure if their spouse was dead or alive. A majority of the Yazidi participants are females (62.9%) and more than half of the respondents had no formal education (57.6%).

1. Trauma and its Aftermath

- Trauma influences all aspects of the resettlement experiences of the Yazidi in Canada. Almost all of the study participants told us about their traumatic experiences even though we did not specifically ask about them.
- Almost all of the Yazidi have lost close family members to Daesh violence. Kidnappings, physical and sexual assaults, along with murder are common experiences.
- Family reunion is a major concern for all families. Research suggests that family reunion increases the speed of integration, reduces stress and anxiety, and fosters a sense of belonging. Most families, however, did not have correct information about which family members would be eligible for the One-Year Window of Opportunity program. Family members who are not identified during that one-year window are no longer eligible for this

program which causes problems for some Yazidi families as their loved ones are located after the time period elapses.

- Trauma affects language learning. Several participants were unable to attend language classes due to severe mental health problems.
- Professional interpreters are required, particularly for medical appointments. Same-sex interpretation is preferred by most of the participants. Women have extreme difficulty relaying intimate information to their health service providers if the interpreter is male.
- Teachers require additional supports. Several misunderstandings between parents and teachers have occurred because teaching staff have not been trained in trauma informed care nor have any resources to help them learn about the violence experienced by the Yazidi.

2. Pre-Arrival Orientation

- Nearly all the participants attended the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) workshops prior to their arrival. Most, however, felt woefully under-prepared for their arrival in Canada.
- The information best recalled by the majority of Yazidi was: the One-Year Window of Opportunity for family reunification, Canada is cold, Canadians are nice and it is expensive to live here. Few could provide additional information about other content discussed during their 3 or 5 day COAs.
- Some of the COAs were conducted in Arabic with interpretation done by family members who were not fluent in that language. This caused significant amounts of misunderstanding among many Yazidi.
- The anxiety and fear of coming to Canada, combined with low levels of education may have resulted in problems among the Yazidi in retaining the information needed to understand Canada.

3. Reception Centres

- Yazidis who lived in reception centres that had facilities allowing them to cook their own meals were generally more satisfied than those who were served food.
- Due to a shortage of space and a large number of GARs entering their cities, most reception centres have instituted a policy that allows refugees to stay in reception housing for 2-3 weeks. Other reception centres have more “open” policies. No single way is better. Those

that keep visits short may be stressed or pushed into housing they are not ready to accept. Those who are not ‘nudged’ out of the reception centre are delayed in starting language classes and starting the integration process.

- The condition of furnishings in most reception centres is a concern among the settlement sector staff. There is a need for waterproof mattresses and sheets due to the number of traumatized children who suffer from enuresis.

4. Permanent Housing

- Most Yazidi prefer to live close to one another. The proximity gives them a sense of safety and provides networking opportunities. They feel they can better recuperate from their shared traumatic experiences if they are living close together.
- Proximity to grocery stores, schooling, language classes and settlement services tends to result in higher satisfaction.
- Living in basement suites is traumatizing to the Yazidi. Many have been held captive in windowless rooms for upwards of two years. Basement suites remind them of this captivity and should be avoided.
- There is some evidence of overcrowding, mainly because the Yazidi do not want to be separated from one another. Settlement service providers do what they can to find accommodation close to one another to accommodate multi-generational families.
- Most Yazidi were concerned about their ability to pay their rent and make ends meet, particularly after month 13.
- Although they appreciated the furniture provided, some Yazidi reported that it was in such bad condition that beds, tables and chairs broke days after they moved in.

5. Language and Education

- The Yazidi participating in our study had low levels of education. This is not surprising given that they were prevented from attending school in Iraq and were educated in Arabic. Most left school at Grade 6, making them effectively functionally illiterate in Arabic.
- Kurmanji is not a recognized language of school instruction in Iraq, so many Yazidi are unable to read and write in that language. As well, it is the only language in the world that

uses three alphabets: Cyrillic, Arabic and Latin. This complicates the learning of this language for many Yazidi.

- Learning English will be difficult. No one in our study had any knowledge of English prior to their arrival. With low levels of education and being functionally illiterate in their mother tongue, it will take a long time for many of the Yazidi to become proficient in English.
- Almost one-third of our participants are not currently attending English language classes. The reasons they gave us are: young children at home, illness or caring for ill family members.
- Google Translate is a widely used app among the Yazidi as it helps them conduct some simple transactions without the presence of an interpreter.
- In addition to the need for more Kurmanji-speaking interpreters, there is a significant need for more translators. Official documents such as medical letters, correspondence from IRCC and other government departments is not understood and often poorly translated by well-meaning but non-professional translators. Investing funds to professionally train Kurmanji-speaking Canadians to professionally translate and interpret would be a good long-term investment for this community.
- Arabic should not be used to fill the shortages in interpreting services in Kurmanji. Some Yazidi were told that they could receive settlement services faster if they agreed to receive interpretation in Arabic instead of Kurmanji. This was intended to be a temporary solution given the shortage of qualified Kurmanji interpreters. This procedure failed for two reasons:
 - Since many of the Yazidi in this study have no education or less than Grade 6 education, they were functionally illiterate in Arabic. Those receiving services in Arabic often report difficulty understanding the information that was given to them.
 - Other Yazidi refused services in Arabic because this was the language spoken by their captors. Many were afraid of people speaking that language due to the traumatic memories this language invokes.

6. Settlement Services

- The Yazidi are mainly satisfied with the services provided by the settlement agencies.
- There is significant confusion and misunderstanding about who is a volunteer and who is a paid employee of a settlement agency. When they move to permanent housing, most Yazidi

think the “kindly people” who “drop by” are volunteers. Some do not understand that the person taking them to appointments (for instance) is a paid employee and not a volunteer. Agencies might want to make an effort to ensure their employees wear badges or other identifying information to help the Yazidi understand they are receiving paid services.

- It is extremely difficult for those who have experienced trauma to discuss intimate and private issues using an opposite-sex interpreter. Some women have refused interpretation services for medical appointments if the interpreter is male. Interpretation services should try to accommodate this as much as possible.
- Interpretation over the phone is largely ineffective, particularly for those with low levels of education and especially for medical matters. Interpreters miss important non-verbal cues when they are on the phone. Some Yazidi have extreme difficulty understanding this kind of interpretation.
- There is a need for professional and prompt interpretation of important letters and documents. Google Translate does not work for these kinds of documents.
- About half of the Yazidi use food banks at least twice a month.
- Budgeting and financial literacy is low among some Yazidi. They would benefit from some instruction about how to budget for monthly costs in Canada.
- There is confusion about income tax and the child tax benefit. The three months wait for the child tax benefit causes problems as the Yazidi could really use the extra funds earlier in their resettlement.
- We worry about burnout among the Kurmanji-speaking employees of settlement agencies. Some Yazidi are very dependent on these workers for travel to all their appointments and for all their interpretation needs.

7. Public Transportation and Wayfinding

- Many Yazidi find it difficult to use public transport. Some of the confusion is due to their inability to read English. This prolongs their dependency on certain kinds of settlement services.
- Wayfinding is difficult for some Yazidi due to their inability to read English. Others are not given the names or addresses of their schools or medical service providers so they are unable to learn their way around.

8. Gender Issues

- There are many, very young widowed women in our study. In Iraq, these women were not allowed to attend school or were forced to leave at a young age. This has prevented them from getting an education which makes learning English, using public transport, and conducting business very difficult. We interviewed many men who were responsible not only for their own immediate families, but for families headed by single women. This group of Yazidi may require additional services so they can learn to live more independently. In the short-term, these families require additional help so that the male family members are not overburdened as they learn about their new society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Much of the world's attention in the past two years has been focused on the unprecedented and rising numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons, and other persons in danger. At the end of 2017, the UNHCR (2018) reported that over 71.3 million people have been forcibly displaced, with 21.3 million refugees and another 3.2 million asylum seekers. Given the context of global politics, the economy, and the threat of environmental degradation, the numbers of people in need are likely to continue increasing in the near future. Canada is recognized recently as a global leader in the resettlement of refugees, not only because of the over 46,070 Syrians resettled in Canada in 2015-16 (IRCC, 2018), but due to our long history of successfully resettling refugees from various countries including over 37,000 Hungarians (1955-56), nearly 60,000 Vietnamese Laotian and Cambodians (1979-1980), 4,000 Karen (2006), and more recently, 25,000 "special needs" Iraqi (2009-2013) refugees.

The Yazidi have been persecuted throughout most of their history. The latest atrocity occurred in 2014 when the Yazidis in Iraq experienced yet another genocide, this time at the hands of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also commonly known as Daesh. More than 200,000 Yazidis residing in Sinjar were chased up the mountain and attacked (Erdener, 2017). Daesh wanted to exterminate the Yazidi, either by conversion or by death. Between 2,000 and 7,000 Yazidis were killed in August 2014 and almost equal numbers of women and children were captured by Daesh and raped, sold into sexual slavery, and tortured (Erdener, 2017; Foster

& Minwalla, 2018; Kelly 2018). The people who managed to escape and fled to Turkey were uprooted again in 2017 by the Turkish government. Many of the Yazidis returned to unorganized camps in the Sinjar area where they were later selected for resettlement by Canada.

In 2017, 1,215 people, mainly Yazidis (81%), were resettled in Canada (IRCC 2018 personal communication). Almost all of them are women and half are children (Harris, 2017a; IRCC 2018 personal communication). What makes this group significantly different from many of the previous refugee arrivals is the degree of physical, mental and emotional health issues, exacerbated by the fact that they are among the most marginalized and tormented ethnic minorities on the planet (Porter, 2018; Vijanann, 2017). They have been victims of persecution for centuries, mainly due to the mistaken belief that their religion is focused on devil worship. As a result of years of marginalization and persecution, their religion, culture and way of life is not well understood. The other unique part of their situation is the fact that the Yazidi resettled in Canada this year were selected in Iraq directly. Because they were internally displaced prior to their arrival to Canada. This meant that the time between leaving Iraq and coming to Canada is measured in weeks—not years—which is the case for most other refugees. This fact is significant as according to the UNHCR, the average refugee spends 7-9 years in a refugee camp prior to permanent resettlement. There is also evidence to suggest that the prolonged nature of the trauma they have endured collectively is vicious and inhumane.

Given their unique pre-arrival conditions, the significant trauma they have witnessed or personally experienced, and the fact that the Yazidis settled in Canada arrived directly from Iraq, there are a number of pertinent questions to be addressed. *1) what settlement services do they require? Do they have access to these services?; 2) what has their experience in attaining language training been like?; 3) what might their job prospects be?; and 4) what are their current housing conditions?* Addressing these questions will provide valuable information to the Canadian settlement organizations and prepare them better when receiving refugees experiencing significant trauma in the future. Most importantly, it will help this group of refugees better prepare for their new lives in Canada.

2. A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF YAZIDIS

Yazidi live mainly along the Iran/Iraq border, with smaller communities in Syria, Armenia, Turkey and Georgia. The Yazidi coming to Canada most recently are mainly from the

northeastern parts of Iraq. The largest expatriate community is located in Germany. Estimates indicate that there are about 700,000 Yazidi today, with the majority living in the Kurdish-controlled areas of northeastern Iraq near Erbil and Kirkuk (Allison, 2004; Jalabi, 2014). The UN and EU Parliament, along with the American and Canadian governments, have recognized Yazidis as victims of genocide (Hutchinson, 2017; Cetorelli et al., 2017). Since their culture and religion are endogamous, they do not accept converts (Arakelova, 2010) and those who marry outside the group are no longer considered Yazidi. This endogamy imperative, combined with centuries of marginalization, massacres, and subsequent flight from war and genocide, means that the health and wellbeing of the Yazidi community is deeply endangered and that their trauma is intergenerational. The fact that they are now forced to flee for their lives and be resettled far away from one another in places like Canada and Germany will make it difficult for this group to fully recover.

Various myths and misperceptions about the Yazidi continue to contribute to the stereotypes and false information being shared today. Elements of Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism shape Yazidi culture and religion (Arakelova, 2010). They follow Yezidism which is a monotheistic religion, following one god known to the Yazidis as Xwade (Nicolaus, 2014). Malak-Tawus, the Peacock Angel, is the most important prophet in the Yazidi belief system which is both divine and evil. Outsiders to the ethnic group wrongly believe a widely held myth that Malak-Tawus is actually Satan. For this reason, the Yazidi have long been labeled as devil worshipers. On the contrary, Yazidi religion has no devil or evil spirit associated with it. Another myth involving Yazidi is the false connection between their ethnic name and Yazid Ibn Muawiya given the similar sound and spelling. Yazid was a Muslim caliph in Ancient Islam who was responsible for the mass murders of hundreds of innocent Muslims in the 7th century. There is no connection between Yazid and Yazidi. There is also a mistaken belief that Yazidi people are Muslim (Smith and Shadarevian, 2017; UNHCR 2009; Yezidis International, 2018). Yazidi are often falsely believed to be Kurds. They are not Kurds; the Yazidi have a culture, religion and dialect that are different from those practiced by the Kurds.

One of the salient characteristics of Yazidi religion and culture is that it is transmitted orally by the religious prophets (Spät, 2017). This oral tradition of passing religion without a written text has had tremendous consequences as outsiders have questioned the authenticity of the religion and used this as one of the justification of their conversion. Today, Daesh and their

supporters consider the Yazidis as a group without a “real religion” and that they should be converted to Islam by force or killed to release them from their misery of not having any religion.

These myths, stereotypes and lies about the history of their religion make Yazidi targets of some of the worst persecution the world has witnessed. In 2014, for instance, 40,000 Yazidis were forced to flee into the mountains near Sinjar Iraq (Bram and Yacoub, 2014; Chulov, 2014). Most of the men, boys, and those physically too weak to walk, were summarily executed; many of the women who survived were sold into sex slavery or forced into marriages with non-Yazidis—a fate which results in excommunication from their communities due to religious rules against exogamy. Yazidi women and children are, sadly, the most likely to experience and survive atrocities as the men and teenage boys have been killed, abducted or remain unaccounted for. While many refugee families arrive to Canada in fractured, incomplete units, this situation is particularly extreme among the Yazidi. According to reports from the UNHCR, women, girls and boys are likely to be victimized by kidnapping, rape and forced marriage, which are described as the “tools of modern warfare” (Global Justice Centre, 2014; vonWelser, 2017). Daesh captured the Yazidi women and later sold them in the “slavery bazaars” at a rate of \$10 and \$1500 USD earning millions of dollars from human trafficking and enslavement (Erdener, 2017; Worldwide Movement for Human Rights, 2018).

3. YAZIDI POPULATION IN CANADA

There were approximately 1500 Yazidis residing in Canada in 2015, according to an IRCC estimate (IRCC, 2017), with the largest numbers living in London and Winnipeg. Just over 800 were Yazidis resettled between February and October 2017 (House of Commons Standing Committee, 2018) and the government hopes to bring more Yazidi to Canada this year. They have mainly resettled in Calgary, London, Toronto and Winnipeg. A majority of the Yazidis have not had the opportunity to attend or complete school in Iraq (IRCC, 2016; House of Commons Standing Committee, 2018). Those with no formal schooling are more likely to be female. Arabic is the language of education but as most leave before completing primary school, almost all Yazidi are functionally illiterate in that language. As Kurmanji is not taught in school, most Yazidi have difficulty reading and writing in that language as well (Akin, 2011).

The primary language of Yazidis is Kurmanji and is spoken by 65% of the population (Akin, 2011). Kurmanji is not a Kurdish language and people who speak it cannot understand other Kurdish languages and dialects such as Sorani or Horami (Yezidis International, 2018). Kurmanji is the only language in the world that is actively written using three different alphabets: Arabic, Latin and Cyrillic (Akin, 2011). The alphabet used is dependent on the country in which the Yazidi reside. A group of experts is currently working to standardize the written form of the language. In Canada, almost all of the Yazidi speak Kurmanji. A few are fluent in Arabic while some know basic Arabic.

Four cities, Toronto, London, Winnipeg and Calgary, hosted the majority of Yazidi refugees to Canada. Table 1 details their arrivals¹. The city receiving the largest number of Yazidi was Winnipeg at 355, accounting for 29% of all the arrivals. London follows closely behind with a total of 275 Yazidi. The destinations of Winnipeg and London make the most ‘sense’ given that their cities hosted the highest number of Yazidi arriving to Canada pre-2014. Toronto and Calgary also host a number of Yazidi given the availability of settlement services. A number of other cities hosted Yazidi refugees, though fewer in number. Lethbridge, Vancouver, Hamilton, Peterborough and Montreal also hosted some Yazidi families.

Table 1: Yazidi Arrivals, Canada 2017 to September 2018

	2017	Jan - Sep 2018	Total
Alberta total	210	75	295
Calgary	180	50	245
Lethbridge	25	25	50
Manitoba total	220	115	355
Winnipeg	220	115	355
Ontario total	370	175	550
London	160	115	275
Toronto	185	60	245
Grand Total	810	370	1,215

Source IRCC. 2018. Permanent Residents, September 30 2018. Data request tracking number RE-1800511.

¹ This table reflects the number of Yazidi destined to each city. It does not reflect the Yazidi who relocated subsequently. We have evidence that several Yazidi relocated shortly after their arrival to Canada, mainly to Calgary and London.

Like other refugee communities, the Yazidi community is very young. Upwards of 70% of all Yazidi refugees are aged 30 years or younger, a figure that is slightly higher than the 60% among other refugees UNHCR (2017, calculations by author). Because of generations of persecution in Iraq and elsewhere, most Yazidi children and their parents have not finished secondary schooling and many are functionally illiterate in their mother tongue.

Winnipeg hosts the largest number of Yazidi families with a total of 135; London follows with 105 families. Toronto hosts 90 families and Calgary 100. We asked IRCC to tell us the average family size, which they are unable to calculate. This is because all dependents over the age of 18 are “counted” as single arriving adults—even though they are very likely to be living with their families. As a result, the information in Table 2 should be interpreted with some caution. We suspect that the majority of the single-person households are actually individuals over the age of 18 joining their families. Contrary to media reports, the families, at least on average, are not large. Although no family unit reported in our data request was larger than six members, this was due to data suppression. We have evidence from our interviews and from speaking with settlement service providers of very large families with 12 or more individuals, but these are not common.

Table 2: *Family Size by City, 2017-2018*

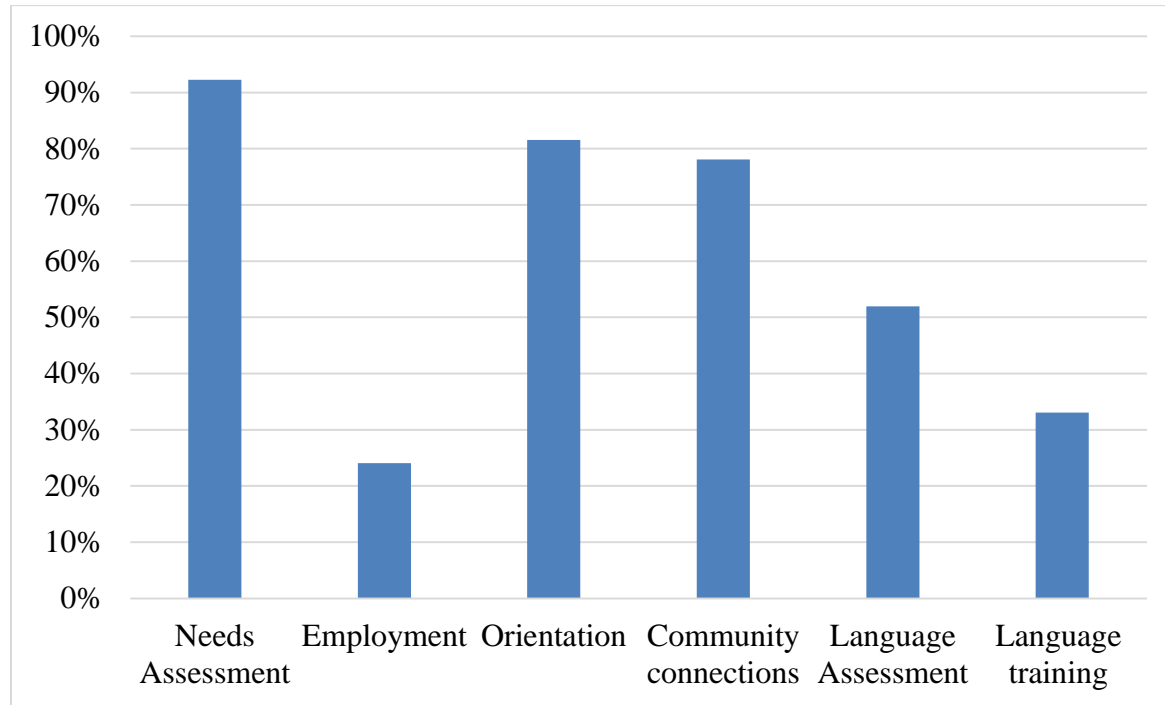
Family unit	Calgary	Winnipeg	London	Toronto
1	55%	56%	48%	39%
2	10%	7%	14%	11%
3	10%	0%	10%	17%
4	10%	11%	14%	17%
5	5%	7%	10%	11%
6	5%	7%	0%	0%

Source IRCC. 2018. Permanent Residents, September 30 2018. Data request tracking number RE-1800511.

According to data from iCARE, we see a large number of Yazidi are already using various resettlement services. Table 3 shows that over 90% have received a needs assessment and 81% have received orientation. Just over half have had a language assessment and one-third

are currently in language training. Despite being in Canada for about a year, 23% had received some employment counselling.

Table 3: *Settlement Services Accessed by Yazidi Refugees in Canada*



Source IRCC. 2018. Permanent Residents, September 30 2018. Data request tracking number RE-1800511.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

As our study is preliminary and the first time we have met the Yazidi, we focused on four major aspects of their new lives in Canada: pre-arrival orientation, housing conditions, settlement service use, and language acquisition. The literature review outlines some of the most recent research in these areas. We will also discuss trauma because although we had not directly asked the Yazidi about the trauma and the reasons they came to Canada, their trauma experiences permeated every aspect of our interviews.

4.1 Housing

For refugees, housing is an essential first step toward successful settlement and integration. Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) are provided with temporary accommodation in reception centres during the first few weeks in Canada. These accommodations are arranged by the settlement organizations until permanent housing is secured (UNHCR, 2016). Almost all of the Yazidi arriving to Canada in 2017 are GARs and thus, their first ‘experience’ of Canada was in a reception house.

In spite of all the housing support given to the resettled refugees, studies indicate that low income and high rents remain major challenges (IRCC, 2016; Yu et al, 2007). Many refugees find it difficult to manage their housing expenses once their sponsorship has ended and they transition to provincial social assistance the federal government agrees. According to the 2015 *Evaluation of the Immigration Loan Program*, Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) income support was insufficient to pay for the basic necessities of refugees (IRCC, 2015). More than 46% GARs and 64% Blended Visa Office Referrals (BVORs) agreed that the RAP income support did not meet their basic needs and they had to depend on the food banks for compensating other basic necessities. The situation is a bit different for Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs); only 13% felt that their sponsors’ income support was not enough to cover their daily expenses (IRCC, 2015). Most income support covers housing expenses but leaves little else for other necessities such as school supplies and clothing. Research also shows that refugees with large families, single adult or refugees with special needs, and GARs have the most challenges locating affordable housing (IRCC, 2016; Wilkinson et al, 2017) and that the housing they do locate is often too small and in need of repair (Hyndman, 2013) .

According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC, 2010), affordable housing is defined as the condition where renters pay less than 30% before-tax household income. In case of refugees, many families exceed this ratio by large margins affecting GARs and PSRs equally (Murdie & Logan, 2011). Many GARs have to spend most of their income on rent, some exceeding more than 55% of their total income assistance (IRCC, 2016). Refugees face additional housing problems because they do not have a credit history or co-signers (unless they have private sponsors) who can take responsibility on their behalf either

for rents or mortgages (Wilkinson, et al., 2017). Moreover, for most of them lack of networks of family members or friends to refer them to reputable landlords make them vulnerable to exploitation within the rental housing market.

Affordability usually plays a major role in newcomer's satisfaction with housing. The trade-off for acquiring suitable housing usually means settling for a higher rent than the shelter-to-income ratio that is optimal for financial stability (Carter et al., 2009). Neighborhood plays an important role in terms of safety, proximity to work, and available job opportunities which are often not located near affordable housing. An additional compromise has to do with basement suites. In some instances, refugees are housed in basement suites in an effort to create space for large families. Although more affordable, some refugees find the conditions traumatizing (Rose & Charette, 2014; Teixeira, 2014; Wilkinson et al., 2017).

Refugees with large families tend to face greater housing challenges (Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Wilkinson, et al., 2018). Canadian dwellings are not constructed for large families which may cause illegal living and overcrowding while accommodating refugees. The cost of trying to improve affordability can lead occupying old houses in poor quality. Other challenges include finding housing in relatively good condition (such as the building having proper heating and air circulation, is well maintained without mites and bed bugs, etc.), suitable for large families, located in a safe neighbourhood, and accessing reliable information about housing vacancies (Carter, et al., 2009; Francis & Hiebert, 2014; Sherrell, 2009; Wilkinson, et al., 2018). Often, refugees have fewer choices in the housing they can select because of size and affordability issues (Netto, 2011; Francis, 2009). The consequence of not providing refugees with a decision to the type, location of housing, size and the condition of residence is usually left to the sponsors who may not take into account the needs of those who will live in the apartment (Atallah, 2017). Language can become a barrier in communicating to landlords regarding problems with the unit, understanding national occupancy standards, or in accessing any information that is vital for resettlement (Francis & Hiebert, 2014).

Race, ethnicity, religion, and marital status are also factors which may hinder chances of acquiring proper housing. These ascribed characteristics can be the basis for landlord's prejudices, refusal to provide accommodation to certain groups of people and the strenuous house searches refugees encounter (Mensah & William, 2013; Netto, 2011; Teixeira, 2014).

4.2 Employment

The few studies that exist on their labour market participation and integration mainly focus on their first five years in Canada, the period of time where most are learning a new language and acquiring new skills. If we consider their long-term job trajectories, the majority of refugees pay more in taxes than they ever use in settlement and language services. This is because the majority of refugees arrive to Canada prior to their 29th birthday, meaning that most will have decades of work experience before they retire (Wilkinson and Garcea, 2017).

Labour market integration is an important indicator of wellbeing for most refugees and Canada, unlike most other countries, allows most refugees to work as soon as they arrive. Large gaps and incomplete education, along with weak language skills, racial discrimination, lack of Canadian work experience, and foreign credential recognition are barriers most refugees face when obtaining employment (Beiser & Hou, 2000; Krahn, et al., 2000). As a result, refugees initially end up in low salaried, low skilled jobs which are mostly precarious and part-time (Krahn et al., 2000; Francis, 2009). “Refugees are concentrated in precarious employment (e.g., security cleaning, warehouse, factory, etc.) characterized by low pay, no job security, poor and often unsafe working conditions, excessive hours, and no benefits” (Francis, 2009, p.36) at least in the short term. There is evidence that over time, however, many refugees are able to find more secure and better paid employment (Clemens & Hunt, 2017; Pendakur et al., 2016).

A recent study of Syrian refugees finds that labour market transitions as the most important service need among refugees; 45% of refugees wanted pre-arrival assessment of skills, education and work experience, 51% wanted pre-arrival assessment of English/French language skills, 48% refugees wanted post-arrival skills and job training, and 44% refugees wanted additional connections with employers and job referrals (Wilkinson et al., 2016). Furthermore, refugees have lower job satisfaction compared to other newcomer groups and are less likely to be working in a job that recognizes their education and work experience (Wilkinson et. al., 2016).

Not unlike other refugee groups, the experience of work differs by gender. IRCC’s (2016) study of refugees finds a gender difference in the acquisition of employment. Men (47.5%) are more likely than women (25.8%) to have jobs within the first five years of resettlement (IRCC, 2016). Many women come from cultures where they are not expected to work, so the acquisition of employment in Canada may be particularly difficult for them. The reality is that most families will require multiple income earners so many women will find work

in Canada eventually. As Pendakur et al., (2016) show, female refugees have similar work patterns and outcomes to other immigrant groups and to Canadian-born females as time in Canada increases.

4.3 Language

Language fluency is one of the powerful predictors of successful resettlement among any newcomer group and affects their ability to access employment opportunities, influences the degree of social and cultural integration, and their overall satisfaction with settling in Canada (Myles & Hou, 2003). English language fluency is also a significant predictor of mental health (Beiser & Hou, 2001).

Several studies identify different factors that influence access to language training including age, marital status, size of the family, presence of young children, and education which affect women differently from men (Murphy Kilbride and Ali, 2010; Adamuti-Trache, Anisef and Sweet, 2018). Women as the primary caregiver in the families, face barriers accessing language training services that many men do not. Women are most likely to drop out of language classes due to family responsibilities. Once they drop out of language classes they are unlikely to return (Brunner, et al., 2010). English language proficiency among refugee women is directly proportionate to participation within labour market. Refugee women with English language skills tend to participate more within the labour market than their male counterparts (Beiser & Hou, 2000). Childcare is one of the biggest barriers that prevent refugee women from accessing English language classes early in their settlement (Beiser & Hou, 2000; IRCC, 2016). While men also have difficulties accessing language courses, they may have access to different opportunities such as that provided by organizations where they work or through other social settings. As a whole, however, women are less likely to access language classes and as a result, are in danger of becoming socially isolated and dissatisfied with their lives in Canada.

Learning a new language is more difficult when formal education is absent or incomplete. Among newcomers, it is refugees who are the most likely to have no schooling or significant gaps in their education. Among refugees, it is GARs who come with the lowest levels of formal education (IRCC, 2016). It has a snowball effect; little or no education means functional illiteracy in their mother tongue which means acquiring a new second language knowledge is more difficult which in turn affects their employability (Watt & Lake, 2004).

4.4 Mental Health

According to the settlement provider organizations who have worked with the early-arriving Yazidis, the main mental and emotional health problems they have observed involve anxiety, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, compulsive disorder, conversion disorder, and depression (Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, 2017; Marton et. al., 2016). Some psychologists are suggesting that the trauma faced by refugees, especially those who have been held in captivity for long periods of time have a form of PTSD that is more difficult to treat. Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD) “is typically associated with prolonged trauma where one's destiny is under another's control and escape - from captivity, for example -- is unfeasible. As opposed to PTSD, which can be triggered by trauma reminders, C-PTSD is conceived to be a more deeply-rooted disorder that affects the very core of one's self-organization” (Health Reference Centre Academic Editor, 2018: np). In Hoffman (2018) and his colleagues’ study of resettled Yazidi women (all who had been held in captivity), 51% had CPTSD and another 21% had PTSD.

The treatments for these conditions include intensive therapy with qualified specialists, Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (for PTSD and conversion disorder, depression, anxiety disorders), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, narrative therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, and resettlement (Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, 2017). In fact, successful resettlement and integration of persons with these conditions is the primary and most successful ‘treatment’ for many of the mental disorders that refugees bring with them is resettlement and integration. Intuitively, this makes some sense. If social, economic and cultural conditions are stable and accepting, then those with pre-existing health problems can concentrate more time on becoming mentally and emotionally well which is congruent with Maslow’s Theory of Hierarchy of Needs (Gale Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health, 2013). Although his theory has been criticized for its rigidity and simplicity, there is some truth in the idea that emotional and psychological needs cannot be dealt with until basic food, shelter, safety and other needs are met. Two recent systematic reviews of medical research on the mental health of refugee children and adults also confirm that for the vast majority of refugees, successful integration is the main factor contributing to recovery from most mental health conditions

(Wilkinson and Ponka, 2018; Marton et. al., 2016). Among refugee children, parental integration and learning an official language had the largest effect on successfully overcoming trauma (Beiser et., al, 2014).

Families fractured by war, experiencing violence first hand, or witnessing their family members enduring violence, are a sadly common phenomenon. According to recent research, 70% of children and over 90% of refugees have either personally experienced violence or witnessed it (Abbott, 2016). Complicating their experiences is the increased exposure to interpersonal violence after the conflict (McCloskey and Walker, 2000). Walthen and MacMillan (2013) find that rates of within-family interpersonal violence among refugees are higher than among the general population. In short, not only are refugees victimized by the war and atrocities external to their family but they are also more likely to be secondary victims of interpersonal violence. Although there is great interest among various resettlement agencies in Canada in helping refugee families deal with interpersonal violence, there are only a few research studies on this issue (Arteaga, 2014; Hauff and Vaglum, 1995).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 A Qualitative Method

Although it was our initial intention to conduct a survey of the Yazidi, after much deliberation and discussion with our advisory panel, the decision was to conduct qualitative interviews with a smaller number of people. The reasons were as follows. First, we were unsure if the Yazidi would be able to complete a survey. As it turned out, over half of our participants had never attended school. The remainder had less than grade 6 education. They also were largely functionally illiterate in Kurmanji because they were never given formal education in it. The only way a survey would be successful would be to conduct the interviews face-to-face and there just was not enough time to do that. Secondly, our settlement service providers and mental health committee members felt that the trauma that the Yazidi had experienced was such that introducing ourselves using the strict procedures of survey methods would be intimidating and may cause more damage to them. Finally, we have now learned that most of the Yazidi want to

share their stories of coming to Canada and this was an excellent opportunity for us to get to know them a bit better and to ethically record their histories, so we can share them “with the world” as they phrased it. We are happy we selected qualitative interviews as we have uncovered information that would be difficult to identify using traditional survey methods. All of our participants agreed to be interviewed and/or participate in our follow-up study. We have cross-referenced our results to existing research when we were able.

The advisory committee assisted in identifying the themes that shaped our interview guide. These themes include: experience in the reception centres, current housing conditions, language classes and pre-arrival knowledge of English², pre-arrival employment history and accessibility of employment services, pre-arrival orientation and post arrival settlement service use, general health related service accessibility and various demographic questions. An interview guide was prepared and shared with our advisory committee. We received valuable feedback and adjusted, removed and added questions accordingly. After the guide was approved, an independent Kurmanji speaking translator was hired to translate the interview guide, consent form and recruitment script into Kurmanji using the Latin alphabet. The translator was a different person from the interviewer. Copies of the interview guide in English and Kurmanji, along with dual language copies of the consent forms are available in Appendix II, III, IV & V.

Given the low level of education of many of our intended participants, it was imperative that we hire a Kurmanji speaking interviewer. It was fortuitous that we were able to hire a skilled person living in Lethbridge and she agreed to conduct the interviews in Winnipeg, Toronto and London. Not only is she fluent in Kurmanji and English, but she has had extensive experience working in the settlement sector with newly arrived refugees. Due to time constraints, the interviews conducted in Calgary were conducted by a male interviewer who works for Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, the major provider of RAP services in the area.

All the interviews were conducted in person and were voice recorded with their permission. The interviewer translated and transcribed the interviews—but was spot checked by the independent translator and found no inconsistencies in the interpretation. In all study sites,

²Since the study was conducted in mainly English speaking areas of Canada, we did not ask about prior knowledge of French, a topic we will examine in subsequent studies of this group.

the interviewer was accompanied to the interview site by local settlement workers and a research assistant. No adverse events were reported.

5.2 Recruitment of Survey Participants

According to the House of Commons report on the Yazidi in Canada, 642 government-assisted refugees resettled in London, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Calgary, and another 165 Yazidis have been resettled elsewhere across Canada including Montreal, Moose Jaw, Ottawa, Sherbrooke and Windsor (House of Commons, 2018). A very small number of Yazidi were privately sponsored. Prior to the arrival of the most current group of Yazidi, there existed a small Yazidi community in Canada arriving with other refugees from Iraq between 2009 and 2014. The largest established communities were in Winnipeg and London.

Interviews were conducted on a sample of 35 Yazidi in these four cities of Canada (Fig 1.). Participants were identified by the four participating RAP agencies and settlement workers explained the study and arranged appointments for our interviewer. The goal was to interview 5 to 10 participants per city, a goal that was achieved in 11 days.

Figure 1: *Participants by City of Residence*

City	No of respondents
Calgary	6
London	10
Toronto	9
Winnipeg	10

Given the short timeline for our study and the fact that we used RAP agencies to identify and invite participants, all the Yazidi in our study are GARs. Study participants were all aged 18 and over at the time of the interview. Only one person per household was interviewed.

The Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba reviewed the study recruitment and methodological protocols and granted permission for the team to conduct the study.

Our interviewer ensured that all the participants she met were ‘healthy’ before she ended the interview. At no time did any of the participants indicate that they were traumatized and that they could not continue. In some cases, she alerted the settlement worker on site (her interviews were conducted in the community where the immigrant settlement organization was working) if she felt the family was in need of assistance unrelated to our interviews. At the conclusion of the interview, she gave each participant \$10 as an honorarium and asked if they would like to participate in a future study. All participants agreed to be contacted for a second study. They left their cell phone numbers with the interviewer for future follow-up.

All identifying data was kept separate from the interview materials and kept on a password protected, encrypted computer. In writing this report, we endeavored to keep the identities of the Yazidi participants confidential so there are places where we purposely do not provide certain demographic or geographic characteristics. We have given each participant a Yazidi name as a pseudonym. We identify participants by age, sex, marital status, and time in Canada. Readers can view this information in Appendix VI on page 107.

All participants expressed a strong desire to share their experiences with Canadians and we endeavor to do this in the current report.

6. FINDINGS

The findings are separated into three parts. First, we provide a general demographic overview of the participants in our study. Next, we provide the results of our interviews by theme beginning with the experience of trauma, pre-arrival orientation, reception centre experience, housing conditions, language and education, employment, access to settlement and health services and others. The last part of this section records our observations, mainly connecting our findings to existing research and making some policy and programing suggestions based on our findings and cross-referenced with other studies.

6.1 Demographics of our Study Participants

Twenty-two of our participants identified as female and 13 were male. As mentioned earlier, almost 60% had never attended school. Of those who did, only three completed high school. Of these three, only one completed post-secondary education. This is a similar result to what has been reported elsewhere (Frangou, 2018). Because they have been marginalized and excluded in Iraq for centuries, the Yazidi are unlikely to attend school and if they did, most left or were forced to leave after 5 or 6 years making them only partially literate.

Figure 2 shows that the participants in our study are very recent arrivals, with an average of 8 months in Canada at the time of their interview with us. The “newest” arrived participants arrived only 6 days prior to the interview (two persons) while the “most experienced” participants had been in Canada for 13 or 14 months (six participants).

Table 4: *Preliminary Statistics – Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants*

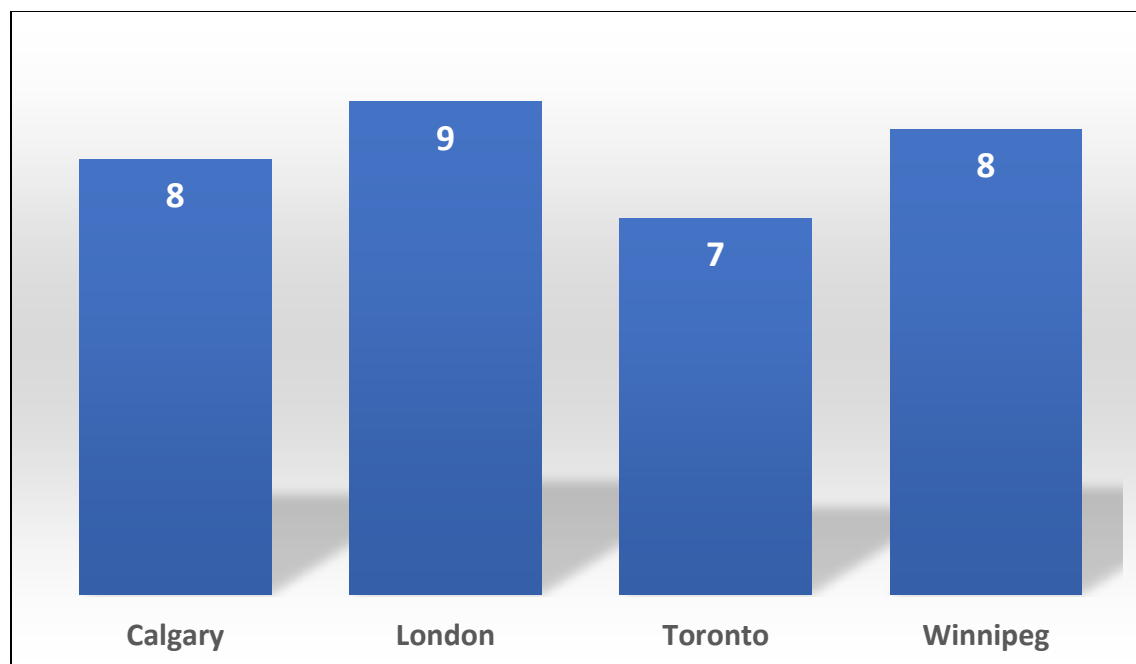
Country living Prior to arriving Canada	Iraq	Turkey	Lebanon	Total		Sample Total
N (%)	31 (91.2%)	2 (5.9%)	1 (2.9%)	34		35
Age groups	20-29years	30-39years	40-49years	50-59years	Total	
N (%)	15 (45.5%)	12 (36.4%)	4 (12.1%)	2 (6.1%)	33	
Marital Status	Married	Widowed	Single	Total		
N (%)	15 (42.9%)	14 (40%)	6 (17.1%)	35		
Gender	Female	Male	Total			
N (%)	22 (62.9%)	13 (37.1%)	35			
No. of people in household	Average number of people in household	Total	Average number of children in household	Total		
N	5.3 = 5	186/35	3.5	121/35		

Educational level (1)	No Education	Up to Grade 5	Up to Grade 6	Up to Grade 8	Post-Secondary Education	Total
N (%)	19 (57.6%)	6 (18.2%)	4 (12.1%)	1 (3.0%)	3 (9.1%)	33
Educational level (2)	No Education	Grade 3 - 5	Grade 6 - 9	Post-Secondary Education	Total	
N (%)	19 (57.6%)	6 (18.2%)	5 (15.1%)	3 (9.1%)	33	
Immigration Application Status	Principal Applicant	Spouse				
N (%)	32 (91.4%)	3 (8.6%)				

Notes:

1. All respondents arrived through Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) class
2. All respondents indicated “Kurmanji Kurdi” as their First Language
3. Almost all respondents stayed in a hotel/motel/reception centre when first arrived in Canada.

Figure 2: *Average Number of Months in Canada by City, Yazidi Refugees, 2018*



All of the Yazidi we spoke to were living with some family members although the composition of the families varied. Understandably, marital status was difficult to ascertain. Many of the persons who told us they were married qualified that with “but I don’t know if my husband is alive or dead” because they had been taken by Daesh. As a result, some of the married individuals were in Canada without their spouses. Our count is as follows: 14 widowed (all female), 15 married (though some were unsure where their spouse was) and 6 single/never married participants. Almost all participants had children living in their household. As figure 3 indicates, the modal number of persons per family unit was 5.3 and the family size did not differ by city. Figure four indicates that the modal number of children per household as 3.5. These “averages” are not representative of the Yazidi population in Canada and due to the small sample size, should be taken with caution.

Figure 3: *Average Yazidi Family Size by City, 2018*

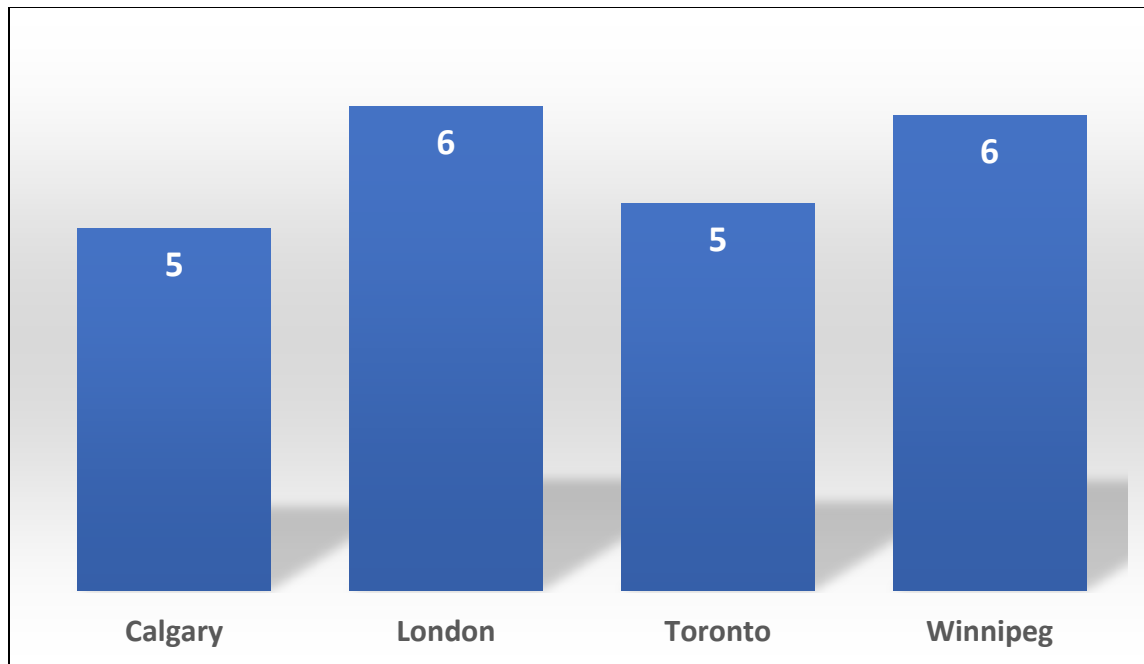
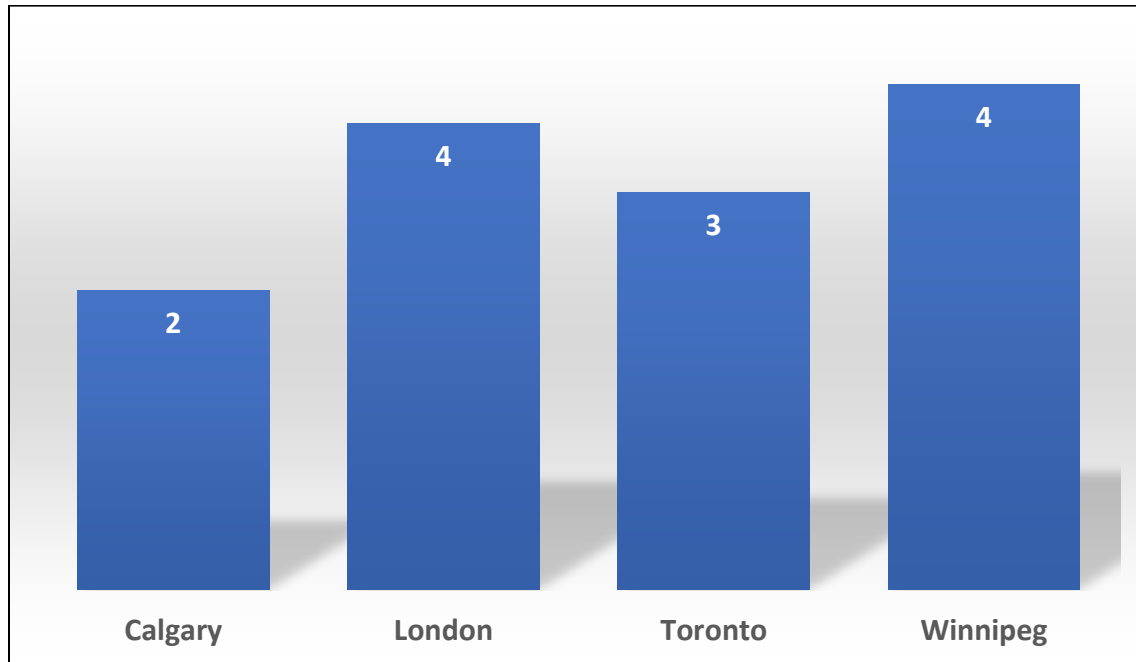


Figure 4: *Average number of children per Yazidi household by city, 2018*

The next section outlines the findings from the qualitative interviews.

6.2 Initial Settlement Experiences

6.2.1 The Trauma Experience and Aftermath

It is virtually impossible to conduct any research with refugees and not have trauma and mental health appear within the interviews. This is hardly surprising as all refugees come to Canada is because they are fleeing violence and conflict situations. A recent study in Germany by Abbott (2016) indicates that over 90% of all refugees have witnessed or personally experienced physical violence, rape, attempted murder, witnessed murder, or witnessed assault or rape. What makes this Yazidi population and study different from other recent refugee groups is the fact that nearly all 35 participants described in great detail the physical, sexual and mental trauma they had personally experienced³. This was despite the fact that the interview guide did not expressly ask any questions related to trauma and violence. Their trauma seeped through all

³ Our observation is confirmed by our conversations with psychologists and social workers who are currently working with Yazidi refugees. Dr Annalee Coakley (and many others), medical director for Mosaic Refugee Health Clinic in Calgary states in a recent *Globe and Mail* article, “I have never seen families in acute distress like that” (Frangou, 2018, A11)

the questions we asked on housing, employment, pre-arrival orientation, settlement service use, health service use, and language acquisition. Almost every aspect of their lives in Canada was affected by the trauma they had witnessed and endured.

One message was made clear by nearly all of the participants, “please let Canadians know about our story”. While this report can only tell bits and pieces of their story, it is our mission to ensure that we respected their wishes. In this section of the report, we do the difficult job of telling their stories. We made the decision not to reveal even the pseudonyms or present city of residence to maintain some confidentiality.

Upon reflection, it is not surprising that we heard so much about trauma during our interviews with the Yazidi. Their trauma is experienced collectively. As indicated by international bodies, they have experienced genocide (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016), and that this is the 74th genocide they have experienced since the 14th century (Marczak, 2018). As a result, their trauma is intergenerational. Many currently have family members and friends in Daesh captivity or they are unsure of their whereabouts. This is a very important reason why they are willing to share their stories with us and with others who will listen. Because they have been victimized and marginalized for so long, they now wish to use their voice to encourage action among the international community so that this never happens again.

The psychosomatic and physical scars carried by many of the Yazidis to Canada are immense. Given that the Yazidi were selected precisely because they were targets of genocide, the fact that their experiences were reported throughout our interview is not surprising. According to Jean-Nicolas Beuze, the UNHCR to Canada, the selection of the Yazidis was based on the assumption that “children born out of wedlock of women who had been held captive by Daesh (ISIS) are particularly at risk of reprisal from their own family, unfortunately, and from their own communities” (Harris, 2017). This observation is confirmed by recent reports from Iraq. There is evidence that over 200 women have put their “Daesh babies” up for adoption (Worldwide Movement for Human Rights 2018). Psychologists and other mental health experts working with the Yazidi have also reported that this group has among the highest rates of sustained trauma they have ever witnessed (Porter, 2018). The trauma that many have endured is shocking and yet they shared their stories with us.

“I am unable to sleep peacefully. Every time I close my eyes, I get flashbacks, even with the medications I’m taking. I go back to the times we have been raped over and over and over again with my children watching. I have witnessed the most horrid events. I have seen women raped and killed before my eyes. I have seen their one to three-year-old children beheaded before my eyes for defying the Muslims. I want the government to know we are not the same. Some of us are a lot worse than those pretending to be. We require good medical treatment, good doctors and psychologists. We need interpreters that we can feel confident to help us relay our messages.... I have nine kids. Eight are with me and one is still in captivity. The twin of my child that is here. My son was taken by a butcher and he was a slave in his house. He would come to see me once and a while covered with blood. He told me the Daesh man he was living with was beheading innocent people. And he’s asked him to do the same thing. I start crying and I told him, son, if you do that I will kill myself. What if they bring you someone and it turns out to be your father and you’re not aware because his face is covered. What will you do then? So praise God he refused to obey those demands. They beat him day in and day out. They tortured my poor boy and the other kids. My babies were raped, unable to hold their stool in. I had to put diapers on my babies. My son, their slave and I and my children are their toys” (Roshan, Female, 8 children).

Loss of family members due to violence, kidnaping and torture by Daesh are sadly common histories of the participants we met, such as the experiences by the woman we just discussed. Their histories appeared throughout the interviews even when seemingly innocuous questions were asked. One man recalled these events when we asked the participant about whether or not he was currently working in Canada.

“Could I say something, my teacher?”

Interviewer: “yes, of course. Say whatever you’d like”.

“I lost 21 members of my family to Daesh. And I rescued 5 members. And those I have rescued are traumatized, tortured sick and importantly, I brought five of them here with me. Two of the girls were raped and sold over 20 to 30 times. One of the boys has been severely wounded and the other boy has gone deaf due to the blows of trauma to the head and face”.

This couple was guardian to eight girls and four boys, all under the age of 18. Some of the children and teens had been sexually and physically assaulted. One of the youngest boys had been recruited and fought for Daesh and was exhibiting troubling and violent behavior. In fact, this young boy regularly hits his siblings and the couple looking after him. The interviewer ensured that this family was given assistance by the RAP providers at the end of her interview (although we understood that the family was already receiving trauma counselling and the girls had already been examined by a gynecologist). This couple was struggling caring for 14 children alone. In Iraq, they were able to manage because three other adults assisted in their care. Despite the difficulties caring for 14 children, “I brought them here with me because I figured I could give them a second chance at life so they wouldn’t turn out bad. In Iraq, they probably wouldn’t have lasted. I decided to come here because I was told it was a great country to live. The kids will have a better future, they will be able to study and go to school and no longer have to fear death” (Aylas, Male, 12 children).

Reunification with family members still trapped in Iraq was a priority for most participants in our study. Many had left loved ones in refugee camps. One woman tells us, “All I want is help for those that have left family behind. They need to get out of that terrible lifestyle in the camps. My sisters and brothers are still living in the camps with no food to eat and cold at times. People like my father and mother who are old need more care and attention. The need to make sure they get the help they need” (Sarab, Female, no children). Almost everyone told us of sons, daughters, husbands, sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews who remained in Daesh captivity.

Others were unsure of the whereabouts or safety of family members who had been kidnapped by Daesh. One woman tells us her four-year-old sister is currently under Daesh captivity. She asked us for help as it cost her \$20,000 US to buy her other sister from Daesh. This separation and the constant anxiety of worrying about the health and safety of missing loved

ones only compounds the mental health problems the Yazidi are experiencing. Many people told us that their worry for relatives in Iraq was hindering their language learning and settlement in Canada. One woman tells us,

“No, I’m not getting better it seems. I was struck by a car while fleeing for safety. I was in captivity, locked away for almost two and a half years. I am not well mentally. I was barely given a chance to see the light of the sun. (Nearly) my entire family was killed by Daesh. I’m grateful to the Canadian government. They returned one of my sons recently, but my older son is still in captivity. I haven’t heard back from him at all. It’s hard to process information while you are under so much pressure and stress, worrying about my family and relatives and friends knowing most of them were killed by Daesh. Some in front of you. Others behind you” (Khalida, Female, 5 children).

These experiences, coupled with the difficulties integrating into a foreign country where their language is not spoken, religion is not respected or tolerated and the uncertainties of learning to live independently cause much concern for the Yazidi. Studies have shown that families that reunify integrate faster and more successfully than families who are left fractured and incomplete (Frangou, 2018). The family acts as an insulating factor, protecting individuals from some of the pain associated with integration into a new society.

Once in Canada, it is imperative that the mental health services provided are helpful and culturally appropriate and sensitive to the depth of the trauma some of these people have endured. A participant in London reports that her therapist told her to:

“Forget about what happened to me. I will tell you it’s not easy to forget, no matter what we get or do in life. What I went through, I cannot forget. I was in captivity by the Muslims (Daesh) for over two years. I bared a child from them. I held that little girl for about five days and carried her 9 months to term and they took her from me. They told me that your other children are infidels and we don’t want them as they are the offspring of an infidel. The men that raped me took my little girl away from me. Then

when I got sick, they threw me and my two children in a hospital in Iraq. That's how I escaped" (Nasreen, Female, 2 children).

Psychologists and physicians who treat Yazidi in Canada may not know how to help. It is not uncommon for Yazidi family members to reject the offspring of such unions. In their religion, exogamy results in banishment. Mothers are forced to choose between their children and their families. Often the child is left in an orphanage, much to the mother's distress (Worldwide Movement for Human Rights, 2018). Another participant said that some of the physicians in Canada only write prescriptions for anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medications instead of doing the psychological work that is required to recuperate. "The doctors here are not good. All they do is write a script and send us on our way. These issues need to be addressed by professionals who know how to deal with these situations. A simple script is not going to take it away" (Battal, Male, 5 children).

Some participants tried to work through their physical and mental pain. One participant told us that she is "sick still. Daesh caused injuries to my head and honestly, I am unable to process the language as fast as I had hoped or wanted to, but I'm going to specialists. Maybe they will do further tests to help me" (Gesa, Female, 5 children). Another participant tells us when we ask her why she is not currently attending language classes she says "I have gone through too much. I lost 35 people in my family. I lost my husband and my children to Daesh and one of my sons died in my arms. You think I will ever lose that image in my head? Never. I cannot" (Silda, Female, 3 children). Another participant tells us she plans to go to school "once my health issues are taken care of and I am not so emotional. Like I said, we have seen too much with our bare eyes. We have seen people die in front of us. It's all taking a toll on the mind" (Amal, Female, 6 children). Another woman tells us that she has problems learning English "because of all the hardships we went through back home. My memory isn't so good. I have depression and anxiety. I saw my brother die" (Zheyen, Female, 7 children). Another woman tells us that because she worries so much about her family members who are still captive under Daesh that she has trouble concentrating in English class and that her mind cannot process the language properly.

Other Yazidi are too busy caring for sick family members to attend classes themselves. When we asked if he was currently attending a language class, one male reports, "I'm not able to

take any classes. My wife is sick. I must take care of the children. And I am also responsible for her mother and her three other kids. It's very hard for me to go to school. My wife has mental illness and has episodes of blacking out, even the cooking I am doing alone" (Battal). He is not the only person who is undertaking significant responsibility caring for themselves and other family members while they are ill. Another woman tells us,

"but I'm not alright, honestly. Mentally, there is a lot of work for me to be done. If it weren't for my kids, I don't know if I would even want to live after all that has happened to me. My children keep me going because I know they have no one here. I was raped and tortured by several Muslims. While in captivity they took their turns on me. If I defied them they would threaten my children" (Saadia, Female, 4 children).

Another woman tells us that Daesh has threatened her family overseas.

"Daesh they know everything about me. They've contacted my brother in Iraq and have threatened him for me to return to Iraq. Sister, believe me or not, I saw them with my own eyes running into Turkey from Syria and seeking refuge amongst the refugees. The majority of Daesh were Syrians" (Nasreen).

She goes on to say that some of the Daesh members are currently in Canada. "A while ago, I saw one of them on the bus. I can swear it by God it was the same guy who sold me in Mosul. He was on the bus here in XXX. I tried to tell people I was 100% sure it was him but I was told it was a look alike. I know it was him, but nobody was listening to me" (Nasreen)⁴.

We did not ask about what is happening to their children after their arrival to Canada, mainly because we wanted our interviews to be short and we knew we would likely be returning to visit the families again should they be interested in participating in the next study. However, the participants told us many things about their children. We asked one woman what prevented her from looking for a job and she told us that "I am always sick. My daughter XXXX is always sick and passes out from the trauma she experienced while in captivity from Daesh" (Manal,

⁴ We were later informed by sources close to this woman that the incident was verified and the person has been identified and the situation is being examined by appropriate police authorities.

Female, 6 children)⁵. When we asked some questions about accessing settlement services, one mother told us about difficulties her children had in school.

“Daesh beat my sister’s older children. We had a complaint from the teacher because both would pee themselves because they are easily frightened by loud noises and if someone becomes loud with them. When Uncle Haider⁶ accompanied us to the teachers, they said ‘sorry, we didn’t know. But they suggested putting diapers on them and that’s all sorted now, thank God” (Gesa).

In speaking with teachers over the years, it is very common that they feel woefully and inadequately prepared to properly teach the refugee children in their classrooms. Many teachers lack basic information about the countries and the war conditions that these children are fleeing. Even more teachers report that they have never been taught how to deal with children who have been victimized and many ask their school boards and provinces for training in “trauma informed care”. Another mother recounts the events that led to her son’s capture by Daesh. He was trained to kill and was forced to watch Daesh kill many other Yazidi. He was beaten during his two years of captivity. Now in Canada, “he is not feeling well. He takes six medications a day to maintain himself” (Saadia). We can only imagine that his teachers must struggle to help him in the classroom. He likely struggles himself as a victim of trauma. Given his captivity and illness, it is very likely that this child has, at best, interrupted schooling and is functionally illiterate. These are difficult odds to overcome for anyone.

Professional interpretation is a necessity but so is consideration that many people do not wish to have their trauma experiences translated by someone from the opposite sex. One mother told us that she had difficulty taking her physically and mentally ill son to get medical treatment. She emphasizes the need for Kurmanji speaking interpreters and that the interpreters should be women interpreting for women and men interpreting for men because “you know, in our culture, as a woman, I am not able to tell in front of a man any sickness or my problems” (Saadia). This

⁵ This is called conversion disorder with psychogenic non-epileptic seizures. It is a very rare and extreme form of PTSD. Early reports indicate that the incidence of this condition is very high among Yazidi refugees (Frangou, 2018).

⁶ Uncle Haider is a local Yazidi community leader.

theme of interpretation by same-sex interpreters appeared several times in different contexts throughout many of our interviews. Another woman tells us, “I would rather be accompanied by a female interpreter than a man. It’s embarrassing for me to discuss my personal things. I am not comfortable talking about my experience while I was held by Daesh with a male staff member” (Wejdan, Female, 3 children).

6.2.2 Pre-Arrival Information/Orientation

Most refugees, regardless of whether or not they are GAR, PSR or BVOR, obtain information about Canada prior to their arrival by participating in a three- or five-day orientation session called Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA). The IOM has been contracted by the Canadian government to provide these orientation sessions prior to departure (Government of Canada, 2018). The orientation is provided “*in the refugee’s first language, when possible, or by using interpreters*” (Government of Canada, 2018: 15, italics added for emphasis). The topics discussed include information about the RAP program, job information, rights and responsibilities, geography and climate, housing, multiculturalism, cost of living, family life, education and adaptation to Canada. The Canadian government (2018: 15) “emphasizes the importance of arriving in Canada with realistic expectations”. The purpose of the COA is to prepare refugees for their new life in Canada.

We asked participants about what they learned from attending the COA. For some, it was the first time they had ever heard of Canada. Khalafe (Female, 3 children) says, “before I came to Canada, I wasn’t even aware of the country’s name”. Nearly all of the participants in our study indicated they had received pre-arrival orientation. In only a few cases, participants felt they had received good and complete information about what to expect once they arrived in Canada. One participant enthusiastically told us, “Yes, the agency in Iraq gave us information about the weather, the hospitals, healthcare system, about the flight plans, about the housing. About almost everything and told us life is expensive in Canada, but all I wanted was to bring my family to a safe place” (Battal). Tujan (Female, 3 children) says that in the “Sharia Camps near the city of Duhok, the UNHCR staff came to talk to us about Canada and we received a lot of information about Canada, the laws and the rules about doctors and the specialists we’d be seeing”. When

speaking about the topics that were covered in the COA, the participants overwhelmingly stated two things: that Canada was cold and Canadians were nice.

A participant from Winnipeg told us that:

“they put up a screen like a television and show us Canada and the provinces, the streets, and the roads and that things are expected to be expensive like rent. (They) gave us the option of whoever wants to go to Canada could go and those that don’t want to go don’t have to go. I told them I am going. I have had enough of Iraq because of the war and ISIS. I cannot be there anymore” (Sajeda, Female, 4 children).

The majority of participants, however, felt very little useful information was passed along during the COA sessions. Saadia tells us, “The agency in the camps barely did anything for us or give us information on Canada. They would just take down my story and leave.... They only said that Canada is cold, keep an eye out for your children. Canada is not like Iraq to leave your children unattended”. Another participant from London gave us a similar summary, “the agency in Iraq provided us with a lot of information about Canada but nothing turned out as they had said” (Khalaf, Male, no children).

We suspect that the majority of the participants in our study received information indirectly through a second interpreter because the COA instructor spoke Arabic or Kurdish (depending on the site) and the interpretation into Kurmanji conducted by non-specialists such as family members. This was the case of Silda who tells us, “there was an interpreter in the camps during the information session. She would speak to my son-in-law and then he would interpret it to me in Kurmanji”. We wonder if this “double interpretation” is not a source of some of the misinformation that our participants reported. For example, Amal was told “The ones in Iraq had said you’ll have an interpreter always... and the government will pay for your rent, bills and food. They made it sound like heaven but it’s not like that. Nothing was like what they said”. Balber (Male, no children) indicated that “they didn’t like us much, the Turks. They didn’t provide us with any information”. If there is a secondary, non-professionally trained interpreter on site, such as a family member, there is not much that can be done in terms of monitoring the quality and accuracy of the interpretation provided by family members and friends but it does

have the potential to cause significant amounts of misinformation to be spread among arriving refugees.

We also suspect that perhaps they all had been given information, but given the heightened anxiety and fear leading up to the relocation to Canada, along with the fact that most of the participants had the equivalent of Grade 5 or less in education, that much of that information was either lost in interpretation or misunderstood. For example, a participant in Winnipeg tells us “we were told that everything is going to be paid for by the government. And it wasn’t like that.... I was told my rent, my food, my electrical bills, wifi would be paid for by the Canadian government. But once we arrived, that wasn’t the case. We are paying it all by ourselves” (Zheyen). In this case, and several others, there is clearly a great misunderstanding that it is the government who provides the funds that allow the families to pay their own bills. This is an indication of the breadth of financial illiteracy among some participants. We are asking them to learn and adapt to new financial realities too quickly.

Another participant, Lozke (Female, no children) who lives in London, reports that “we were told in Canada, people like us receive lots of money and help. You can either use the money for renting a place or buy a house with it and they would take care of all our needs... Whatever they said, it turned out the opposite”. Comments such as hers were not uncommon. Many of the Yazidi we spoke to had highly inflated and unrealistic ideas of the financial assistance they would receive once they arrived in Canada. They claim that these messages were given in the COA programs but we wonder if this is not really the result of either poor interpretation or ‘chatter’ among the Yazidi as they were preparing to come to Canada. Perhaps it is a combination of both. As we will discuss in the recommendations section, there is a significant need to provide training in financial literacy skills, particularly among those who have not been able to complete high school education.

Along the way, we were able to interview a few families who had relocated upon their arrival to Canada. These families were destined to one location (such as Lethbridge or Calgary) but decided to move elsewhere (to one of our study locations), usually within a few weeks. All of them indicated they moved because they had family or friends living elsewhere and would feel more comfortable with them. Some moved because other members of the Yazidi community told them that life would be better in a different city. All of them were upset that the costs of their subsequent second relocation within Canada were not covered by interim federal support funds

so when they arrived at their new destination, they were surprised they weren't given money to cover their flights nor to locate suitable housing. We believe these families do not understand that the interim funds ought to be used for their daily costs.

Yet there were other, even more concerning evidence suggesting that the COA program may not work as intended or that the refugees are receiving information from non-government sources such as friends. One participant in London proudly told us "I was so told that (if) the Canadian military requires your services you must attend and I made it clear that (if) Canada needs us, just as they have, we must give our lives to protect those who stood by us" (Elias, Male, no children). Two participants in Calgary also claimed that they were given the opportunity to select the city in which they were sent. Khawala (Female, 1 child) tells us "I told them anywhere. I am okay with it. I didn't care where and what, as long as I was able to move my children to a safe place". We wonder if this person and the others were confusing the question of whether or not they wished to leave Iraq rather than where they wanted to live in Canada. Again, this could be due to interpretation issues.

The One Year Window of Opportunity to bring family members to Canada was also mentioned by many participants as one of the most memorable features of the COA program. However, their expectations were very high and several participants show a significant misunderstanding of how that program operates and how quickly family members can be reunited with one another. A participant in Winnipeg tells us that the COA program people in Iraq told her that "once you go to Canada, you can tell them that you have people in Iraqi camps and they will help you" (Behi, Male, 6 children). To our knowledge, no one has helped her with the paperwork so far, though we expect there is a large backlog of those waiting to file paperwork for the one year window to bring family members. There seems to be a belief that it would take only one year to bring family members to Canada. This is clearly not the case. Another participant in London explained,

"They told us you can request your other family members and your girlfriend".

Interviewer: "Do you have a girlfriend in Iraq?"

"Yes I do"

Interviewer: “Did you tell the representatives or agency that are dealing with your paperwork?”

“No. I didn’t get any information on her”

Interviewer: “Did anyone explain or give you information on how you can sponsor your girlfriend or family members and what is the expectations for that to happen?”

“No. I have not asked nor have I mentioned it to anyone here”. (Khalaf).

Another participant believes that the one-year window program can be used to bring her adult sisters from Germany. “I have asked for the agency for help to fill out my paperwork, but they say it is not possible” (Dema, Female, 4 children). The woman believed it was not possible for the agency to help her complete the necessary paperwork when in fact, it is not possible to bring her sisters from Germany under this program because as adult siblings living in Germany, they were not eligible “close family members⁷”. This is another example of how many participants do not understand this program and who is eligible for their services.

When we spoke to the settlement service providers in Canada about the COA program, they agreed that although some refugees seemed to have good knowledge of the settlement programs, the one-year window, and what to expect in the country, there are many more refugees who lacked basic knowledge about the procedures. We will discuss how the RAP providers responded to the gaps in knowledge in section six.

6.2.3 Housing

Conditions at the Reception Centres

Since all of our participants were GARs, they all stayed in transition housing prior to moving to their (more) permanent homes. In Calgary, the Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre can temporarily house up to 60 refugees at a time. Most of the Yazidi who were destined to Toronto stayed at Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre. Jerimiah’s House Reception Centre can accommodate up to 30 people at a time and is the only reception centre for

⁷ Close family members include: only a mother, father, children, and step children under the age of 18.

GARs in London. Of the nearly 300 Yazidi who have arrived in Winnipeg, over 200 stayed at one of two Accueil francophone's transition houses: Abri Marguerite and Centre de la Pastorale which together can accommodate over 110 persons on a short-term basis. The others stayed at Welcome Place which has thirty self-contained apartment units that can accommodate up to 120 people at one time. As a result, most refugees did not stay in transitional housing for very long.

At most reception centres, food is prepared for the residents. On the whole, most of the Yazidi we spoke to were unhappy about that. There was one exception, however. One participant in London told us “the kitchen staff was really good and their food was really good as well. There was a man working in the kitchen from Iraq so I didn't have any problems at all. Praise God” (Afrah, Male, 4 children). His feelings about the food at Jerimiah's House, however, hint at the problems that other refugees raised about the food—they weren't used to food cultures other than their own. Several participants in Toronto complained they could not “tolerate” the food. Gesa says, “the only problem with the reception house was their food. Sometimes we could have Kurdish food then other times it was African food. We weren't used to it, that's all”. According to another participant in Toronto, “if I mentioned to the staff about disliking the food they would get mad. My children would go hungry at times the only thing the agency did was give us \$50 each” (Wejdan). This funding was used by the mother to purchase food her children would eat. A third participant from Toronto mentioned that she too was unfamiliar with the food and that her children would not eat Chinese food, so they ate elsewhere (Saadia).

In Winnipeg, unlike the other study centres, refugees staying in Abri Marguerite prepare their own food. Overall, the refugees staying here had a better “food experience” than the other centres for two reasons. First, the families indicated they felt a stronger sense of agency and independence of being able to cook for themselves and their families—it gave them a sense of “normalcy” in their first weeks here in Canada. This finding is confirmed by Kyriakides and his colleagues (2018) that small acts of agency help normalize the transition to Canada. Second, they were far less likely to complain about the quality and type of food than in other centres.

There were still problems with food preparation among the Yazidi refugees in Winnipeg. The primary concern was the size of the kitchen. Almost all of the refugees we interviewed complained that the kitchen facilities there were too small. When we investigated further, the biggest problem is that the facilities need access to additional ovens and stoves. There are

enough refrigerators to accommodate all the refugees but not enough ovens and stoves. In speaking with staff from Accueil francophone, we were told that the reason for the shortage of stoves was that additional electricity would be needed to run through the kitchen and cost was an impediment to increasing the number of stoves. With that said, some of the cooking practices of the Yazidi families are rather resource intensive. One Yazidi woman told us that “one kitchen for so many people can be a problem. Making food and *baking bread* is hard to do in one kitchen with so many people” (Manal). We suspect the problem is that everyone wants to bake bread at the same time and there is just not enough oven space to accommodate everyone at the time meals are prepared.

The other problem is likely due to the length of time the Yazidis spent in transitional housing in Winnipeg compared to other cities. The communal living conditions likely took a toll on families who were already struggling to adapt to their new lives in Canada and living with people from other countries whose languages they could not speak and who were suffering and uncertain themselves likely contributed to some of this frustration. On the whole, however, the families in Winnipeg were more satisfied because they could cook their own food.

Due to the large numbers of incoming refugees to all four cities, there is a constant need for transitional housing. Three of the four centres have time limits regarding the length of time newly arrived refugees may stay in transition housing. In Toronto and London, it is 15 days (LCCLC, 2018; COSTI, 2018). In Calgary, it is 19 days (CCIS, 2018). We suspect there is a need for these limitations given the large numbers of refugees needing temporary housing assistance arriving in all three centres. Welcome Place and Accueil francophone in Winnipeg do not have such deadlines because there is not a shortage of rooms for incoming GARs, at least not until recently. This partly explains why the length of time spent in transition housing is much longer for the Yazidis located in Winnipeg. Almost all of the Winnipeg participants spent two to three months in the reception centre at Accueil francophone. The other reason, however, has to do with the refugees themselves. Many of the participants in all cities reported that they refused to move to more permanent accommodation because it was not close to other Yazidi community members, a theme particularly prevalent in Winnipeg where the Yazidis were located largely in two neighbourhoods—one located downtown and the other on south Pembina Highway. Many stressed that it was important to have “our Yazidis close to us” (Zheyen). We were told by settlement workers that there was a real problem with finding accommodation that the Yazidis in

Winnipeg would accept, and it mostly had to do with location and the desire to be located close to other Yazidi community members.

There was a perception among the participants living in London and Toronto that they were being forced to leave the reception housing and accept more permanent housing before they were ready. As mentioned earlier, three of the cities have time limits as to the number of days the newcomers can stay in transitional housing. The reasoning is twofold. First, there are large numbers of refugees entering these cities and the need for temporary housing outstrips the availability. Once one family leaves temporary reception housing, the rooms are quickly filled by other arriving families. One married Yazidi couple in London told us, “the only thing that was bad and stressful for us was that we were told ‘you have 15 days to find a place or chose a place we provide you, whether you like it or not. If you haven’t found a place by then, you’ll still have to move out’” (Khalaf). LCCLC staff members told us that this is indeed their principle and is due to the fact that London receives many GARs and there is not enough temporary housing to shelter them for any longer than 15 days. If the refugee is unable to find appropriate housing during that time, they are moved into a hotel which they pay for out of their own monthly allowance. This is a similar situation in Toronto, though there, we noted that some of the participants ended up staying with other Yazidis in the community for up to two months until they could locate a place of their own. In Winnipeg, one participant was told by the agency that “the government approves it (the permanent housing) and you have been at the reception house for two months. For now, take this apartment and we can keep looking for you” (Sajeda).

One participant in London, Khalaf, who is single, suggests that the pressure to leave the reception centre can be particularly difficult for women. He tells us

“It’s very hard for the women with children who fled captivity. They come here and they are told if they don’t find a place by the 15th day they must move out whether they’ve found a place or not. It’s easier for me, a man. I am able to do anything and live in any conditions. But these women need extra help. If they take time to find a place it’s because they want to be close to their relatives or friends that they have known because they have depression. Some of these women are barely able to care for themselves,

let alone their children. They then become rushed to take any place, regardless of how clean or dirty it is” (Khalaf)

One participant in Toronto made an astute observation about the timing of her arrival. Widowed in her 20s and with six children, this woman arrived in Toronto in December, right at Christmas time. She told us about her experience.

“No, we did not have a good experience. While in the reception house for two days and three nights, we didn’t see anyone. We were given two rooms but we are frightened. We were new in a foreign country. My children were crying, they were frightened.”

Interviewer: “Why were you not able to see anyone?”

“Because it was a holiday, I believe. After the holidays, the people from the agency came. They took us to the reception house for two days. After two days they took us to another place because there was no room... we were moved around, just like we were in Iraq⁸” (Amal).

We are happy to report that despite the difficulties she encountered at the start of her journey, she is now currently happily resettled in permanent housing in Toronto.

In all centres, Yazidi participants revealed the problems of living in close proximity with many people over a long period of time in the reception centres. Complaints about sharing washroom facilities were particularly common among the participants in Toronto—though others complained as well. One participant there indicated “the restrooms were shared by everyone in the reception house. It was hard for my children there, very hard because they didn’t want to share washrooms and showers” (Wejdan). The problems they pointed to most repeatedly, however, had to do with living with people from different cultures. Some suggested that reception centres should ‘segregate’ people by country. We do not believe this is a healthy suggestion but it was mentioned several times by several participants in all of the cities. Perhaps the reception centres could provide more guidance and information to their clients during their initial orientation sessions as they adjust to their new lives in Canada.

⁸ Amal is referencing the fact that she was constantly sold and resold by Daesh in sexual slave markets.

Although none of the participants mentioned this directly, all of the settlement service providers we spoke to mentioned the problems they had with the condition of the furnishings in the reception housing. Bedding and mattresses are a particular problem as many of the younger children have problems with bedwetting, usually due to trauma. Purchasing the mattresses with adequate protection is expensive and they are difficult to maintain with such a heavy turnover of guests at the reception house.

Permanent Housing Conditions

The desire to live near other Yazidis was near unanimous in our study. We noted that the agencies in London and Toronto tried to locate their newly arrived Yazidi families near one another. When asked about her current housing situation, a widowed mother of six living in a three bedroom apartment in Toronto indicated that “I will stay in the house. I have no choice. I like it and since its close to other Yazidis it is better for me... and I am close to my father-in-law as well” (Amal). Another woman indicated that it was important for her to be “surrounded by other Yazidis” (Gesa).

In Winnipeg, not unlike the other three cities, Yazidi were settled in two ‘clusters’: one in downtown and the other in a complex of apartments on south Pembina Highway. Not surprisingly, those living in downtown Winnipeg are less happy with the location of their housing; it is a complaint made by other newcomers as well. There is a lack of affordable grocery options in downtown which is a major problem, but other refugees participating in other recent studies have indicated they feel unsafe there (Wilkinson, et al., 2017). When asked about how they feel about their current accommodation, one participant in Winnipeg said, “...not like downtown. It’s full of problems you know. Why we left Iraq it was to get away from the problems” (Amira). Another Winnipeg resident indicated that her neighbours “don’t even speak English let alone Kurmanji” so she felt incredibly isolated (Behi). Those who live in south Pembina Highway were more satisfied, although the rent is much higher. A widowed single mother of five children told us she likes “it a lot (because it is) surrounded by Yazidis. It’s like living in Shingal again, so it’s good. We call it Shingal⁹” (Zeri, Female, 5 children).

⁹Shingal is a town in northwest Iraq which is one of two major Yazidi settlements in that country. The more internationally recognized name of Shingal is Sinjar and it is the site of the massacre of over 5,000 Yazidi men and boys and mass kidnapping of Yazidi women and girls by Daesh in August 2014. In respect to the wishes of the people we interviewed, we use the name “Shingal” instead of Sinjar.

Proximity to grocery stores, schools, health specialists, language classes, and other services is also important to the Yazidi, especially since they do not have their own transportation and many struggle to use public transportation. Those who are most satisfied with their accommodation live close to these services. A respondent from Calgary tells us that “we want to continue living here as neighbours are good, buses are close, market is close and banks are close. Thank God we have no difficulties with neighbours and Yazidi members in this community are good” (Khawala). For those not so lucky to be living close to amenities, their dissatisfaction is apparent. “I am not happy there. The schools, markets... everything is far for me. I have to use the bus and train to go everywhere and if I could move, I would” (Dalal, female, 1 child).

Several of the participants reported that they were currently living in basement suites. They are among some of the cheapest accommodation options in all four cities. None of the refugees were happy about living in a basement suite. A married couple with six children in Winnipeg were living in a basement suite and indicated “my children, my family, were locked away underground for over a year and a half. This is not where I want to live. It is not safe here” (Behi). Khalida, another Winnipeg resident, tells us “I cannot be in the basement apartments at all. I was in captivity, held underground for two and a half years. I wasn’t allowed to the light nor the sun” (p. 65). The reluctance to live in a basement suite, particularly because it provides a painful reminder of trauma and torture conditions, is common among other refugee groups.

There is, however, some evidence that some of the Yazidi are living in overcrowded conditions. A widowed mother of six children is currently living in a two-bedroom apartment in Calgary (Dalal). Another woman in Calgary is sharing a three-bedroom apartment with seven people (Khawala). A male in Calgary reports “we are living in a house with me, my mother, two brothers, a sister-in-law and my sister. There are in total 7 people, but one is not a relative. They just put them with us” (Bassil, Male, 5 children). A brother and sister are sharing a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto (Wejdan). One participant in London told us that he used to live with his brother and his wife but were told by the city “it’s not acceptable living in their basement so we got ourselves a two-bedroom apartment (Afrah, male, 4 children). Another widow in London reported a similar incident. She was living with her two children in a three-bedroom apartment in London which she shared with her brother, her sister-in-law and their three children (Nasreen). By the time we had interviewed her, she was living in a two-bedroom apartment alone with her

children. She felt, however, it would be much better for her to live in the same house as her brother's family. This is a sentiment we saw among others who were living in or had formerly lived in crowded accommodation.

We asked all the participants about whether or not they had received any furniture when they moved into their new place. All participants in each city indicated that they had received and welcomed the furniture. There were, however, some issues with the condition/quality of some of the items. A participant in Toronto reports that they "received beds, dressers, dining table and chairs, a sofa and couch, but to be honest, the chairs broke a few days after they gave it to us. Their stuff isn't good" (Gesa). A participant in London reported that the kitchen table and chairs "broke shortly after we received them" (Roshan). This was a common occurrence among our participants.

We also asked them about the condition of their current housing. The most common problem indicated by participants was that the housing was old and in need of repair. This is a typical type of complaint. A participant in Toronto told us that "The house is cold, the stove isn't working. The burner exploded on my wife¹⁰. She's okay though, and the fridge is leaking (but) we are moving soon" (Tujan, Female, 3 children).

The other complaint we heard fairly often was the presence of rats, mice, bedbugs, and insects in the living space.

"There are a lot of rats in the house"

Interviewer: "Have you talked to anyone about the rat problems in your home?"

"Yes, I have. They've come and set traps and sprayed it with some sort of chemical but (it is) still there. When I open my kitchen pantry they jump out at me"

Interviewer: "have you spoken to your worker about your concerns?"

"Yes, I have but it's just being delayed" (Wejdan).

¹⁰ This type of explosion can occur on stoves using the old coil elements. The explosion happens as a result of a fuse breaking in the element.

These are complaints that are similar to those expressed by other Canadians in low income and precarious housing. Improvements in refugee housing are likely to be beneficial to all Canadians who rely on low income housing.

6.2.4 Language and Pre-Arrival Education

Pre-arrival Education

We had a number of questions regarding language knowledge, EAL access and self-rated English language knowledge but the responses to these questions were short, mostly due to the very low level of education our group received prior to their arrival to Canada and that many participants had not yet started English language training. Only three participants (9.1%) had completed high school and had started post-secondary education and of those three, only one completed a university degree. Ten participants had some elementary education ending at Grade 5 or Grade 6 with the exception of one male reporting Grade 8. The vast majority, (57.6%) reported having never attended school. Of the 19 participants with no education, 16 were female. This highly gendered distribution of education is not surprising given that most of the participants also reported that they had not attended school because they were married young, mainly by age 13¹¹. Khalida, a widowed mother in Winnipeg tells us, “I have never studied in my life. I was a housewife at a very early age. You know in Kurdistan or Iraq, women don’t work and they take care of their homes and children while the men provide”. Sarab in Toronto also tells us “I have never held a pen in between my fingers. This will be the first time (her English language classes) I have been in a class and I am excited. I want to learn the language and the doorways to work will open for me I am sure”.

Purely illiterate persons are relatively rare as they have never attended school and cannot read or write even their own name (Vágvölgyi et al., 2016). The fact that 80% of our female participants are purely illiterate makes them one of the most unique groups in the world. Functional illiteracy, on the other hand, is more common. According to UNESCO (1978: 183), “a person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to

¹¹ According to UNICEF (2015), 24.6% of girls in Iraq under age 18 and 4.6% of those under age 15 are married. Yazidis are highly over-represented in both groups given that child marriage is a common practice (Avagyan, 2011).

continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1978, p.183). In short, they can "get by" in their daily work and personal lives but likely have difficulty with reading newspapers and books, written correspondence, supporting their children at school, and working at their jobs. They likely have work which requires no or little schooling. The problems that come with being illiterate in their mother-tongue are far reaching. Dema tells us that she's worried about learning English because "I don't even know how to write my name (in Kurmanji)".

Although the adult literacy rate in Iraq is 78.5% (UNICEF, 2015), it does not take into account the fact that the Yazidi, who are a marginalized ethnoreligious minority, are often prevented from attending school and are over-represented among the illiterate in that country. Given that most of our participants lived in Sinjar and that the government of Iraq and the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI) did not invest in the school system due to their conflict and the invasion of Daesh, few Yazidis have attended school (IRCC, 2017). A similar study in the US indicates that 83% of Yazidi there have never attended school (IRCC, 2017). Research has shown that almost all girls leave school by age 14 to get married (Avagyan, 2011) and a large number of Yazidi boys do not complete it either. This would explain why nearly two-thirds of our study participants had never attended school.

Speaking in Arabic

Trauma and the events leading up to their departure from Iraq have greatly affected their learning ability. Unprompted, we had several participants indicate that their physical and psychological injuries have negatively influenced their learning ability and ability to retain information. Afrah from London tells us "I studied in Iraq up to Grade 5 but I have forgotten how to write and read it. It was all in Arabic". Hadi (Male, 4 children) tells us that he "would prefer to (work with) a Kurmanji-speaking person because even I am unable to say somethings in Arabic, but I can say it better in Kurmanji". This sentiment was echoed by several participants when the subject of speaking and understanding Arabic came up.

As Hadi told us, although some could speak a little bit of Arabic, most were not fluent in that language either and most were, understandably, not willing to accept services in that language. Nasreen, in London was told that settlement services would be easier to obtain if they spoke Arabic due to the great shortage of qualified Kurmanji speaking interpreters. Indeed, there

are very few Kurmanji speaking people in Canada especially prior to the arrival of the Yazidi. In speaking with some of the settlement service providers, they were keenly aware of the very serious lack of qualified Kurmanji speakers in Canada and some sites mentioned that Arabic was attempted at times. This strategy did not work for several reasons. First, most of the participants in our study have never attended school and although those who did were “educated” in Arabic, their formal education ended at Grade 5 or Grade 6, making them functionally illiterate in that language. Secondly, there were unprompted comments among several participants indicating that speaking Arabic reminded them of their captors and speaking it caused them great stress.

Roshan, in London, tells us about her experiences attending English language classes in Canada. “I had some problems at the beginning with Arabs that attended that class. As soon as they found out we were Yazidi, they started whispering and taunting us. They were calling us names” (p. 64). Thankfully the problem has now been resolved. Given that some of the participants indicated (without prompting) that they felt stress when forced to converse in Arabic, it is not surprising that they were unhappy and at times unwilling to receive services in this language.

Other participants also echoed these comments about connecting Arabic to their captors. Remembering how to converse in that language was not only extremely traumatizing but was difficult to remember. Dalal in Calgary tells us “I have forgotten most of it since I was captured by the Muslims... I went to school but I forgot everything”. She tells us later in the interview, “I made it clear (to CCIS) that I don’t want any Arabic volunteers nor do I wish to speak Arabic nor do I wish to have one as an interpreter. I have made it clear... it’s not easy for me to be able to look at one and speak to one, especially knowing what they have done to us”. Difficulties remembering, combined with the trauma associated with being tormented by Arabic-speaking Daesh militants has made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for many Yazidi to be expected to receive their settlement services in Arabic.

Somewhat related to this issue is that some participants report that they have been asked to call themselves Kurdish, not Yazidi. A participant says “the interpreter kept insisting we say that we are Kurds, but we aren’t. We are Yazidi” (p. 26).

Learning English

None of the participants could speak English or French prior to their arrival. All of the participants reported their mother-tongue as Kurmanji which is described as a dialect of the

Kurdish language¹². As a result, all of our participants would be starting foundational or literacy classes¹³. At the time of the interview, 25 participants were currently enrolled in a foundations or literacy interpretation class, ten were not. Among the ten who were not currently in an English language class, the main reasons they were not participating was because they were sick, their family members were sick or they were breastfeeding very young infants. Dyla (Female, 1 child) in Winnipeg tells us that the reason she is not currently enrolled in language classes, even though she's been in Canada for nine months, is that she is sick physically and mentally. She has depression and her "thoughts are not well. I am unable to process anything anymore". Manal says "it's hard for me to concentrate. You are aware of all that has happened to us. I'm still thinking about those that are still in captivity. My two daughters, my husband and my brother are still in captivity. No matter how much we're told, nothing is able to be processed. My thoughts are always with them".

Both Zheyen and Amira (Female, 3 children), who are also in Winnipeg, tell us the reason they are not currently attending classes due to the presence of young children at home, although both are on waitlists for language classes. Both have been in Canada for six months. Sarab in Toronto tells us she is too old to attend language classes and that "I have gone through too much. I lost 35 people in my family. I lost my husband and my children to Daesh and one of my sons died in my arms". For her, the trauma, combined with the fact that she has never attended school, makes the thought of learning a new language too daunting. She is only 50 years old. Dalal in Calgary says that she must hear something in English "five or six times (and) I am still unable to process (it)". She feels her English is not improving despite attending half day classes for two months. Her highest level of education in Iraq was Grade 6.

We asked participants how many days per week and how many hours per day they were attending English language classes. Over half of the participants were enrolled in half day (about 3 hours long) classes. About 40% of the remaining participants were in full day (6 hours or so) classes. We asked some of the participants who were participating in half day classes if they would prefer to attend fulltime. Their answer was unanimous, that they preferred part-time

¹² As noted in the literature review, some linguists indicate that there is enough difference between Kurmanji and other Kurdish dialects to make it a distinct language, but there is much debate over this.

¹³ Foundation classes are for students who have no literacy in their mother tongue, and Literacy classes are for students with 9 or less years of education.

classes, mainly because they perceived attending full time classes would conflict with the times their children would be home from school. In speaking with some of the settlement service providers and English language instructors, there seemed to be a feeling that half-day classes were more preferable, particularly for those who had no or little formal schooling as the full day class might be too overwhelming to people not used to attending formal language instruction. Only one person out of the 35 people we interviewed felt they could be in class for more hours per week.

Even though most of our participants have very little formal schooling, the desire to learn English, attain more schooling in Canada and to perfect their English is high among most of our participants. Khalafe in Calgary confidently tells us “I can understand everything almost now” (p. 19) despite being in Canada for only 6 months. Bassil, who has been in English language class in Calgary for three months is a bit more cautious indicating that “I am not fully confident in yet saying a full sentence”.

Many of the participants rely heavily on Google Translate for their daily English needs. When visiting the hospital in London, Khalaf tells us that he “praises God” (p. 20) for Google Translate. A similar sentiment is expressed by Afrah when he indicates that the tool is handy for helping him and his family shop. The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria and Google Translate have teamed up to create a new app which not only assists in daily interpretation needs but has a free language learning platform which will assist newcomers in further developing their English language skills outside the classroom (Roth, 2017). We suspect this is a very popular app with many newcomers.

Not surprisingly, language problems make it difficult for the Yazidi to navigate their new lives in Canada. Khalida in Winnipeg tells us that due to her inability to read and comprehend the Latin alphabet she has trouble taking the bus or picking up her children from school. She relies heavily on her brother-in-law, whose English is not much better, to help her. Dyla tells us “I am done. I am unable to do anything. I don’t understand the language and others don’t understand my language. Shopping, going to the doctor, locating important places, I am unable to find (them) on my own”.

6.2.5 Employment

Given that the average number of months in Canada among our participants is 8, that the majority had no or very little formal schooling in Iraq, had no knowledge of English or French prior to their arrival, most had never been employed in Iraq, and most are recovering from significant trauma, it is not surprising that most of our participants were currently not working. In fact, only two participants in Toronto were currently employed at the time of the interview. Gesa works part-time in a bakery, a job which “Uncle Haider” had helped her find. She has difficulties, mainly because she is “sick still. Daesh caused injuries to my head and honestly, I’m unable to process the language as fast as I had hoped or wanted to”. Balber, who never attended school in Iraq, is currently working part-time in a Middle Eastern restaurant in Toronto. He balances work with English language classes. In Iraq, he worked in construction.

Most recent studies of employment among refugees in Canada indicate that finding paid work is very difficult in the first year (Wilkinson, et al., 2017; ISS of BC, 2018). Among the Syrians, a report from BC (ISS of BC, 2018) finds that 17% had employment by the end of year one. A similar group of Syrians was interviewed in the three Prairie Provinces and only 6% had found work in year one (Wilkinson, et al., 2017). There is one notable exception. Alberta has been noted by Legrane (2017) as the jurisdiction where refugees find work the fastest. In their first year, 83% of refugees in that province found employment, though it was mostly part-time or contract work. His findings have been recently confirmed by research from the University of Calgary (Stark, 2017) using IMDB data, indicating that just over 80% of all refugees reported some employment income in their first year in the province in 2014. That province experienced an economic downturn the following year, but anecdotal evidence suggests that the labour market has rebounded since then. Further anecdotal evidence from several settlement service providers in the province indicate that refugees who were originally destined to other provinces are relocating to Alberta because there is appropriate work available there.

Over the longer term, however, there is strong evidence that employment rates among refugees, both GAR and PSR, increase. IRCC’s (2016) own internal review of the GAR, PSR and BVOR programs reveals that in year one, 70% of PSRs and 41% of GARs reported employment income. Five years after arrival, over 50% of GARs are currently working. In a

2013 survey, findings indicate that 5.5% of refugees in Alberta, 11.3% in Manitoba and 29% in Saskatchewan were unemployed (Wilkinson et al., 2016).

Despite their short time in Canada and the challenges they experience in getting a job, almost all of the refugees in our study were eager to start work, even if they had never held paid employment previously. This included the people who had never attended school and the widowed mothers among our participants. The number one impediment to starting work, according to our interviewees, was lack of fluency in English. All of them mentioned that they needed to learn better language skills before they could find work. This included the two part-time employed people in Toronto. All of the participants knew they would have to work hard to learn English but they were all optimistic about their future in Canada.

6.2.6 Use of Settlement services

Satisfaction and Accessing Settlement Services

We very rarely heard any complaints about the quality or quantity of settlement services provided in each of the four study cities. This is a meaningful finding, especially since the interviewer we hired did not work for any of the agencies¹⁴ participating in this study and the interviewer has extensive experience working in resettlement services for refugees. In short, there is great positive rapport between the resettlement service providers and the Yazidi refugees. A sampling of the comments appears below.

Bassam (Male, 4 children) in London tells us that CCLC “did whatever they could to help us, like taking us to the dentist and eye doctors. I have nothing to complain about”. Naso (Male, no children), who also lives in London, emphasizes “the agency is like the military, maybe even better because they are always precise on their time and locations. They make sure we are at our appointments”. In Calgary, Dalal says “When we arrived in Canada, things were foreign and it was hard to adjust at first. We received help from the reception house and CCIS. No one else. They found us a house and gave us household items, did our paperwork and received our health

¹⁴ Our interviewer for London, Toronto and Winnipeg works for Lethbridge Family Services. The interviewers for Calgary were from CCIS given the short timeline to complete the data collection and the fact it coincided with three major immigration conferences at the time the interviews were conducted.

cards and took us to the doctors, showed us schools. Whatever help they've offered, we've never declined". In Winnipeg, Amira (Female, 3 children) reports "Marcel, Isa and Brahms from the French agency (Accueil francophone)... they took us to the doctors, they would take the children to a lit centre (we think she's referring to a school). If we need anything, they'd be ready to help.... Another volunteer is helping me do my laundry and house work because I have appendix problems and I am waiting on surgery. She comes and visits every few days". Like the others, Balber in Toronto is pleased with the help he and his family has received from COSTI telling us there is "nothing negative I can say about the agency... they helped us open our bank accounts, they helped us with paperwork and they sent us to classes".

While the Yazidi expressed great satisfaction with the services as a whole, there were a few ideas for improvement. Most of their observations, we believe, stem from two issues which we discuss in greater detail in Section 7. First, although we believe that some of their perceptions are based on significant misunderstanding or confusion about what services they need and who is actually providing them and, in some cases, that they are actually receiving services. There is great misunderstanding of who is a volunteer and who works for the RAP and settlement service providers. For instance, there is a perception among some of the Yazidi that once they moved to their independent housing, help from the agencies ended. Dalal in Calgary says that "but now it seems that they don't want to offer me any help. I am going to appointments by myself and I am unable to do it alone without an interpreter. I know everyone else has a *community volunteer*, but I haven't been offered one". Earlier in the interview she comments that her stay in the reception house was good, but "the moment we left (the reception house) they started ignoring us". Dalal and her family were actually first destined to Lethbridge, but she and her family were among a group of Yazidis who relocated, on their own, to Calgary. We suspect that since they just moved to Calgary, CCIS and the other settlement service providers have not had a chance to make contact with them and this is why they do not have "a regular community volunteer". There is a similar case in London where the family was originally destined to Calgary and feels they are being neglected by services in the London area. We must also stress that the volunteers that Dalal and all of the other Yazidis speak of are actually employed by the RAP agencies and are not volunteers. This is a major misunderstanding and communication issue that we also discuss in Section 7.

More confusion about who is a paid employee and who is a volunteer is seen among participants in Toronto. Amal tells us “The agency (COSTI) in Toronto helped us (while they were in the reception centre). They only gave us our funds for the first ten days and that’s all they’ve done for us”. When we asked her about the kind of assistance she receives now that she’s in her own place, Amal tells us, “what assistance? It’s only the Iranian communities that help us with food and sometimes they give us clothing and things for the house” (p. 35). What she doesn’t realize is that these “Iranian volunteers” are actually paid employees of COSTI. Behi in Winnipeg shares similar observations. “All I’m going to say is that this agency isn’t working for anyone”. Dyla, also in Winnipeg says, “since I moved into my own house, they have done nothing. But there is one foreigner lady that comes to pick me up and take me to my appointments. For the goodness of God, she does help me. Otherwise no one does much for me anymore”. In double checking with Accueil francophone, we confirmed this “foreigner lady” was actually a paid employee named Veronique, a person who appears frequently in the interviews. Clearly, there is a major misunderstanding of what kinds of services are provided and the difference between volunteers and paid employees. It seems like most time, paid employees are believed to be kindly volunteers and that “services” that they receive such as interpretation, transportation and others are not really services at all. They are simply kindly community members helping the Yazidi resettle.

The second issue is that many of our participants are single female headed households. Most of these women are in their late 20s or early 30s with an average of 5 children per household. In Iraq, as Yazidis and as women, many were prevented from attending school altogether or were forced to leave school upon marriage which can occur in their early teens. It means that the vast majority of this group has never held employment, are likely functionally illiterate in Kurmanji and relied very heavily on males to conduct business related to households when they were living in Iraq (Vijanann, 2017; Porter, 2018). As a result, many of the women expressed concern about leaving the house alone as they were afraid to navigate their new cities alone. Dalal in Calgary has two children with serious medical conditions. She tells us that “there’s no interpreter for us (when she takes her sons to the specialists). It’s hard on me. I use to buses to get there and back alone and it’s hard on me”. Many of these women also faced significant trauma, loss and sexual assault—which were discussed earlier in the report. Together, these conditions have led to a group of women who have never been given the opportunity to

gain skills that would allow them to lead independent lives which means they likely require more help from RAP and settlement agencies than other refugee families, which has great resource implications for them. This too is an issue we discuss in more detail in Section 7.

As early as 2012, both federal government and academic surveys of settlement service use among immigrants and refugees were reporting findings that did not reflect the reality that the immigrant settlement sector was living. One of the major findings in these reports was the very low report of immigrants and refugees using the services of immigrant settlement organizations. Although the number of refugees reporting settlement service use was the highest among all the newcomer groups (about 75% of refugees report using settlement services), the findings were perplexing. Results from this study begin to confirm what the immigrant settlement organizations have long told us, that the number of newcomers using settlement services is higher than what is reported in these studies.

Translation and Interpretation Services

One of the areas where there is significant need is in translation and interpretation services. This, not unexpectedly, has been a problem that the Yazidis and the settlement services have encountered, particularly since qualified Kurmanji-English speaking interpreters are very small in number and relatively high in demand. Almost all the participants begged us to help them with interpretation of written documents and interpretation of conversations. Dema in Winnipeg has “health issues, but there aren’t any interpreters. They aren’t available for me to tell the doctors”. She indicates earlier in the interview that interpretation over the phone doesn’t always work either. One of the many jobs an interpreter does is read body language. Speakers can make physical gestures that help convey meaning and more importantly, convey misunderstanding on the part of the receiver of the interpretation. These cues are absent over the phone. When dealing with medical calls, for instance, these cues are very important pieces of information for interpreters. It means that many times the person receiving the interpretation may not understand the complex medical terminology (which is very likely with this group given their overall level of education) and are left confused after the phone call. Had the interpretation been done in person, this confusion might have decreased.

We discovered a rather tragic situation when conducting our interviews. One family received a letter from a medical office two months prior to our visit. The family was convinced

their child had cancer because they asked someone (with limited English language ability) in their community to translate the letter. When it was given to our interviewer, she explained that the letter said the child did not have cancer. This family was in turmoil for over two months thinking their child was deathly ill because they used someone who is not qualified to translate the letter and they were unable to have the letter professionally translated by their settlement agency because the organization has been overwhelmed with such requests. This unfortunate error could have been avoided if they had the letter translated professionally. It would have prevented a significant amount of stress for this family as well.

Service providers are also called upon to do a significant amount of important non-medical interpretation work. Some of it they may not be able to provide due to high demand. Some of it is not really “their job” such as providing interpretation for diplomas and post-secondary transcripts, but many refugees ask for these interpretations anyway, having nowhere else to turn. Since Kurmanji is not a common language, it is difficult to find certified translators. Many call their settlement service providers to ask for help with interpretation, particularly of official letters and documents. One participant in Winnipeg tells us “I will go there. They keep telling me to come back. About a month ago, I received my diploma from Turkey. I gave it to them to translate and stamp it. Every week I go there to see when it is done. They keep telling me to come next week and so on” (Awar, Male, no children). Overall, interpretation services, both in person and of letters and documents, was a major theme appearing throughout all the interviews across all four cities.

Some of the agencies have tried to make do with what little they have, asking some of their clients who can speak Arabic to use Arabic interpretation instead. As mentioned above, this was not a good strategy for many of the Yazidi as they associate Arabic-speakers with their captors and tormentors. For others who opted to use Arabic interpretation instead, there were difficulties with understanding and comprehension, largely due to the fact that almost all of the Yazidi, even those who claimed they could understand Arabic, were actually functionally illiterate in that language too. Silda in Toronto tells us that the services she and her family were offered were in Arabic with the understanding that family members could function in that language. “... but honestly, I only speak a few words (of Arabic). It’s only my son-in-law as they speak with him in Arabic, so whatever he tells me, that’s all I know”. We have found evidence in our interviews that the assumption that Arabic can be spoken and understood by some Yazidi is

false and that many times, whatever is interpreted between family members is incomplete and often incorrect. This is a cause of major misunderstanding and misinformation among many Yazidi and is complicating their successful resettlement both prior to (by the COA program as noted earlier) and after their arrival to Canada.

Accessing Health Services

We asked separately about access to and satisfaction with physical and mental health services. Overall, most Yazidi were fairly happy with the treatment they have received from Canada's medical professionals. Naso and his family in London are very pleased with the mental health services they have been provided, describing "me and my children (are) in the hands of the best". In speaking about the physical, optometry, and dental health he has received, Khalafe in Calgary says,

"Everyone from CCIS helped us. I had no teeth, they made up new ones for me.... All the doctors we visited were good. They (arranged) appointments for us. I had diabetes and they controlled it. I had eye problems and they helped me with it and gave me glasses. My teeth were made... everything was excellent, I have nothing bad to say".

Like other Canadians, however, their major complaint was about the time it took to receive appointments and referrals, particularly to specialists. Part of this disappointment was, no doubt, related to highly inflated ideas about what life and medical services would be like in Canada. Part of it is simply because the Canadian system is over-extended and underfunded. Many refugees will arrive to Canada with pre-existing and undiagnosed and/or untreated conditions and Yazidi are no exception. These conditions are exacerbated by the trauma, physical, sexual and mental torture and the multitude of losses the Yazidi have endured. Interpretation at hospitals and in physicians', dentists', optometrists' and psychologists' offices is often not available or only available by telephone and this cause significant miscommunication and misunderstandings. Khawala in Calgary told us that her first visits to a physician and optometrist were without interpreters. This has caused confusion as she did not return for a scheduled follow-up after several of her teeth had been removed. Now that she has interpreter services, her visits have become more productive and she better understands what is going on.

One participant in Toronto is happy they have found an Arabic speaking physician and because their household is fluent in this language, they are happy.

For many women, having female medical care specialists is essential to their recovery and even the Yazidi men recognize this. Basam in London tells us that the psychologist his wife and children see is female and they are pleased with that. Others, however, do not have female medical service providers and this causes significant difficulty, especially for the psychological health of women. Saadia in Toronto pleads with us, “I told everyone we are sick for a month and nobody took us to the doctors. Nobody. My friend helped us. We need a Kurmanji-speaking interpreter you know. Our culture as a woman, I am not able to tell in front of a man my sickness or my problems”. Wejdan, who is also in Toronto, agrees.

“I would rather be accompanied by a female interpreter rather than a man. It’s embarrassing for me to discuss my personal things. I am not comfortable talking about my experience while I was in captivity by Daesh with a male interpreter”.

Confiding in a psychologist, counsellor or social worker about rape, torture and sexual assault is tremendously difficult for anyone. It becomes more complicated and difficult when the person must rely on an interpreter as the “middle man”. When sharing these terrifying experiences in the presence of a man (either as the clinician or the interpreter), it can greatly impede successful healing. All the women in our study indicated their strong preference for female interpreters, particularly in medical settings. Some also insisted on female interpreters for every transaction, a situation we discuss in Section 7.

Understanding the Child Tax Benefit

Almost all of the Yazidi we spoke to had children living in their household. As it was tax season when we conducted the interviews, we also asked about their understanding of income tax and the child tax benefit. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Yazidi didn’t know very much about how the tax system worked or how the child tax benefits were distributed. Of the 35 study participants, only Bassam in London seemed to understand how income tax worked, how to attain child tax benefits and the difference between the income support he received as a refugee

and that which he now receives as a social assistance recipient. We asked him about whether or not he felt he was getting more income support under federal funding or under social assistance. Although he was only 13 months in Canada, meaning he just transitioned to provincial social assistance, Bassam felt that there was not much difference in his monthly income. He offered to check his paperwork for us (because he saves all his records) just to be sure. In Winnipeg, Dyla, disagreed. She was told by other Yazidi that her social assistance payments in Manitoba would be higher than the federal interim support but since she's only been in Canada for 9 months, she cannot be sure of this. In contrast, Elias, also living in London and in "month 13" felt he was receiving significantly less funding when on social assistance telling us, "when I was on the federal program I received a little over \$1000. Now I receive \$700 and something. I'm not sure the exact amount right now. I don't have my papers".

In London, Aylas expressed significant dismay at the three months wait for the Child Tax Benefit to begin. Furthermore, he told us he was very confused about what the federal interim funds were for and that they were different funds from the Child Tax Benefit. He was not alone in this confusion. Almost all participants stated they did not understand how the federal interim funding worked, whether they would get more or less funding on social assistance and where the funds to assist them originated. Many were convinced their monthly funding came directly from the RAP service providers, including Adham (Male, 2 children) and Khawala in Calgary and Amal in Toronto. Some had no idea that they would continue to receive funding after one year. Adel (Male, 5 children) in Calgary says we told "CCIS (that) we would like to continue to receive further aid and support from not just the one year as we've been told". The fear of the termination of financial aid and settlement assistance is seen among other refugees. Fear of "month 13" and the financial changes that may occur was mentioned by two Yazidi—many fewer than among the Syrians whom we interviewed in 2017 (Wilkinson, et. al., 2017).

A Note on Foodbanks

Although we did not directly ask about it, the topic of food banks came up frequently in our interviews. A third of our participants knew about and used the food banks. About one-fifth depended on support from the food banks to feed their families. A few of the participants would use the food banks more often but could not either due to the long distance to travel to one or that the food was not appropriate. Khawala in Calgary tells us "we can't eat the variety of the food

they offer. I'm sure if they tasted our food too, they might not like it. So, we never went back". It is a sentiment echoed by several other participants.

6.2.7 Other themes

Understanding that the Reception Centre is not a Hotel

In many cases, the Yazidi participants referred to the reception centres as “hotels”. Amal in Toronto consistently refers to the reception centre as a hotel throughout the interview as did Bassam in London. Luckily, our trained interviewer was able to understand what they were telling us and was able to clarify in her interview that the Yazidi were not staying in a hotel but a newcomer reception centre. Qualitative interviews allow the interviewer more freedom in interacting and asking of additional clarification questions than can be attained in a survey. In quantitative interviews, although there is some ability to seek clarification, the interviewer is not allowed to interact with the participant in the same way. As well, the surveys done by the government and by academics have been conducted over the phone—where important visual cues of participants are lost because the interviewer cannot see the face of the participant. We think this misperception has caused some of the under-reporting of certain types of resettlement service use.

Living in Canada is Expensive!

Not surprisingly, the expense of living in Canada was mentioned by all the Yazidi participating in our study. Saadia in Toronto says that she would likely relocate from her \$1500 per month (not including utilities) apartment if she were able to find a less expensive option. Other families indicated they had to borrow money to make ends meet. This was especially predominant among families with children as they waited for their Child Tax Benefits to begin.

We found evidence of overcrowded conditions where large families were sharing small apartment units although for most, this appeared to be a personal preference. Many participants reported their preference to live under one roof with all their family. In these cases, the family would consist of a mother/grandmother living with her children and her grandchildren or siblings, their spouses and children living in a single unit. In one case, there was a family of 9

living in a 3 bedroom apartment—but the settlement agency discovered this and assisted the one family to relocate. The participant told us that they were told it was against the law to have so many people living in a single dwelling, but the family was unhappy because they were now “separated”. In another case, a brother and widowed sister were sharing a one bedroom apartment with at least two children. It is likely that the overcrowding we witness is partly based on the Yazidis’ preference to maintain multi-family households as they did in Iraq. This is hardly surprising as people who have undergone trauma are likely unwilling to be separated from one another, especially in a foreign country. One single mother, Nasreen, tells us

“The only problem I have with my house is that I’m unable to live with my brother. He has his own family, wife and kids. And I am alone with my two children. I get sick easily and I get dizzy and I don’t want to be a burden for them. And I feel that my children might be feeling not having a father around”.

The other issue leading to overcrowding is likely also due to cost, particularly in Toronto and Calgary where rents are among the highest in Canada.

Who is a Volunteer?

Similar to the problem of hotel versus reception centre is a misunderstanding of who is a volunteer and who is a paid employee. This confusion appeared in all study cities, but was most apparent in Toronto and Winnipeg. In Toronto, a local Yazidi community leader named “Uncle Haider” appears in every single interview. Gesa’s description of him nicely summarizes the Yazidi’s perceptions of him:

“I love my house. It’s close to Uncle Haider, to the markets, the bus stop is near us. But the most positive thing about my house is that Uncle Haider is close to us. If anything were to happen, we go to Uncle Haider for help.... Uncle Haider has been taking care of our needs since we moved into our home. *We have not received much help from the agency* (italics added) and honestly, if it is not for Uncle, we don’t even know how to take the bus”.

In fact, Uncle Haider's presence is so predominant in the Yazidi community there, he appears in a recent *Maclean's Magazine* article (Buck, 2017). We asked another family about whether or not they used the services of COSTI. Battal replies, "the agency offered to find a place, but we declined because a very good family friend here named Uncle Haider who's lived in Canada for 9-10 years, he helped us find our house".

A slightly different situation appears within the Yazidi community in Winnipeg, except their "Uncle Haider" is a woman named Veronique¹⁵. We confirmed with Accueil francophone and she is indeed their employee assigned to help work with the Yazidis in Winnipeg. Amira refers to a "volunteer" who helps her with household chores as she awaits surgery. Manal talks of a volunteer lady who takes her to medical appointments, "her name is Veronica. I believe she is a volunteer... she is very good.... She helps me a lot".

Calgary and London have their Uncle Haiders and Veroniques too. One participant in Calgary even said that "CCIS turned their back on us... We have (since) met a Canadian who continues helping us. They are number one still" (Khawala). That "Canadian" is actually a paid employee of CCIS. Dyla, also in Calgary, complains that the local settlement agency has done nothing for her since she moved to her own apartment. She reports later in the interview, however, that "but there is one foreigner lady here that comes to pick me up and take me to my appointments. For the goodness of God she does help me. Otherwise, no one does much for me anymore". Again, that foreigner lady is a paid worker at CCIS.

It is clear from the interviews in Toronto and Winnipeg—but also in Calgary and London, that there is a great confusion about who is a paid employee, who is a volunteer, and who is a community leader—with the people coming to their apartments, picking them up for appointments and assisting with other daily activities assumed to be volunteers and not paid employees of the resettlement agency and that the services they are receiving are not 'services'. This likely contributes greatly to the under-reporting in surveys of settlement service use among refugees—and likely other newcomers as well. This information could only be "discovered" through qualitative interviews as the way surveys are designed would make it difficult to

¹⁵ All of the participants actually refer to her as "Veronica" but her name is Veronique—so we will use her formal name.

differentiate employees from volunteers. In any case, it is very clear that the Yazidi continue to receive a significant amount of services, they are just not aware of that.

One issue that we also noted is the very high dependency that many of the Yazidi families have on community leaders and workers at the resettlement agencies. Some participants tell us that “I think we all rely on Uncle Haider for everything, to be honest... Uncle Haider is our link right now”. Tujan tells us “Uncle Haider, he is a good man. He helps us out a lot and many members of the Yazidi communities. Him and his family are wonderful people, and may God bless them”. He is so influential that his niece also appears in the interviews from time to time. We worry about ‘burnout’ of the Uncle Haiders and Veroniques of the resettlement world. They are clearly going out of their way to ensure that the families and communities they are looking after are well cared for, but we wonder if they are being over-extended due to the lack of Kurmanji-speaking settlement workers but also because they care so much.

Transportation Use

Fear of taking or difficulty using public transportation was another theme that appeared frequently in our interviews. Way finding is particularly difficult, particularly for those just learning English. Battal in Toronto says “I’m not able to name my doctor’s offices or the dental clinics. I need someone to come with us as you know Toronto is a big city”. In Calgary, Khawala tells us “they showed us with pictures where we needed to go... They should know we are like blind people. Pictures aren’t going to help us learn or show us the way”. In Winnipeg, another participant, Manal, also refers to herself as “blind” because she does not know where her appointments are. Sajeda tells us that she is unable to go to medical appointments on her own because she doesn’t even know the name of her physician or dentist and she has not been shown the way. Zheyen tells us “I’ve had some situations where I have walked to the doctor and we weren’t able to find it so we had to come home and take one of our neighbours who is Yazidi with us”. These comments appear frequently throughout all the interviews in every city.

Only one participant in London, Afrah (who is male) felt confident taking the bus saying “I just take the location of my appointment and show it to the bus driver if I’m not sure where I’m going exactly”. One of the participants in Toronto, however, has acquired a car and a drivers’ license and we presume that he is fairly competent with wayfinding and the transportation system.

Informal interviews with service providers indicate that some of the problems that refugees may experience with wayfinding are compounded by mental health challenges. Some people who experience severe mental health problems also develop memory problems. This, combined with low levels of education and no prior knowledge of English or French can cause significant difficulty in reading, understanding and remembering road signs, bus schedules, and maps.

Women and Independent Living

Difficulties taking or fear of taking public transportation is predominant among the female participants in our study. Many of them are illiterate or functionally illiterate, so wayfinding can be very difficult under those circumstances. Amira in Winnipeg cannot deposit a cheque on her own. But the main theme arising with many of the women involves lack of independence. Most of the women in our study were widowed or unsure if their husband is still alive. In Iraq, these women left school at a very young age or had no education and were expected to become housewives and mothers. As Sajeda in Winnipeg tells us, “I do not have a male figure to do my work for me or send me on the right path and guide me” and Manal explains “I have no man to go do the shopping for me”. In Toronto, Gesa and her family are very dependent on Uncle Haider who takes them to all their appointments. If he is not available, Gesa replies “we don’t go or make any appointments unless it works with his timing”. Later in the interview she “only goes to Uncle Haider for help”. Sarab in Toronto has “not really left the house” and tells us that if there is an emergency, she will ask her cousin for help. She lives with her brother and he does all the shopping, interacting with settlement agencies and other activities because it is not her job as a woman to do such things. Similarly, Silda who also lives in Toronto, depends on her son-in-law for all interaction with the outside world. A male we interviewed in Winnipeg was not only responsible for shopping, appointments, interpretation and other issues for his own family of six children, but he was caring for the household needs of his widowed sister-in-law and her children and his own sister and her children as he is the only male living among them. He tells us, “I honestly would love to work once I learn the language... but I am helping everyone. School is all I can do for now”.

Some women decline Kurmanji interpretation services if it is offered by males. We asked Wejdan in Toronto if Uncle Haider ever helped her with interpretation. She replies “no, he has

never interpreted for me. I've declined his services as he is a man, after all". Uncle Haider's niece interprets for her instead. There are several women who are reluctant to work with male settlement service workers, particularly for sensitive issues like medical interpretations. Other women, however, follow a strict code of separation between women and men. Given that none of our participants have been in Canada for longer than 14 months, it is understandable that their attitudes toward gender segregation have not changed. With that said, however, many of the women we interviewed are isolated in their homes and rely significantly on the settlement service providers or on the remaining adult male family for interaction with persons with whom they are not related. This is a significant issue that prevents many women from obtaining the many helpful and necessary services from the settlement organizations.

Fear of Child Apprehension

Although this theme did not come up very often, it did appear a few times in our interview. Many families told us that as part of their pre-arrival orientation that they were to care for their children differently in Canada, that they could not let their children "run around unattended" like they could in Iraq. It was among one of the few messages during the pre-arrival orientation that many of the participants clearly recalled.

It is not uncommon for many newcomers to feel insecure about parenting in a new culture. There are a number of newcomer families who have had their children apprehended by provincial care services and news about this spreads quickly through the community. One woman tells us about her experience in the reception centre. She was having difficulty getting her children to eat the food they served there. Eventually, she was given a food allowance which would allow her to buy food from outside the reception centre. The following was an account of what transpired:

"One night, me and my friend left to go grab food from outside. The kids were sleeping so I didn't think it was a problem. I was hungry. When we came back the staff threatened me by saying we are going to call the police for leaving the children in the reception house. I was only gone for no more than half an hour and they were sleeping. But praise God, that problem was solved".

The rules and norms around supervising children are very different in Canada. Given the uncertainty of arriving in a new country, not speaking the language, not understanding the customs or culture is challenging for anyone, but the fear that many parents have of being separated from their children is likely among one of the most terrifying thoughts about resettlement. Hers was not the only incident of this kind we heard about.

7. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are reluctant to prescribe firm policy implications arising from the research given that our sample was small, consisting of only one ethnic group and it was not based on a random sample. We can, however make some observations about what we witnessed and try to connect them with studies others have conducted as some of what we have witnessed can be corroborated by other research and observations with other refugee groups.

7.1 Trauma and Mental Health

The Interim Federal Health Program provides mental health assistance in several forms including counselling with psychologists and social workers and prescription medications. Refugees are entitled to 10 one-hour long sessions with a professional during their first year in Canada (House of Commons, 2018). This is over and above the health supports provided by the provincial and territorial governments. The problem is that although many of the Yazidi in our study expressed the desire to receive mental health services, they were unable to access them or felt that what they were receiving was not helpful. In most jurisdictions, refugees rely on their primary health provider to refer them to psychological services (Porter, 2018). Clearly, this is not working, at least according to our participants and to reports from the federal government. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (2018) finds that only 5 Yazidi refugees have accessed these extra psychological services. We know this is an under-reported figure but our own participants mention that accessing mental health services remains a problem.

We wondered why the uptake for the federal program was so low when the refugees we interviewed indicated they would find additional support very helpful. We talked to some

professionals in the area to find out why. Access to health services is an equity issue, particularly for immigrants and refugees. This group has even fewer resources and knowledge of the Canadian health system so sometimes they are unable to find the help they need. In order to reach this group, we have to change the way the system operates in terms of referral services and culturally sensitive services.

There are some promising practices. Aurora Family Therapy Services in Winnipeg have developed a *psycho-social settlement needs assessment* which is given to refugees shortly after their arrival in Canada and intended to help follow them as they resettle in Canada. The idea is to identify those persons in greatest need of psychological services and to bring them to appropriate care earlier in their resettlement journey. They also believe that health is holistic—meaning that if the refugee is having difficulty accessing housing, for instance, this may negatively affect his or her mental health. By helping this group access to services sooner, the easier their transition to life in Canada will be. The participants are given a short screening tool which asks questions about mental health but also collects information about the family and current living conditions. They meet with a counsellor who makes an assessment and directs the refugee towards appropriate psychological and resettlement/integration services. It is a multi-pronged approach that views the refugee as a holistic person who requires varying degrees of support. Aurora Family Therapy estimates that they have assessed the majority of the Yazidi who arrived at Winnipeg as GARs and have offered their services to those arriving in the PSR and BVOR programs. To date, they have provided assessment and referral to over 500 refugees (personal communication) and have offered follow-up assessments at the 6, 12, and 18-month mark. Their approach with the Yazidi has been particularly successful because they were assessed individually and at the time of arrival. Other refugees are eligible and do receive the psycho-social assessment, but they learn about it in large and impersonal contexts, usually as announcements in language classes. As a result, fewer refugees have used these services.

It is also evident in our interviews that children need specialized assistance. According to multiple media and international government reports, girls as young as 9 years have been kidnapped and raped by Daesh (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016; Worldwide Movement for Human Rights, 2018). Boys of the same age have been kidnapped, held hostage and forced to fight for Daesh (Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016; Worldwide Movement for Human Rights, 2018). Although there are specialized supports for children, they are unlikely to meet the differing cultural and trauma needs faced by Yazidi refugee children and youth.

In addition to specialized psychological services, there is a need to help their teachers understand and support their healing. In various conversations with school board trustees, departments of education and educators, we have learned that many teachers have not received any trauma informed training nor are they provided with any historical and political information about the countries their students are fleeing. Providing more teachers and other educational support staff with this information and training will help them better support the refugee students in their classrooms and to have better understanding of how trauma can affect learning and behavior. There are school boards in the three provinces that have provided such services but there is evidence to suggest that these services require additional investment as the number youth needing these services and the extensive trauma Yazidi children and youth have experienced mean that there will be increasing pressure on the settlement workers in schools and the interpreters in the future.

Finally, the importance of having interpreters whose gender reflects those of their clients is very important, particularly when refugees are receiving health services. Many Yazidi women in our study commented on how difficult it was to share their trauma, mental health and physical health information with male interpreters. In some cases, the women refused to work with men and did not receive the treatment or services they needed. In person interpretation is significantly more effective than by telephone as the visual cues interpreters use to identify confusion or misunderstanding are absent in this method. The settlement and psychological experts we spoke to agreed that the gender of the interpreter is very important and they try to accommodate as best as they can. The difficulty is that there are so few qualified Kurmanji interpreters and even fewer who have been given the necessary medical, ethical and legal training on health to participate in these activities. However, when speaking to some therapists, they mentioned that the presence of the interpreter allowed more ‘deep’ work to be done with their refugee patients. The time that it takes for the interpreter to translate for the therapist or for the patient gives both parties time to think and digest the material, so instead of slowing the process of treatment, it deepens it.

7.2 Pre-arrival Orientation

Misinformation and misunderstanding were key themes when we asked the Yazidi what they learned about Canada through the COA information sessions in Iraq. Although we are not sure of the origin of this misinformation, we can speculate. As some of our participants told us, the information sessions were sometimes conducted in Arabic, so the information they learned was filtered through to them by a Kurmanji-speaking family member who claimed to know Arabic. There are two problems with this method of interpretation. First, we learned that almost all of the Yazidi who could speak Arabic were essentially functionally illiterate in that language. That meant the quality of the interpretation is likely suspect. Second, using non-professional interpreters means that the passing of information is left to a third party—who may not pass the correct information or be selective about what they translate. Although we cannot confirm that this is the only source of misinformation and misunderstanding, we do believe it is a chief cause of this problem. Perhaps it would be possible to make it mandatory that the person conducting the COA sessions actually speaks the language of the audience could become a priority. As well, providing training and supplemental material for the instructors in their primary language would be helpful in transmitting more accurate information to refugees.

We also wonder if the refugees may be ‘overloaded’ with information in these COA sessions. Some camps provide three full day sessions, others provide five half day sessions. Depending on the time in between sessions and the educational attainment of the audience, this might be too much information at the wrong time. The Canadian government might consider the fact that many refugees have interrupted or no schooling which will affect their ability to learn lots of new information in a short period of time. Perhaps housing this information, in their mother tongue, on a website, would be a helpful resource.

It is clear, however, that the one-year window to bring family to Canada is very important information shared at the COA. With that said, there is a significant amount of misunderstanding about the timelines to bring family as some refugees believe that they can come to Canada within a year. The other misunderstanding involves who can come—particularly with regard to who is a “close” family member. Providing this information in writing in Kurmanji might have helped with the spread of misinformation—at least among the Yazidi who could read and write in that language. Perhaps providing this information in various languages on a website would better transmit the information to all refugees wishing to bring their families to Canada.

7.3 Reception Housing

Many participants indicated they were unhappy with the food served to them at the reception houses. This is understandable as the reception houses must cater to a wide variety of tastes and cultures. It is impossible to make everyone satisfied under these circumstances. The participants in Winnipeg who were able to cook their own food appeared to be more satisfied. They could select food that suits their family's tastes and with that, provide them with a sense of 'normalcy' in an abnormal situation. More importantly, however, is the sense of agency that is gained when a person is allowed to prepare their own food. Refugees are not often given a chance to do anything for themselves. So many decisions are made for and about them without their input. The act of being able to cook and care for oneself and/or family is a small but important first step for regaining normalcy and a sense of control. Cooking facilities should be big enough to accommodate all the people living in the reception centre and although the costs of creating or expanding kitchen facilities will be high, the returns to the family will be significant.

Because of the increasing numbers of GARs arriving to Canada, many reception centres have instituted a time limit of about 2 to 3 weeks of stay. This is understandable as there is a significant shortage of rooms to accommodate the new arrivals. From an integration perspective, it is stressful for refugees to stay in temporary communal housing for long periods of time because it lengthens the resettlement process. Families cannot start to rebuild when they are in a situation they know is temporary. The wait to get to Canada is long and at the reception centre, their lives are on hold too which can be very stressful. In cities that have not introduced a maximum period of stay, refugees do spend more time in this reception centre "limbo" which is unhealthy too. We don't have the evidence from this study to suggest whether shorter stays at reception centres are better than more open-ended stays. We do understand that there is a shortage of room and given that worldwide refugee numbers are increasing, and Canada is being asked to take on more resettlement cases, the need for more rooms in reception centres will increase, at least in the short term.

Furnishings in the reception centres are a concern. Although this was not mentioned by the participants, almost all the service providers we spoke to mentioned that the quality and condition of the furnishings in the reception centres as serious issues. Waterproof mattresses and higher quality bedding are needed as many of the children who stay at the centres have experienced trauma and suffer from enuresis (bed wetting). These mattresses and sheets are very

expensive but are good value for money as they do not need to be replaced as often. Funds for updating other furnishings are difficult to attain but are also needed given the high volume of people using these facilities.

7.4 Permanent Housing

Like other Canadians, finding affordable housing is extremely difficult. Refugees are no exception. All of the participants complained about the high cost of housing and worried about their economic future. The average cost of a one-bedroom apartment in Calgary is \$1247, in Winnipeg it is \$1107, in London it is \$1041 and in Toronto it is \$1404. ACTO (2018) warns, however, that these averages reflect the costs for all renters. In reality, the average cost of units available for rent is actually much higher. The shelter-to-income ratio is a number that helps determine the ‘affordability’ of accommodation (Statistics Canada, 2016). The optimal position is that housing costs account for no more than 30% of the person’s monthly income. A person is said to be in extreme danger if the shelter-to-income ratio exceeds that number. In Toronto, 46.7% of the population spends more than 30% of their income on rent; in London, that figure is 45% while in Winnipeg it is 38% and Calgary it is 34% (ACTO, 2018).

All four study centres are large cities and all experiencing low vacancy rates. The vacancy rate for apartments in Toronto is less than one percent (Mathieu, 2018). The vacancy rates in London are not much better at 1.7% (ACTO, 2018). In Winnipeg, the vacancy rate is 2.8% while in Calgary it is 6.3% (McNeil, 2017). Subsidized housing is available only to 15% of Ontarians (ACTO, 2018). This is an issue affecting the poor. Nearly 90% of those living below the poverty line are paying rent that exceeds 30% of their income (ACTO, 2018).

It seems that those participants who are located close to settlement services, schools and grocery stores have greater satisfaction with the location of their housing. For some, but not all, living close to other Yazidi was also a great benefit—particularly since they could pool resources such as child minding and even sharing some language interpretation. The social and inter-relational benefits of living together are particularly helpful and help the Yazidi deal with the collective trauma they have endured.

Basement suites are not suitable for most Yazidi. Although they are among the most affordable kinds of accommodation, the trauma they have experienced in captivity means that

being in underground, enclosed and largely windowless spaces is very traumatizing for them. This is not unexpected as other refugee groups have the same difficulties living in basement suites. Adequacy of housing is important for well-being as well. Several of the participants in the study reported that their rental units were infested with bugs, bedbugs or mice. Others reported the units were in poor shape with broken appliances and fixtures. These are similar problems other low-income Canadians face—so attending to them will benefit the entire population. The condition of some of furniture is a problem, with several participants reporting that some of these items were broken within days.

7.5 Language Classes

Because so many Yazidi are functionally illiterate in Kurmanji and most have had little or no formal schooling, learning English will likely take longer. This means making investments in more language classes and perhaps a slower pace for some students. Most participants were satisfied with the half day language classes especially since it gave them and their families flexibility to pick their children up from school. All of the participants were satisfied with their classes. Some were frustrated that they weren't learning the language faster. All were aware that their ability to find paid work depends on learning English.

In addition to language classes, many of the adults would likely benefit from additional schooling in general. Very few of the Yazidi we interviewed had completed high school and this is consistent with other studies indicating fewer than 20% of Yazidis had completed a secondary school diploma (IRCC, 2017). This is particularly important for the women we interviewed. Many of them told us that they left school when they were married—some as young as age 13. Finding work will be difficult for this group even if they learn good English. Given that there is a large enough group of women who have very little schooling and no English language fluency, it might be beneficial to think about educating the Yazidi together—in both English and general schooling given the common language and educational barriers they face.

Using Arabic for transmitting information has not been successful according to our observations. At some centres, Yazidi were asked if they would accept services using Arabic due to the shortage of Kurmanji speaking interpreters. For some, speaking Arabic caused significant stress and trauma as this is the language of their tormentors. For others, their fluency in Arabic

was weak, limited to five years of schooling. As a result, some of the participants who accepted services in Arabic could not fully understand everything that was told to them and this caused further problems. In other cases, a family member who claimed to speak Arabic might not be able to interpret correctly for the other family members and this meant that misunderstanding between family members was a problem. In short, although we understand the reasoning for asking the Yazidi to consider using Arabic for interpretation purposes, for most, this was a failed experiment. We advise against using Arabic with this population in general. In the short term, additional interpretation services will be needed, at least until this new group of Yazidi become more fluent in English. If the government plans to bring in more Yazidi in the future, they will need to think about identifying more qualified Kurmanji speakers and training them to become interpreters and translators. This will not only provide work for some Yazidi, but will be extremely beneficial for helping future Yazidi to resettle and avoiding some of the problems this group has encountered in resettling in 2018.

A promising approach to on-the-spot interpretation has been developed by Google Translate and the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria. The We Speak Translate project provides training for settlement service providers in using some of the features of the Google Translate app (Roth, 2017). Since the participants already know and use Google Translate, we believe this could be a beneficial short-term solution to some of the interpretation and interpretation issues that the Yazidi have experienced.

7.6 Employment

Not surprisingly, it is far too soon to give any recommendations on employment. Only two of the participants were currently working. Almost all of the participants, however, wanted to work. This too is unsurprising given that most of the participants have been outside the workforce due to the conflict for many years. Most participants are worried about their financial futures in Canada, particularly being able to afford housing and all the necessities of life. All understood the importance of English language knowledge in the cities they were living.

There is good evidence, however, that there are other programs we can offer, outside of additional education and language training, that would assist refugees in finding work. A recent study of ten years of administrative data in Switzerland reveals that the longer refugees spend in

“limbo” waiting for permanent housing, access to language classes and other resettlement needs increases their overall unemployment rate by 4-5% (Hainmueller, et al., 2016). In other words, prompt access to permanent housing, language classes, schooling for their children, etc. reduces the amount of time refugees are unemployed. This is a very healthy outcome as work gives many people a sense of normalcy and a sense of accomplishment—two very important contributions to good psychological health. Canada and the US are among the only resettlement countries that allow refugees to work as soon as they are able. In the US, 71% of refugees who complete the Matching Grant Program were able to find permanent work within 180 days (Legrain, 2017). The Matching Grant Program pairs a refugee with an employer. The costs of hiring the refugee are covered by the government for 3 to 6 months. This gives the refugee an opportunity to gain experience in the American labour market. Many of the employers hire these workers permanently after the program ends. Others find work because they have American experience. There are several small-scale programs like this in Canada, although these are not largely government regulated. Danby Appliances in Ontario has hired dozens of Syrian refugees to work in its manufacturing plant in Guelph (Estill, 2017). Their CEO, Jim Estill, also helps place Syrians in other workplaces as well. The Danby Appliance model could be one that other businesses could be encouraged to follow.

7.7 Settlement Services

IRCC funds service provider organizations to help newcomers and access settlement programs mainly covering six areas such as, Needs Assessments and Referrals, Information and Orientation, Language Assessments, Language Training, Employment-Related Services and Community Connections along with six support services including child care services, transport facilities, interpretation, provisions for the disabled and handling crisis situations (IRCC, 2017).

It was clear from the study participants that the services that many Yazidi were receiving were not recognized as “services”. Several participants spoke of the wonderful volunteers and the work they did without understanding that these volunteers were actually paid employees. This would explain why several studies conclude that settlement service use is fairly low, even among refugees. Had we not conducted a qualitative study with a knowledgeable interpreter, we could not confirm this. Perhaps it would be good practice for the employees, particularly those who do their work “on site” at the refugee residences, to wear name tags and carry business

cards. This would help the refugees to understand that the services they are receiving are not from volunteers but from settlement service agencies.

We do observe the potential for ‘burnout’ and stress among the settlement workers, particularly those who are fluent in Kurmanji. Because there are so few qualified Kurmanji speaking interpreters available, those who can speak the language are, understandably, in high demand. We spoke to several settlement service agencies across Canada about this and it is a very real issue for them, particularly among those who help with medical interpretation as there are even fewer trained in this area. Many of these workers put in unpaid overtime just to ensure their client is safe and understands the situation. Because Kurmanji is spoken by so few people, those who can speak it may feel obligated to do this interpretation work even in their off time because the need is so great. We found evidence that some of the workers were overburdened with requests as the families depended significantly on them for almost everything from transportation to appointments to interpretation and interpretation of important documents. While the demand for Kurmanji may decline after the crisis ends, there will be other language speakers faced with similar situations where they will be asked to or feel obligated to put in extra time to help vulnerable families. The creation of a nationally recognized body for interpreters and translators working in the settlement sector might be a good first step in professionalizing the occupation and adopting some workplace standards for this group.

In addition to more interpreters, there is a desperate need for more Kurmanji translators. The wait to have official documents translated is too long and has caused unwanted stress among families as we mentioned earlier in the report.

7.8 Budgeting and Financial Literacy

There is clear evidence that the Yazidi (and other refugee groups) require more instruction on budgeting and financial literacy. Our interviews revealed that very few participants knew where funding for their first year in Canada originates and that their funding would continue from a different source after year one. Although this information is likely provided at the COA and the orientation sessions provided at the reception centres, this information is clearly not understood or retained. Perhaps providing this information in Kurmanji

on a website or a pamphlet might help. The Yazidi are not unique as this problem has been identified among other recently arrived refugees. Many Syrian refugees worried about “Month 13” as they did not have adequate information about their finances.

Understanding how income tax works and about the benefits to which they are entitled also caused confusion. Most families were aware of the Child Tax Credit—but did not understand how it worked or why they were receiving the funds. They believe it is a payment for children—which is essentially true, but there is much confusion about eligibility and who counts as a dependent child. There was also much anxiety about the three-month wait to receive these payments. The extra funds could be very useful, particularly since most Yazidi will be living independently and outside the reception centres within one month of landing. If there is something that could be done to expedite these payments, the refugee families would greatly benefit.

The expense of living in Canada was another concern for the Yazidi. Most will have never lived or traveled outside of Iraq and are used to pricing in Iraqi dinar rather than in Canadian dollars. As well, some were under the mistaken impression that their rent, utilities, wifi, telephone, and other expenses would be “covered”. When we asked about this, some thought that the monthly funding they would receive was for spending money—not for living. This misunderstanding added to their confusion and stress about money. We believe they were taught something about this in the COA prior to arrival but there is clearly a need for more communication in this area. Although classes in budgeting are available, we wonder how many Yazidi attend and whether or not their level of schooling would prevent them from understanding the lessons. There is, however, clearly a need for this kind of instruction.

7.9 Transportation and Wayfinding

Most of the Yazidi had difficulty using public transportation. Many could not understand our Roman alphabet, which is understandable. Others needed more time, practice or instruction with their settlement worker about how to use public transport. Perhaps volunteers and paid workers could use additional training on how to help the Yazidi and other refugees become more

independent in using public transportation. Having some additional sources of information in Kurmanji might be helpful as well.

Wayfinding was an issue for many Yazidi. It is a two-part problem. First, many Yazidi do not know the name or address of their medical clinics and other appointments. Providing this information early in the process might encourage them to venture out on their own a bit more often. Secondly, because of the language and education issues they face, many will find wayfinding difficult, especially at the start. If more Yazidi knew they could ask the bus driver to tell them when to get off at their stop, this would be helpful. For some, that might mean typing up a card which is handed to the driver to help with communication. For others, perhaps the Google Translate app could be helpful. Another suggestion would be to use some of the map functions on their smart phones. These can be useful tools for directions and wayfinding.

7.10 Women and Independent Living

Because of the structure of Yazidi society, women were rarely given the chance to attend or complete schooling. They were expected to get married at a very young age and to take care of their family and households. Few had never held a job. As a result, many depend on the assistance of males for grocery shopping, wayfinding, making appointments, and dealing with government business and banking activities. Although most settlement agencies are aware of these practices, which are not unique to the Yazidi, it does mean that different strategies are needed to reach these women. They likely need more time to adjust to independent living, especially since many of the women are widowed or involuntarily separated from their husbands who are still in Iraq. It would be helpful if those organizing the programs could be female as well as there is still reluctance among some of the women to receive services of any kind from a man. For those who have been sexually assaulted and kidnapped, working with women might not be as threatening.

8. CONCLUSION

In many ways, many of the observations here could be applied to any other refugee group. Trauma, flight, integration, and resettling into a new country are aspects all refugees must

endure as they begin their new lives in Canada. Similarly, many of the observations also apply to the needs of other Canadians—such as the need for affordable, clean housing and better access to health care which are some of the many challenges we all face.

There were surprising elements in this study that could not be uncovered using broader survey methods. The evidence we collected underscores the observations the settlement sector has been making for years—that newcomers do use settlement services in greater numbers than they report. Much of the confusion stems from the refugees’ inability to differentiate between a paid employee and a volunteer. This is information that would be extremely difficult to get from a survey. The extent to which Arabic is not a useful language for interpretation is important to note mainly because many of those who “think” they are fluent in that language actually aren’t. We suspect that some of the misunderstandings that happen between Yazidi and those providing services occur because many are functionally illiterate in (Kurmanji) language. The association of Arabic speakers to the captors is extremely traumatizing for many. The fact that those who are able to prepare their own food in the reception centres seem more satisfied than those who are served food. The agency of cooking for one’s own family likely provides a little bit of ‘normalcy’ in an otherwise foreign world for them.

Yazidi appear to be a bit different than other refugees given the significant amount of trauma they have experienced. Some of that trauma is intergenerational given that they have been a long-marginalized group. More importantly, however, is that trauma seeps into almost every aspect of resettlement for almost all refugees in this group. While the Yazidi are not the only refugees to experience trauma, they are amongst the most traumatized we have ever seen in Canada and the way we identify and refer refugees to mental health services seems not to be working. Some refugees are not finding the help they need, and others are not utilizing the supports that are available.

It is clear that the settlement services offered to the Yazidi are generally good. We found evidence that all the staff are working as hard as they can to provide services in a timely and efficient manner. The need for interpreters and translators is great—a hole that cannot be easily filled given the very small number of qualified interpreters and translators available. English

language training and interpretation supports are likely to be in demand among this group for a long time given their low level of education.

Despite learning all the challenges the Yazidi faced as they started their new lives in Canada, we were struck by how thankful they were towards Canadians and our government. One of the messages they wished us to convey is their deep gratitude for bringing them here and for listening to their stories. For many Yazidi, their losses have not dampened their enthusiasm and hope for a better life for themselves and their children. Although life is difficult in the early stages of resettlement, most Yazidi look forward to becoming active and productive citizens of Canada.

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Appendix I – Research Ethics and Compliance Certificate



Research Ethics
and Compliance

Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca

AMENDMENT APPROVAL

January 25, 2018

TO: Lori Wilkinson
Principal Investigator

FROM: Kelley Main, Chair
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: Protocol #P2017:020 (HS20570)
"Resettling in the Canadian Prairies: A Longitudinal Survey of Syrian Refugees"

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelley Main".

Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB) has reviewed and approved your Amendment Request received on January 23, 2018 to the above-noted protocol. PSREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is given for this amendment only. Any further changes to the protocol must be reported to the Human Ethics Coordinator in advance of implementation.
2. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to PSREB as soon as possible.
3. Amendment Approvals do not change the protocol expiry date. Please refer to the original Protocol Approval or subsequent Renewal Approvals for the protocol expiry date.

Appendix II – Participant Consent Form (English)



IMMIGRATION RESEARCH WEST

Immigration
Research West
St. John's College
92 Dysart Road
University of
Manitoba

06 March 2018

Participant Consent Form

Research Project Title: RESETTLING IN CANADA: A Study of YAZIDIS

Principal Investigator and contact information:

Lori Wilkinson, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Sociology
309 St John's College 92 Dysart Road
University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M5

Tel: (204) 474-9794 Fax: (204) 474-9611 Email: Lori.Wilkinson@umanitoba.ca

Sponsor: Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something

mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

The purpose of this research is to gather sense of Yazidi refugees' experiences, successes and the challenges they have experienced in the first few months in Canada. The objectives also involves:

- 1) collecting baseline information to understand their needs and settlement experiences within their first year of settlement;
- 2) compare baseline information to subsequent data collection points (years 2 through 4) to assess changes in need or changes in family situation; and
- 3) to assist the refugee resettlement organizations by providing timely information on a variety of issues that will assist them with the design of new programs and the improvement/expansion of existing programs to meet the needs of all refugees (Yazidi or other country of origin) arriving to Alberta, London, Toronto, or Manitoba. This information is central to helping these organizations be more responsive and helpful in the resettlement of future refugees.

Procedures:

This is a longitudinal study of the Yazidis who arrived in Alberta, Ontario, or Manitoba. Study participants are all aged 18 and over and one participant per household will be interviewed face-to-face by an Arabic or Kurmanji speaking interviewer, who is hired by the University of Manitoba for this purpose (English can be used by request). The interview is about 25 minutes in length. We will also store the contact information for those participants wishing to participate in phases 2 through 3 and the contact information of those who wish to obtain copies of the final report.

Funded by:

Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Potential Risks:

There are no known or anticipated risks to those participating in this research.

Benefits Directly to the Participants:

There are no benefits directly to you—but we hope to use the information you provide to help refugee resettlement agencies provide new and better services for refugees like yourself. A small gift, a \$10 gift certificate, will be given to you to offset the time you spend with me today.

Confidentiality:

The following script will be read to participants before the interview commences:

“The information you provide will be used only for the indicated purposes in conformity with the XXX (Province/Territory) Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP). Your answers are confidential and will be stored in a secure database and used only for study purposes. The results of this study will be analyzed only in group format. No single person will be identifiable.”

Right to Withdraw:

The following script will be read to participants before the survey commences:

“I would like to assure you that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, please let me know and we will skip them. You may end this phone call at any time.”

Questions or Concerns:

This information will be read out to the participant before the survey commences:

““Your verbal consent indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-

7122. A copy of this consent form can be sent to you via email to keep for your records and reference.”

Consent

Consent will be implied through the completion of the survey. The use of the data, confidentiality and right to withdraw are explained to all participants before the survey begins.

Participant signature _____ Date _____

Interviewer's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix III – Participant Consent Form (Kurmanji)



IMMIGRATION RESEARCH WEST
(LÊKOLÎNÊ KOÇBERIYÊ ROJAV)

Immigration
Research West
St. John's College
92 Dysart Road
University of
Manitoba

06 March 2018

Forma RazîbûnBeşdar

ProjevaLêkolînê: LI KANADA VEGUHESTIN: LI SER ÊZÎDÎSÊ LÊKOLÎNEK KALÎTÎKÎ YE

LêkolînerêSereke Û AgahdariyaTêkiliyê:

Lori Wilkinson, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Sociology

309 St John's College 92 Dysart Road

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M5

Tel: (204) 474-9794 Fax: (204) 474-9611 Email: Lori.Wilkinson@umanitoba.ca

Alîkar: Penaberan Û PenaberiyaKanada (IRCC)

EvRazîbûn Forma, kopiyek bi we redimîne, tenêbeşekpêvajoyê ye Tenêbeşek ji pêvajoyaagahdariyaagahdariyêagahdarkir. Divêwêbîrbisekinkuçilêkolînê ye û li kîjan we beşdarî we bibin. Hekehûn li vîrtîstekbehsabêtiragahîbikin, an agahdarî ne li vir e, divêhûn ji boserbestbipirsin. Ji keremaxwevegihîştinawextêvêbaldarîxwendin û agahdariyek bi hev re fam bikin.

Armanc (s) û Armanc (ya) yaLêkolînê:

Armancavêlêkolînêev e kuezmûnênxweyênpenaberênÊzîdîcivîn, serketî û astengiyênkuew di çendmehênpeşîn de di Kanada de hatineceribandin. Armancên her wihajîhene:

- 1) Agahiyênbingehînênkuhewceyênpêdiviyên wan û pêdiviyên wan di nav yekem de rûniştinê de fam bikin;
- 2) Agahiyênbingehînyên ji boxalêndaneyêndaneyêndanûstandin (2 salan 4 salî) bi danûstendinên li ser hewceyê an hewceyê di malbatê de guhartinbikinbikin; û
- 3) ji bosaziyênrexiştinênpenaberiyêyênku di demêndemjimêr de bi awayekîzewacî re alîkarî dîke kudê bi bernameyênûyênûvebirin û pêşveçûn / pêşveçûnabernameyênheyîyên ji bohemîpenaberan (Êzîdî an welatê din ên din) diçecem Alberta, London, Toronto, or Manitoba. Evagahdariyeknavendî ye ku ji bo van saziyênalîkarî di vejînapaşerojêyapêşerojê de bêtirberpirsiyar û alîkariyek be.

doz:

Evlêkolînek ji hêlaêzîdîyanve ye ku li Alberta, Ontario, or Manitoba hatim. Di beşdarîxwendekaran de 18 salî û zêdetirî û her kesêkudê ji hêlaEreb an Manitoba vetêxebitandin ji aliyêErebî an Kurmanji re hevpeyvîn re hevpeyvîn re hevpeyvînkirin (Îngilîzîdikarin bi daxwazabikarbînin).Hevpeyvînnêzîkî 25 deqîqedirêj e. Em ê ji bobeşdarîbeşdarîbeşdarîentêkiliyêdikinkubeşdarî 2-3 û beşdarîagahdariyatêkiliyêyakesênkudixwazinkopiyêndawîyadawîbibin.

Ji aliyê:

Penaberan û penaberiyêKanada (IRCC)

Rîsk:

Li ser vêlêkolînê di nav wan de rîskên an jîpêşniyarênpêşbînîhene.

Xizmetên Bi SerêTevlêbûnê:

Vêgavênku bi rasterastî ji te re nîne-lêhêvîdikin, lêemhêvîdikinkuhûnagahdariyakuhûnpêşkêşdikinkualîkariyaalîkariyapenaberiyêpenaberan ji bopenaberênxweyênû û çêtirpêşkêşdikin. Diyarîyapiçûkek, belaşek \$ 10 belaş, dê ji we rewextdayekuhûn bi min re derbasbikin.

Veşartî:

Dibistanajêrîndêberîhevpeyvîn bi destpêkahevpeyvîn bi dest bixin: "Agahdariyakuhûnpêşkêşdikindêtenê ji boarmancên bi XXX re (Herêm / Territory) AzadiyaAgahdariyaAgahdariyê û ParastinaMafêQanûnaDerve (FOIPP).Bersivên we nehênînehêne û dê di navnîşanaewlehiyê de tomarbikin û tenê ji boarmancênxwendinêtênebikaranîn. Encamênvêlêkolînêtenê di forma grûpê de analîzkirin. Kesekyekkesnayênaskirin. "

Mafêvekişînê:

Dibistanajêrîndê ji berbeşdarîlêkolînadestpêkêbeşdaranbixwînin: "Ezdixwazimhûn ji we redibêjinkubeşdariya we di vêhevîdîtinê de bi temamîdilxwaz e. Ger hegerpîrsênkuhûnnaxwazinbersivbikin, ji keremaxwewerinbizanin min û em ê wan bikişînin. "

Pîrs û şik:

Evagahîdê ji berîlêkolînadestpêkêbeşdarîbeşdarîbeşdarîxwendinêbibînîn:

" Daxuyaniyadevkîya we nîşandidekuhûn bi dilsoziya we agahdariya li ser projeyalêkolînê li ser beşdarbûn û fikirdikinku wekbeşekmijarabeşdarî. Heke di vêawayê de mafênxweyênqanûnîberbiçavnekir û lêkolîner, sponsor, yanjîsaziyênbeşdar ji wan berpirsiyarênhîqûqî û profesyonelserbestberdestin.

Divêbeşdarbûna we berdewam be wekkuhûndestûrapêşînyaagahdariyêagahdarbikin, da kuhûnserbestbikinku ji botevlîtevlêbûna we agahdardikin an agahiyênnû.

Zanîngeha Manitoba dikare li ser raportênlêkolînên we bibîninkuhûndibîninkulêkolînê di rêyaewleh û ewle de pêktêkirin.

Evlêkolîn ji hêlaZanîngeha Manitoba yaZanîngehaPsychologî û Sosyololojiya RÊVEBERIYA LÊKOLÎNEK ETÎK ve hat pejirandin.

Hekekuhûn li ser vêprojeyê de hebin an gilîhene, hûndikarin ji her kesênvênjorîn an jîHevrêziyaHiqûqaMafênMirovî bi 204-474-7122 re têkilîbikin. Kopiyek ji forma vêconsentêdikare ji we re bi şandina e-nameyê re bişîneku ji boqeydên we û referansaxwebiparêzin. "

Razîbûn

Peymanadê di temamkirinalêkolînan de tête kirin. Bikaranînadaneyên, sirûbar û rastêvekişînîn ji hemûbeşdaran re berîlêkolînêdestpêdikin.

îmzekarbeşdarî_____ rojek_____

îmzekarHevpeyvînerê_____ rojek_____

Appendix IV - Interview Guide for Yazidi Project (English)

Housing

1. Did you stay in a hotel/reception centre/motel when you first arrived in Canada?
 - a. If yes, please tell us in few words about your experience when you first arrived. What was good? What was difficult? Did your family face any problems? (*If the respondent is unsure, interviewer can give some probes-see below*)
 - a. *Positive probes*: settlement organization came to assess me, physicians held a clinic, etc.
 - b. *Negative probes*: size of the hotel rooms, food, if orientation/information was shared with them during hotel stay, communication with SPO, specific needs during stay which were not met).
 - b. If no, where did you first stay after entering Canada? (did you go directly to your new home?)
2. Where are you living at present – house/apartment? Do you like the locality? Do you want to continue living in your present house/apartment? *If respondent is unsure, interviewer can use probes below*
 - a. If yes, what are the things you like about your present house/apartment? (*probes: location, close to schools, size*)
 - b. If no, what are the problems you are currently facing? (*probes: needed regarding access to transportation, grocery, size of the house, condition of the house, rent/mortgage payment, etc.*).

Language

3. What is your first language? Are you facing problems communicating in English? Can you list some of the problems you faced/face learning English?
4. Have you taken English language classes since you arrived in Canada?
 - a. If no, why are you not taking free English classes? (*probes: transportation problem, childcare, distance from the house, timings of the classes, etc.*). Is your name in the waiting list? Is there anybody from your family who is taking free English classes?
 - b. If yes, how many classes have you taken OR take per week? Who told you about this? Do you think you need more classes per week? Are you getting confidence while communicating in English after taking these classes?
5. Are you still in English classes? How would you rate your progress in learning English?

Employment

6. What is the highest grade, degree or diploma you have earned? Do you have any work experience from your home country? If Yes, what was your profession?
7. Are you currently working? (*interviewer can use appropriate sub-question below*)

- a. If Yes, what kind of work do you do now? Who helped you find this job? Are you happy with your present job? If not, why?
- b. If No, are you looking for a job now? Are you looking for a permanent or part-time job? What type of work are you looking for? Who is helping you with your job search and application? Have you got any interview calls so far? What help do you think you need to get a job?
- c. If not working and not looking for job, what is your main focus at this time? (probe: learning English, gaining more education, caring for children/seniors/ill family members, caring for oneself)

Settlement Services

8. Before coming to Canada, what pre-arrival services did you receive? Did you feel you were well prepared to settle in Canada? If not, what services/information did you think you required before coming to Canada?
9. After entering Canada, who helped you settle? Did an agency help you with any aspect of your settling? Yes/NO
 - a. If Yes, what do they do? Did you take any help from the service providers? When and why? Are there any services you need but it is presently not available? If yes, what are they? Can you name a few settlement service agencies near to your location?
 - b. If No, when you need any help, whom do you ask? Did you face any challenges getting general information? (such as locating walk-in clinics, finding physician, dental care, finding suitable food for family, etc.)
10. Have you experienced any problems or difficulties in getting the help you need to settle in your province?
 - a. If Yes, what are they? (like if they depend on the food bank for food, if they can meet their needs with the social assistance they receive, etc.)
11. What have your experiences been like in obtaining health care? (*probe: have you or any of your family members experienced health care needs that have not been addressed?*)
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your settlement experiences in Canada?

Demographic Questions:

13. Date of arrival (current city/town)? _____(mm/dd/yr)
14. Was this present province your final destination in Canada from before you entered the country? Yes/no
 - a. If no, please indicate place of original destination _____

- b. Date of arrival to Canada: _____(mm/dd/yr)
15. In what country were you living in immediately prior to arriving in Canada?
-

16. Under what category (GAR, PSR, BVOR, JVisa) did you enter Canada? (circle one)
- a. GAR (Government Assisted Refugee)
 - b. PSR (Privately sponsored refugee)
 - c. BVOR (Blended Visa-Office Referred Program)
 - d. Other, please specify: _____

16. Are you the principal applicant? (circle one)

YES NO

17. Date of birth? _____(mm/dd/yr)

18. Current marital status? (circle one)

- a. Single, never married
- b. Common law
- c. Married
- d. Separated
- e. Widowed
- f. Divorced

19. Gender: _____

20. Total number of people living in household? _____

21. Total number of children in household? _____
- a. Total aged 6 and younger: _____
 - b. Total aged 7 through 15: _____
 - c. Total aged 15 through 19: _____

Thank you for your time in completing this interview. The data will be used to help other refugees in their initial settlement experiences in Canada.

We would like to contact you again in the next year for a similar interview as we are interviewing newcomers across Canada and would like to know more about their settlement experiences. Would you be interested in allowing us to contact you?

No: _____

Yes: _____

Please provide your email and or cell phone number so we can contact you:

Interviewer's comments/observations (if any) –

Appendix V - Draft Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Yazidi Project (Kurmanji)

PêşniyarêHevpeyvînekNiv-DamezrandinRêberek Ji Bo Project Êzîdî

Xanî

1. Hûn di otêl / motel de AN navendarazanê de hebûyekemcaraKanadahatîye?
 - a) Hegererê, ji keremaxwe re çendpeyvyan di derbarêezmûna we de ez bêjimgavapêşîhatime.Çîbaşbû? Çiqasdiwarbû? Malbatateçipirsgirêkekrûyêxwe? (*Ger hegerbersivabersivê, hevpeyvînkerekarehînpirsan bide-binêrin*)
 - c. Lêpîrsînênerênî: rêxistinaçareserkirinarûniştinê hat dîtin, bijîşkdermanxaneyekpêkanîn
 - d. Lêkolînênneyînî: Mezinahiyaodeyênnotêl, xwarin,egerahengdarî / agahî bi wan re di dema di hotêlekê de rakevin, ragihandinê bi SPO hatibûparvekirin, pêwîstiyêntaybetîjîdemakubûn re hevdîtin ne).
 - b) Hegerna, kuhûnpêşîbimînînpîştîketinaKanada? (*hûn bi rasterast bi mala xwenûve?*) Malbatateçipirsgirêkekrûyêxwe?
2. Li kuhûnniha li rûniştin - xaniyê / xanî? Ma hûnxaniyê we / malêdixwazin? Ma hûn li cîhêxweyêxwedixwazin? Ma hûndixwazin li mala we / xaniyêberdewambimînînin? *Hekebersivabersivkar e, lêpîrsînerdikarin li jêrlêpîrsînanbikarbînin*
 - a. Hegererê, Çitiştênkuhûndixwazin li ser malê / anjîya we? (*lêkolîn: cihan, nêzîkîdibistanan, mezinahî*)
 - b. Hegerna, Pirsgirêkênkuhûnnihadiçin? (lêpîrsîn: hewceyêkugihîştinaveguhastinê, firotanênqezencî, heqêxaniyê, şertamalê (kevin / nû, germ, avêtinê, etc.), kirînakirêdar / mortgage, etc.).
3. Di nav civakê de hûnçawatêkiliyênmalbatatebinirxînin? Hekedijwarhene, ewçî û çibikin?
 - a. *Pêşniyarêerênî*: Têkiliyênerênîyêncîran û malbatên dîn ênmîna wan
 - b. *Lêkolînênneyînî*: Dorgirtî, derfetênhûrgelanyênsînorkirîkêmdikin.

Ziman

4. Zimanêyekemçi ye? Hûnpirsgirêkênku di pêwendiyaÎngilîzî de pirsgirêkinHûndikarinlîsteyahin ji pirsgirêkênkuhûnhîn English / rû bi rû?
5. Hûnku di Kanada de hatibe we kursênzimanêîngilîzîbistînin?
 - c. Hegererê, tuçiqasçiqas we derxistin OR hefteyekêbigirin? Ma hûnçiqaskursênîngilîzîyênbelaşbibînin? Ma hûngumandikinkutudivêdersênzêdetirserêhefteyê? Hûnpeyabawer demaragihandinê li English piştîçûyîna van çînen?
 - d. Hegera, ÇimahûnnegezênÎngilîzîazadbibin? (*Lêpîrsîn: pirsgirêkekeveguhestinê, lîsteyabendê ye? Gelokese kî ji malbatatekudersên English azadheye?*)
6. Ma hûnhîndibin di kursênÎngilîzî de? Çawadêpêşveçûna we li fêrbûna English hûndikarin?

Karkeriyê

7. bilindtirînradeyaperwerdehiyê / bawername an diploma hûnxistinçi ye? Ma tu ji ezmûnekkarêxwe ji welatê mala we heyê? Hegererê, pîşeyêteçibû?
8. Ma hûnnihadixebite? (*hevpeyvînsazdikarîopsîyona sub-pîrsên li jêr bi kartînin*)
 - d. Hegererê,nihahûnçikarîdikin? Hûnvêkarêçawadît? Hûn bi karêxweyaxwekêfxweş in? Ger ne, çima?
 - e. Hegera, hûn li virdigerinkarekkardikin?Hûndikarintemamîtemamî - li pozîsyona an dem-wextêdigerin? Çicûrekar bi we re ji bodigerin? Kî ji we realîkarî bi search kar û serlêdanate? Ma hemûhevpeyvînên we rabû, hetanihaÇicûrealîkarîhûndifikirin li search karêxwealîkariyawê?
 - f. Heke ne kardikin û negerinkarê, Di vêdemê de fikraserekeyateçi ye? (lêpîrsîn: Îngilîzîfêrbûna, perwerdehiyabêtir, perwerde ji bozarokan / mêr / malbatamalbatatendurustî, ji boparastinaxwe).

XizmetênNişteçîh

9. BerîkuhatinaKanada, ji we rexizmetênpêşîvehatîwergirtin? Eger erê, kuhûnxizmetê pre-hatinapêşkêşkirin û ewçibûn? Ma we hîsdikirkuhûnamadebûnkuhûn li Kanadarûniştin? Heger ne, kîjanxizmetê / agahdariya we ji berkuhûn ji beriyakuKanadavetêhewcedikîhewcekiribû?

- c. 10. Piştî ku Kanadaket, ma ji we re Kanada di çareseriyaalîkariyê de peyda kir? Gelî ajansakuhûn bi cîhekî we re çareseriyawe realîkarîbikin? Belê / na?
- d. b. Eger Erê, ka ewçikîr? Hûn ji bopêşkêşkarên xizmetkarekalîkarîqebûl kir? Gava û çima? Ma hûn hewceyên ku hûn hewcanebe, lê ew ne ji bo we an malbatate ne? Eger erê, ewçî ye? Hûndikarinnavê çend ajansên xizmeta çareseriyên êzîkî çihê? (*pêşniyarê: kesê kutu ji we re an agency / ajansa we re biçin? Ma hûn nizanî ku ew ji kuyî û ku ewçî?*)
- e. Heger na, Dema ku hûn hewceyî alîkarî, li ku hûn li alîkariyê digerin? Hûn agahiyên ku hûn agahdariyagelemperî dakêşin rûyê tebûn? (*yên wekî klînîkên gerdûnî yên diranan, doktorê diranan, lênêrî nadiranêndiranan, ji bomalbataxwarinê, hûrgelandigerin.*)
10. Hûn pirs girêk an zehmetiyên ku di alîkariyê de li parêzgeha webicîh bikin hûn çitecrûbîrkirin?
- a. Eger Erê, ewçî ye?? (*wekî eger ew li ser bank food ji boxwarinê girêdayî ye, eger ew nikare pêdiviyên xwe bi alîkariyê civakî ew bistîne, û hwd. re hev dîtî nê*)
11. Pirs girêka pergala lênêrînatenduristiyê çibû? (*pêşniyarê: we an ji we re an ji malbatate heye hewceyên pêwîstiyên lênêrînatenduristiyên ku nayê çareser kirin?*)
12. Hûn ji bokuezdixwazim bi me re reparve bikin, bersiva we ya din heye? *pêşniyarê: Pêşniyarên ji bopêşkêşkerên xizmetê an agahdariyê kudikare ji boxizmeta we ji penaberan re çetir bikinalîkarî bike?*)

Pirsên Demografîk

Dîrokavekirî (bajêr / bajêr)? _____ (mm/dd/yr)

13. Gelo we niha li parêzgeha Kanada we ya Kanada ye? (Belê / na?)

c. Heger na, ji kerem axweyî cîhekî bîngê hînnîşan bide _____

d. b. b. Dîrokagihîştina Kanada: _____ (mm/dd/yr)

14. Di kîjan welatî de hûn di zûtirîn li Kanada de di cih de dijîn?

15. Li kîjan kategoriyê (GAR, PSR, BVOR, Visa J) didin we Kanada? (circle one)

- e. GAR (Hikûmeta Refugee-Assisted)
- f. PSR (Penaberên sponsor êntaybetî)
- g. BVOR (Tevlî Visa-Office Referred Program)

h. Din, ji keremaxwebinivîsin: _____

16. Ma tuserlêderbingehîn? (dorayek)

Yes No

17. Dîrokajidayikbûnê? _____(mm/dd/yr)

18. Rewşazewacaheyî? (dorayek)

- g. qet ne zewicî
- h. Qanûnahevpar
- i. Zewicî
- j. Vekirî
- k. Jinbî
- l. Divêt

19. Cinsî: _____

20. Jimareyatevahiyakesênku di nav malbatadijîn de (tevlêbûna we)? _____

21. Jimareyazarokan di malê de? _____

- d. 6 salî û piçûktr: _____
- e. 7 salî û 15 salî: _____
- f. 15 salî û 19 salî: _____

Spas dikim ji botijekirinahevpeyvînê de. Daneyênkudê di Kanada de ji bopenaberên din ên wan di penaberiya destpêkê de alîkariya alîkarîbikin.

Emdixwazin bi we retêkilîdîsa di salabê de ji bohevpeyvînekê de mînakuem bi hevpeyvîngasiyê de li seranserî Kanada û dixwazin bizaninkuzêdetir li ser serpêhatiyên çareserîya wan. Ma hûndixwazin bisekininkuem bi te re têkilîbikin??

Na: _____

Erê: _____

Ji keremaxwehejmaranavnişan an jî hejmaratelefonahûrgelanpêşkêşbikin, emdikin ji we retêkilîbikin:

Şîroveyanênhevpeyvîn / çavdêriyan (egeryek)-

Appendix VI: Selected Demographic Information of Participants

Participant	Months in Canada	Sex	Age	Marital Status
Calgary				
Adel	3	M		Married
Adham	0	M	27	Married
Khawala	0	F	23	Married
Khalafe	4	F	30	Widow
Bassil	3	M	40	Married
Dalal	4	F	25	Single
London				
Bassam	3	M	27	Married
Afrah	8	M	29	Married
Elias	3	M	23	Single
Khalaf	0	M	23	Single
Lozke	7	F	47	Married
Naso	2	M	25	Married
Nasreen	3	F	32	Widow
Hadi	4	M	24	Single
Aylas	10	M	36	Married
Roshan	3	F	32	Widow
Toronto				
Battal	3	M	27	Married
Gesa	2	F	32	Married
Saadia	2	F	33	Widow
Sarab	10	F	28	Single
Silda	3	F	49	Widow
Amal	6	F	30	Widow
Balber	3	M	33	Married
Tujan	3	F	29	Widow
Wejdan	3	F	29	Widow
Winnipeg				
Zeri	4	F	36	Widow
Zheyen	3	F	43	Married
Amira	4	F	26	Widow
Manal	1	F	43	Married
Sajeda	4	F	51	Widow
Awar	2	M	25	Single

Dema	3	F	28	Married
Behi	3	M	30	Married
Dyla	1	F		Widow
Khalida	3	F	38	Widow