

**CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA
RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE UNIT**

**A NATIONAL APPROACH TO MEETING THE NEEDS OF GAR CHILDREN AND
YOUTH WITHIN THE RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by:
Kappel Ramji Consulting Group
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1.0 Introduction

In 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada Resettlement Assistance Unit (CIC) commissioned an Inventory of the existing Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) services with a special emphasis on promising practices and the services available to Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) upon arrival. The inventory was based on information collected from Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in nine (9) provinces and their local CIC offices. The Inventory was intended to set the stage for potential re-design of RAP services.

Re-design of RAP has become more pressing with the change in the profile of GARs arriving in Canada since IRPA in 2002. GARs arriving today bring with them more complex needs that challenge their resettlement process. They are leaving home countries with much more dire and difficult living situations than before. Many are unfamiliar with urban living, with the conveniences of electricity, stoves, and running water and many adults and children have never been in school, and/or are illiterate in their mother tongue.

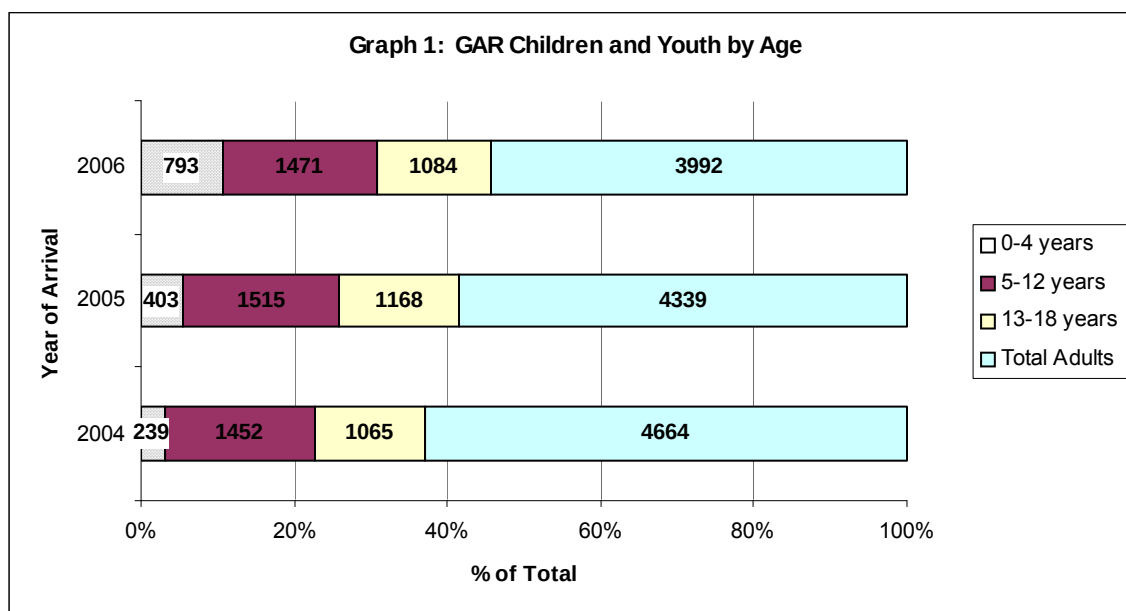
The RAP Inventory highlighted the gaps in services for GAR children and youth who currently comprise about 45% of the GARs being currently served by the RAP program each year. This gap is due in part to the fact that CIC does not currently provide funds to meet the unique needs of GARs children and youth. CIC and its RAP Working Group now wish to develop a national strategy to meet the ***“immediate and essential” needs of GAR children and youth within the RAP context.***

This report highlights the needs that GAR children and youth are experiencing in their resettlement process in Canada. Building on these needs, a national strategy that supports GAR children and youth within their first 12 months in Canada is recommended in order for them to be successful in their overall re-settlement process.

2.0 Profile of GAR Children and Youth Arriving in Canada

GAR children and youth make up approximately 45% of GARs coming to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). It appears that this ratio of children to adults has grown in recent years. Children in the age group of 5-12 years make up the largest percentage of arrivals, with those aged 13-18 not too far behind. Based on 2006 data, 68% of children and youth arrive as part of two parent families, while slightly over 30% are coming with a single parent, the majority women-led families.

Following is a composite profile of children and youth who arrived between 2004 and 2006



GARs have been originating from many different countries. While Colombia and Afghanistan have been the top two sources in the last 3 years, Myanmar (Burma) has recently replaced Sudan in third place. The following table shows the top ten sources countries for GARs coming to Canada since 2004

**Table 1: Top Ten Countries of Origin for GARs Coming to Canada
2004 – 2006**

2004	# Arriving	2005	# Arriving	2006	# Arriving
Colombia	1417	Afghanistan	1916	Colombia	819
Afghanistan	1366	Columbia	1501	Afghanistan	614
Sudan	1082	Sudan	478	Myanmar (Burma)	385
Congo	516	Liberia	439	Congo	285
Somalia	423	Congo	413	Sudan	181
Iran	383	Somalia	310	Somalia	138
Liberia	332	Ethiopia	242	Ethiopia	114
Ethiopia	281	Iran	185	Liberia	113
Iraq	253	Tajikistan	176	Iran	95
Burundi	140	Eritrea	160	Burundi	85
		Burundi	160		

3.0 Method

The process to collect information and develop potential strategies for inclusion as part of RAP services was multi-pronged. Diagram 1 below depicts the process overall.

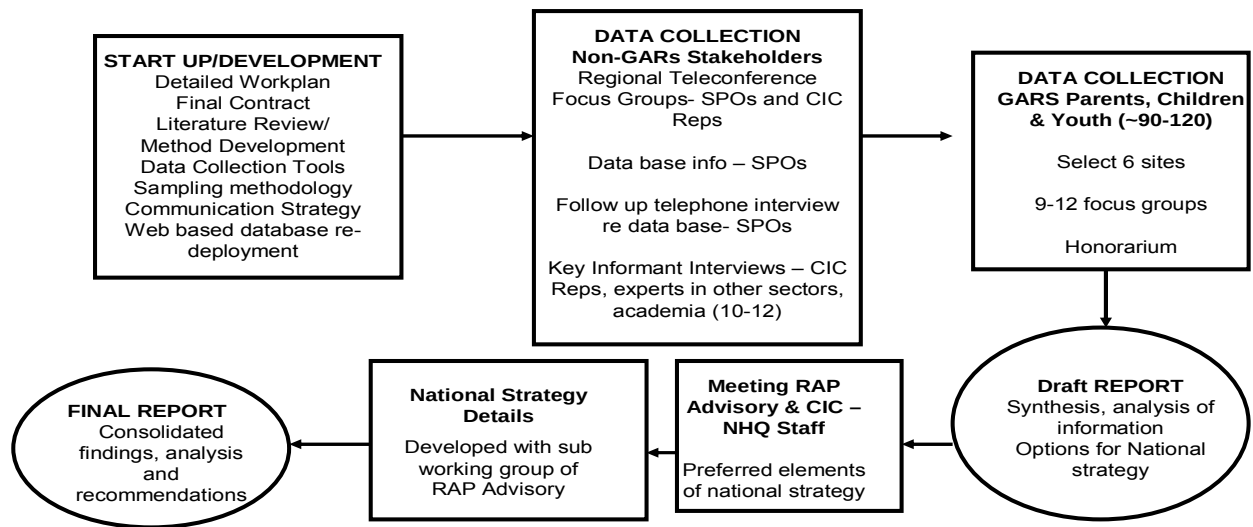


Diagram 1:
CIC Resettlement Assistance Unit
National Strategy for Children and Youth Process

In addition to the a Literature Review, information was collected from select Key Informants, SPOs and regional and local CIC Representatives as well as GAR parents and youth.

Generally, the framework for data gathering was consistent and focussed on the following major areas:

- o Basic needs
- o Education
- o Social Development
- o Health
- o Family Relations

All Stakeholders were asked not just to describe needs but also to identify ways that they were meeting the needs – or promising practices they might think could be integrated into a comprehensive national strategy.

A thematic approach to data synthesis and analysis was undertaken. The data from the three main sources - GARs, the field (SPOs, CIC and Key Informants) and the literature – was triangulated. No one source was viewed as any more important than any other. Rather themes were identified based on the degree to which they were shared by various stakeholder groups and/or their uniqueness because of the particular vantage point or lived experience that might be at play in a particular stakeholder group.

Overall about 185 people gave input to the process. Of these, about 50% were GAR parents and youth. Table 2 below highlights the various ways each stakeholder group was involved.

Table 2: Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder Group	Method	Number
Key Informants	Telephone/In-person interview; Focus Group at a SEPWR Advisory Ctte Meeting	39
SPO Representatives	Teleconference Focus groups; Online survey; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	33
CIC Local Representatives	Local office survey; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	13
CIC Regional Representatives	Teleconference Focus group; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	6
GAR Parents and Youth	Focus Groups in 6 sites Parents Youth	46 48
	Total Participants	~185

Appendix 1 contains detailed information about the method along with the SPO survey, focus group, discussion guides used with each stakeholder group. Appendix 2 is the List of Participants who are identifiable.

3.1. Limitations to the method

There are some limitations to the method that warrant comment.

- There was some confusion about the fact that CIC Resettlement Assistance Unit had commissioned two processes to be done within the same time frame. Both used surveys to gather specific information from SPOs. This confused some SPOs, causing some to miss critical deadlines.
- Because the SPOs are so steeped in the day-to-day needs and realities of newly settling GAR children and youth, there was a tendency to gloss over some of the information that they might have given in the survey - there was just too much to say. They may also have had some difficulty distinguishing between the categories that were used to tease out the needs, feeling that they had already spoken about something in a previous section.

- Local CIC representatives did not respond to the request for information in as large numbers as desired, in spite of repeated reminders. While it is not clear why, for some it seems that they did not feel that they had enough to contribute about the specific needs of GAR children and youth, deferring to the expertise and first hand knowledge that their local SPO colleagues would have.

However, in spite of these limitations much rich data has been collected. The limitations are not so significant as to compromise the process or the outcomes.

4.0 Findings

The five (5) key areas for data gathering were:

- o Basic needs
- o Family Relations
- o Social Development
- o Education
- o Health (mental, physical, emotional)

These areas were selected because they are holistic, taking into account all aspects of the lives of children and youth. In order to develop a relevant and appropriate national strategy, this was important. While these five (5) areas formed the basis of data gathering, emphasis was also placed on children's developmental milestones and age given this would dictate the type of intervention or strategy that would effectively meet the need. It was also clear that different emphases would emerge according to the age of the children and youth, leading perhaps, to different decisions about where to invest limited resources.

Findings will be presented first according to the five (5) thematic areas: Basic Needs, Family Relations, Social Development, Education and Health (mental, physical, emotional), and then summarised according to the emphases that have emerged for each of three age groupings: 0 – 4 year olds, children aged 5-12, and youth aged 13-18. In each section the desired outcomes for the smooth settlement and transition of GAR children and youth are highlighted.

An overall analysis of the information shows that when it comes to describing the needs of GAR children and youth, there is wide ranging consensus among stakeholder groups. What might vary is the emphasis different stakeholders place on the needs related to the role they play and/or the knowledge/expertise they may have. In this section, therefore, the findings are presented without attribution except for the literature. The findings from the literature review are integrated where relevant.¹ For the complete literature review see Appendix 3.

¹ There is little literature specifically about GAR children and youth. At present, research on children and youth largely identifies the needs of immigrants and refugees grouped together under the category of "newcomer." While differences between immigrant and refugee children and youth cannot be overlooked, literature on newcomers is generally all that is available to identify effective strategies might be used to address refugee settlement in particular.

As well, quotes or specific nuances from parents and youth are noted in italics - to add life and immediacy to the findings. Appendix 4 contains a Summary of the Data according to the emphasis placed on needs of GAR children/youth by the various stakeholder groups consulted through this process.

4.1. Basic Overall Needs of Children and Youth

GAR children and youth are like all youngsters in that to develop as full contributing members of society they need food, shelter, and a sense of safety, belonging and love/ support from their parents and extended family. Because of the circumstances that have led them to become refugees, GAR children and youth arrive in Canada with some specific basic needs.

Desired Outcomes in Response to Basic Overall Needs

- √ Structure & Routines
- √ Age Appropriate Life Skills & Coping Mechanisms for Local Context
 - √ Healthy Separation from Parents to Attend Daycare/School
 - √ Adjustment to New/Different Authority Figures
 - √ Adequate, Safe & Affordable Accommodation
 - √ Access to Affordable Transportation

- ***GAR children and youth need to gain stability by having structure and routine in their lives that can give them a sense of safety and predictability.*** Their experience as refugees may have been “routine” but they were frequently in situations where they could not count on consistent schooling, for example, or enough food to sate their hunger. Theirs and their families’ and peers’ safety was never really assured. They need to be able to count on futures full of security, hope and promise.
- ***Because so much about Canadian society is new and different for GAR children and youth, shortly after arrival they need new life and coping skills.*** What may have worked for them in the refugee living situation may not here when it comes to coping with stress, threat, or fear. Furthermore, there are many new things to adjust to- electricity, plumbing, elevators, alarm systems, busy streets, streetlights and most of all, school life.. From a child’s vantage point, some of the messages about how to live in western society may be different from those that parents need to hear.

“..the orientation was not good enough in terms of explaining the future of our children ; not anyone of the staff gave us any information about the schooling system ... and that is why it took them long time for our children to go to school.”

GAR parent

One youth left her school heading tour agency. She took a wrong turn and ended up completely lost. She was asking people for directions in Spanish but no one could understand. The police were out looking for her. It was quite a traumatic event for the hours that she spent lost in the city.

From GAR youth focus group notes

- ***Separation from parents to attend school, day care or other activities can be a new and frightening experience for many GAR children and youth.*** For many this might bring back horrific memories of the war context where getting torn away from loved ones by force was a constant fear with the real possibility of not ever seeing them again. Since many may also have lived in limited circumstances and close quarters for so long, they could be fearful of being on their own in such a dramatically different environment. Parents may also be quite concerned about letting their children go. However, healthy separation is essential to allow adults to accomplish important tasks towards settlement and to prepare children for enrolment in day care, school or other age appropriate programs.
- ***Adjusting to new and different adults or authority figures such as child minders or RAP workers is sometimes quite difficult.*** This could be due to the role that authority figures have played in their refugee experience and not being sure who to trust. It could also be because they have not had much contact with people in “helping” or supportive roles so are not sure what to make of them.
- ***Finding the right accommodation that is affordable, the right size and in a safe neighbourhood with access to appropriate schools is another major challenge.*** Without proper housing, the fear, uncertainty, and health issues that GARs have experienced in the refugee situation may be replicated. There are many large GAR families (more than 4 –5 children) nowadays and in most communities finding suitable accommodation that can comfortably house them is challenging. Some families have had to occupy two units in the same apartment building. Using transportation and food allowances towards rent is not uncommon. Frequently families do not have a choice in the neighbourhood where they will reside because the school boards have limited locations where English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) are available.

“I’m really shocked of the situation that I see in my house, we are more than 7 kids and we only had 4 bed rooms, while some of us sleep in the living room, we have only one wash room, when it comes time to go to school early in the morning, we always missed the bus because every body has to wait another person until he or she finishes in the bath room. It is really hard for us to manage it, in terms of controlling this terrible situation.”

GAR youth

- ***Being able to get to places around the city is a challenge for GAR children and youth since their public transportation costs are not consistently covered by the RAP stipend.*** Currently CIC does not have a policy that GARs’ local transportation needs will be universally covered (for both adults and children who are required to pay to board public transit). Smaller communities do not even have adequate

transportation systems. For many GAR youth this means that they often cannot go out with friends in the community, may not be able to get to important appointments, or participate in recreation /sporting activities. Some feel that this is a real barrier to the integration of GAR children and youth into broader Canadian youth culture.

(“We would like the government to help with bus passes while attending school. “
Gar youth)

4.2. Family Relations

The refugee experience puts a great deal of strain on families. Many families have been torn apart by war for prolonged periods. Many adults are struggling to fill roles for which they have had assistance and support in the past from their extended family, which now may not be in close proximity. Certainly coming to Canada begins to challenge some of the ways that they may have found to cope.

Desired Outcomes in Response to Issues of Family Relations:

- √ Adjustment to being Reunited as a Family
- √ Maintaining Healthy Parent-Child Relations
- √ Effective Parenting Skills to Manage Child/Youth Behaviour

- ***Adjusting to family reunification is key task for GAR children and youth.*** Children need to get to know their parents and other members of the extended family or household, spouses need to rekindle the bonds that brought them together in the first place, and everyone needs to find comfortable ways of living together again as a family. Parents need to re-establish their role as parents and children need to have time to be children.
- ***The struggle to maintain healthy parent child relationships is frequently exacerbated by roles that place children/youth in positions of power over their parents.*** GAR children and youth often learn the dominant language of Canada well before their parents. They then begin to take on positions, which can sabotage the typical parent child relationships such as language interpretation/translation. The literature reveals that the roles of children and parents are often reversed upon arrival in Canada. Melpa Kamateros (1998) identifies a common trend in which children are often forced into the role of “social interpreters” which accounts for a shift in traditional roles of authority.
- ***Parents’ difficulties with adopting new child rearing practices that reconcile the two sets of cultural values/practices can be a stress on children and youth.*** The literature tells us that child-rearing practices vary across cultures, and can be exacerbated when families have to adapt to a new culture and environment. Recent studies on newcomer families in Ontario show that isolation and lack of understanding of parenting

expectations in the Canadian context pose as major challenges for newcomer parents (Anisef, et al 2001). Parental attitudes towards Canadian culture may affect children's settlement and development. For example, in one study on the Sudanese experience of settlement in Ontario, parents reported a change in relationship with children because of "different cultural values" which children learned from media and mainstream Canadian culture (Simich 2004). Rajko Seat (2000), in his study on assessing the needs of newcomer youth, notes that parents of 16 to 19 year olds often worry about their children becoming "too Canadian" and fear that this may lead children to abandon their native culture, beliefs, language and traditions.

Some families concern about their children when they are new at schools. They worry about their children as they spend most of their times at schools and get used misbehaviour at schools as discipline does not exist there. Therefore, they are concerned that their children might go astray as they expose peer pressure and other evil immorality. . .

From Parent focus group notes

Seat's study also shows that a common concern among newcomer parents is difficulty in disciplining their children. The challenges of adjusting to life in Canada, including finding adequate housing and employment, leave parents with little time to effectively monitor their children's behaviour. Changes in family dynamics also contribute to discipline concerns. As well, in many cases, the support of extended family members who help look after and discipline children in the country of origin are no longer available. A common area of concern that GAR parents have identified is lack of understanding about what rights children have in Canada. They report that their children threaten them with calling 911 to report abuse when they are disciplined. Parents want to know how they can replace old patterns of discipline which may be unacceptable in Canada with new ones that maintain the respect they feel they are due in their roles.

.."believe me or not I was so worry, just in the first day my kids went to school because I knew that they are going to have a different kind of education, and also according to what I have heard, some teachers ask kids in school if the parents beat them or not, or what is the condition between you and your parents, and they also tell children that their parents are not allowed to beat them ,if they do, then children will have right to call 911. All these kind of things make me worry. On the other hand I was happy to see my kids are going to build up their future. I also think that the main reason of this issue is simply because of the law differences in Canada and where we came from. As I said my big problem is when my kids may complain against me, concerning a small matter, and at that moment I could be in a trouble with the law in Canada.."

GAR parent

4.3. Social Development

While there may be cultural differences globally, the social development of children and youth still has at its heart making friends, relating and belonging to a peer group and meeting social behavioural norms. GAR children and youth are no different.

Desired Outcomes in Response to Social Development Needs:

- ✓ Age Appropriate and Socially Acceptable Public Behaviour
 - ✓ Healthy views of Sexuality & Reproductive Health
 - ✓ Fitting in & Making Friends
 - ✓ Withstanding Teasing & Bullying
 - ✓ Not Getting into Conflict with the Law

- ***Adjustment to Canadian norms about public social behaviour can be quite challenging for most newcomer children and especially GAR children and youth*** who have come from non-Western and non-urban environments and have been frequently displaced because of their refugee status. The habits, customs or cultural norms for various social and public situations are often not clear to them, nor are the rationales. For example, GAR children might dispose of garbage inappropriately, or urinate in public spaces like stairwells or hallways. They might pull a fire alarm to see what happens. When GAR children and youth do not adopt conventional norms they can be subjected to exclusion, ridicule, social isolation and even conflict with the law.
- ***Intergenerational conflict related to dating and the need for information on sexual and reproductive health can be exacerbated by the clash of cultures between newcomer parents and children.*** Struggling with sexuality is an issue common to all youth. One project, piloted by Sexuality Education Resource Centre in Winnipeg, shows that newcomer youth face a number of stresses, which can contribute to the way in which they view their sexuality and interact with others. For example, intergenerational conflict on issues such as dating and the need for information on sexual and reproductive health can be exacerbated by the clash of cultures between newcomer parents and children. GAR youth need support to develop healthy views of their sexuality and reproductive health.
- ***Fitting in and making friends is another important element of successful resettlement for GAR children and youth.*** Without fluency in an official language, often not being able to compete academically with their age peers, and not knowing all the social conventions makes it hard for GAR children and youth to feel as though they belong. Because of economic hardship, many GAR children and youth are not able to participate in sports and recreational activities, which are natural and positive ways to meet people and make friends.

"...wish if the government could have more programs for children in terms of having fun or relax and enjoy a good time with other children in their own ages. Especially when schools are closed. It is really boring just to stay home without doing anything, while we

know that we came in the big country like Canada to have a good education and also to have a good time".

GAR youth

"They are very good children but they don't have any fun. Fun activities and developing courses are expensive for us"

GAR Parent

- ***Withstanding teasing and bullying is yet another challenge that can face GAR children and youth.*** In spite of Canada's desire to be a multicultural society where all can achieve their full potential, some GAR children and youth face teasing and bullying, sometimes racially motivated. The response that they may have to such negative behaviour may not be the best for them. Some youth choose to join groups of negative peers rather than find other ways of dealing with their realities. They are frequently targets for gangs who try to lure them in becoming members.
- ***GAR youth are at risk of getting into trouble with the law.*** The inability of newcomer youth to adjust to a new culture, language, environment and peer expectations place youth at greater risk. There are a number of factors that make refugee youth more vulnerable including breakdown of the family unit owing to displacement in refugee camps, difficulty finding good housing in safe neighbourhoods, language barriers, as well as a low self-esteem, absence of adult supervision and role models all place refugee youth at risk of exhibiting delinquent behaviour, committing crimes and joining street gangs (ROUTE 2005). GAR youth need support to combat vulnerability to getting into conflict with the law.

4.4. Educational Achievement

Academic success is a key indicator of settlement success for GAR children and youth. GAR children have often had limited or no access to education in their home countries as a result of government neglect, civil war and a lack of educational resources available in refugee camps. Key Informants/Experts and the literature suggest that once placed in Canadian schools, both refugee and immigrant children and youth face a unique set of problems.

Most newcomer families to Canada have great hopes of their children's futures that depend on them doing well in school. Most expect that once they arrive, the educational benefits will be immediately realised. This has not been the general experience for GAR children and youth.

Desired Outcomes in Relation to Educational Achievement:

- ✓ Age Appropriate English Literacy & Language Fluency
- ✓ Meeting School & Classroom Behavioural Expectations
- ✓ Assessment & Placement in Right Classroom Setting
 - ✓ Obtaining Extra Support to Fill Gaps
 - ✓ Participating in Extracurricular Activities
 - ✓ Feeling Parents' Presence at School

- **Access to ESL and ELD Programming is essential for success in school for GAR children and youth.** It appears that this is not universally available in all twenty-three (23) sites where GAR families are resettled across Canada. In some cities, school boards have just a few ESL opportunities for all newcomers and with the arrival of GARs throughout the year, the allocated spaces assigned in the Fall for the full year, leave GARs children out of luck. In other larger centres, there may be spaces, but families are obliged to live in specific neighbourhoods to access the spaces. Reports are that these neighbourhoods are not always safe or desirable places for GAR families to live.

Those in middle school found that they had even less ESL help. Two periods every 7 day cycle is not enough. The rest of the time they were in regular class. Their English was improving but they found it difficult to understand what they were supposed to be learning because the class moved too quickly

From GAR youth focus group notes

Ontario Public School Board Association reports that ESL and ELD programs currently operate on a four-year model. However evidence shows that up to seven years of instruction is necessary for newcomer students to attain the same level of fluency in English as native English speakers. Other systemic gaps of ESL and ELD programs include an absence of common tracking mechanisms to follow a student's progress, as well as an absence of national language benchmarks to assess the level of literacy and language acquisition of school-age children and youth (OPSBA 2005).

- **Responding to school routines and meeting behavioural expectations in the classroom are also essential for success in school.** Many GAR children may never have been in a classroom environment or the setting they have been in have not been as structured as here in Canada. So they experience issues with regular and punctual attendance at school, following the classroom expectations about sitting quietly and working on their own etc. They may not know basics like how to hold a pencil or what crayons are so that to be able to participate in many classroom activities at first is very difficult for them. As well, children who suffer from behavioural and mental health issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder, have difficulty adjusting to a school environment. To further exacerbate these issues, school personnel either may not understand what is at the root of such behaviours and/or no have the personnel available to assist GAR children and youth to adjust and be successful. Often times, the response from schools is to suspend students that act out, rather than assess and support their needs (Scott 2001). Teachers also admit to being ill equipped to accommodate the needs of newcomer students in the classroom (Reynolds 2004).

- ***Appropriate assessment and placement in the right grade level or classroom settings is challenging the educational institutions that GAR children and youth enter.*** The norm appears to be to place GAR children and youth in age appropriate classrooms. In cases where GARs have had access to education in the refugee situation, their schooling has been fragmented and frequently interrupted by displacement (OPSBA 2005). The teachers in those settings are often refugees themselves who may have not had access to relevant higher education and/or pedagogy training.

This all means that many GAR students are not necessarily at age appropriate academic levels. When they are placed in inappropriate classes they struggle. There are many concerns about the rising drop out rates among GAR youth.

"We would like government to make sure that children received appropriate training at school by placing them in grades based on their qualifications rather than on their ages. Besides attending regular classes, children need additional support with their home works. Having enough resource persons from our community to help with children's school works is critical. This way it will help alleviate some of their burdens and pressure from various parts of life while they are settling in Canada." GAR parents

- ***GAR children and youth need a lot of extra support to fill gaps.*** The gaps run the gamut from language proficiency, academic achievement at grade level to the basic life skills and concepts that Western educational institutions assume all entering children have- knowing colours, shapes, measurements, money etc. Many older GAR children and youth do not have these basic skills in spite of some academic achievement in the refugee situation.
- ***A cornerstone of the educational experience is the range of extracurricular activities offered.*** Participating in these allows students to strengthen peer relationships, learn teamwork, advance conceptual and academic skills, and improve other talents such as artistic or athletic gifts. GAR children and youth often cannot financially afford to participate in these opportunities. In some cases parents are unfamiliar with the activities and do not allow their children, particularly their female children to participate. Language and transportation barriers may prevent participation as well.
- ***Feeling their parents' presence at school is important to GAR children and youth.*** Parental participation in their children's education has been shown to improve performance. However, GAR parents are often too stretched trying to make ends meet and/or do not have the language capacity to feel confident to take part in relevant school activities. Furthermore, some parents are unfamiliar with the school

systems and not aware of the opportunities as their children may not be alerting them to all the notices and take home messages that the school distributes.

- ***GAR children and youth want to feel successful, accepted and like they belong at school.*** Overall, they are not different from other kids. They are not immune to the fact that their parents place a lot of emphasis on their success as a way for the whole family to flourish. They often share the hopes and aspirations their parents have for them and are let down when they do not have a positive school experience.

Older youth worry about their own futures. Many had almost finished or had finished high school in Columbia and were starting from scratch here. They were not able to transfer their credits over. At age 17 they knew that they would be in High School for up to 4 more years. They felt frustrated and wanted to find the quickest way to move forward with their lives

From GAR youth focus group notes

4.5. Health

Here the focus is not just physical well being but also the quality of the mental and emotional health GAR children and youth experience given the situations they have escaped from.

Desired Outcomes in Relation to Ensure Good Health:

- ✓ Adequate & Nutritious Food, Proper Clothing & Accommodation
- ✓ Corrected Vision, Hearing, Speech and/or Dental Issues
- ✓ Good Mental Health
- ✓ Access to Primary Health Care

- ***Adequate and nutritious food, proper clothing, and safe and secure accommodation are all critical for optimal health.*** GAR children and youth generally live at the margins in their first year in Canada since the stipends their families receive are indexed to the Provincial welfare rates. This makes it hard for them to have access to nutritious foods or adequate seasonal clothing. Added to this is the challenge their parents have in understanding how to make nutritious meals with the variety of unfamiliar ingredients. The accommodations families find that are affordable are not always as safe and secure as they should be. Furthermore, for large families, accommodation is often too small and overcrowded (e.g. families with 7 children living in a 4 bedroom 1 bathroom unit) or in other cases the family is split up (e.g. between 2 apartment units in the same building).
- ***Many GAR children and youth need correction or remediation for vision, hearing, speech and/or dental issues so that normal growth and development is not impeded.*** For the GARs, in the countries of refuge before resettling in Canada, these types of preventative issues can be considered less critical than other acute physical health concerns and so are often left untended. While these types of issues can prevent

academic success in school, making and keeping friends, and generally getting ahead, they can be readily addressed with access to proper supports. The Interim Federal Health (IFH) coverage and process continues to be challenging to navigate for GARs, making access to these health care services problematic.

- ***Good mental health is a core issue for most GAR children and youth.*** That many refugee children have been exposed to or witnessed extreme violence in their home countries such as shelling, bombing, exposure to dead bodies, looting and killing has been well documented by a plethora of researchers. Research findings indicate that children who have been exposed to such violence are at high risk of experiencing psychological disturbances and mental health problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (Simich 2004). Coping with grief and trauma has been a particular emphasis in this process. Linked to this is a need for children and youth to be able to separate from their parents and form trusting relationships with a wide range of new people.
- ***Finding doctors to take on new and high need families is not always possible*** in the 23 sites cross the country where GAR children and youth are resettling. This means that GAR families often have to access medical attention in emergency rooms and Walk in Clinics where they cannot always make themselves understood and continuity of care is not possible. Cultural health care interpretation that is consistently available is rare across the country, leaving many GAR families relying on other family members (who are frequently older children/youth) to explain their symptoms/concerns to health care professionals.

4.6 Needs of Children and Youth According to Milestones

The needs of GAR children and youth are multiple and serious. Clearly CIC Resettlement Assistance Unit is not in a position to address all of these needs within the RAP context. It is necessary to look at the needs in another way to begin to decipher which needs are most pressing and immediate in the first 12 months. To do this we will now consider the needs that are emphasised for each of three age groupings of GAR children and youth: 0-4 years, 5-12 years and youth 13-18 years of age.

4.6.1. Needs of Preschool Children

The primary emphasis that emerged for pre-school children has to do with preparation for school and effective parenting including dealing with separation issues.

Priority Outcomes for Preschoolers:

- √ School Readiness
- √ Effective Parenting/Behaviour Management
- √ Updated Immunization Status and Normal Growth & Development
- √ Feeling Supported and Understood by Childcare Professionals

- ***Preschool children need to be able to cope in day care or child minding environments and work towards becoming “school ready”.*** This entails separating from their parents, and experiencing an enriched environment where they can learn the basic skills that are required for Kindergarten enrolment in most cities - such as colours, shapes, the alphabet, their name etc. GAR preschoolers, like their peers, need to have creative play opportunities to develop large and fine motor skills, interactive play with their peers and to just have fun. Enrolment in preschool settings would also allow their parents to be free to attend language training classes, orientation and work related training sessions, find employment and/or go to work.
- ***Children also have a need to experience effective parenting and discipline*** so that they are able to learn about boundaries, structure, the role of adults in their lives and self-control. All of these are essential ingredients for healthy adjustment in family life and at school.
- ***Immunization and preventative health screening to facilitate achievement of age appropriate milestones is critical for early learning and development.*** While this is part of the broader package of “school readiness”, it also serves as a platform to reinforce for parents appropriate health seeking behaviours e.g. when to go to Doctor as opposed to using the Emergency Room, basic health promotion practices pertaining to children such as nutrition/healthy snacks, dental health, household and playground safety, play and stimulation, etc as well as teaching about monitoring for and dealing with common childhood ailments like fever, skin rashes, etc.
- ***Parents of preschoolers need to be understood and supported by childcare professionals.*** Here the issue is that many early childhood professionals may not be familiar with the refugee experiences that GAR children are coming from and the challenges that this places on parents’ abilities to provide structure and discipline. As well they may not be experienced in various ways that parents fulfill their roles around the world. When young children experience issues with separation or structure in childcare settings, this lack of knowledge and/or experience can lead to misunderstanding and possibly blaming or negative reactions from the professionals.

4.6.2. Needs of School Aged Children (Aged 5-12)

For this group of GAR children there is a heavy emphasis on education related issues.

Priority Outcomes for School Aged Children:

- ✓ Early and Proper Assessment and Placement
- ✓ Catch up on English Language Proficiency and Literacy
 - ✓ Normal Corrected Vision, Hearing & Speech
- ✓ Age appropriate Social Behaviour in School & Peer Group
- ✓ Feeling Supported and Understood by Teachers

- ***Early and proper assessment and placement within the educational system is key for this age group.*** This group of children are still young and will have several years in the educational system. They need to get off on the right foot by receiving the right types of interventions/support so they can feel successful, capable and accepted.
- ***ESL and ELD gaps need to be filled in a short amount of time to ensure academic success.*** They also often need support to deal with homework. Continuous reinforcement in school but also after school, in the home and over the summer months is key if they are to achieve their potential. The common expectation that schools have of “Parents as Partners” is not only quite foreign or unfamiliar to the GAR families but also the adults are dealing with too many other basic issues of their own to be able to also give the necessary time and energy to meet educators’ expectations.
- ***Normal vision, hearing and speech development will facilitate growth and learning.*** Given the significant issues of ESL and ELD, it’s important any concerns related to such health concerns be ruled out first.
- ***Children in this age group need to learn new ways to manage their behaviour and to develop healthy peer group relationships.*** Many yearn for “Canadian “friends”. The behaviours that kids in this age group might have adopted to survive in the refugee situation may not be effective in Canadian playgrounds or communities. Compared to their Canadian born peers, these children also have to undertake “adult-like” responsibilities at a younger age. Examples include caring for younger siblings, cooking, household chores as well as escorting and interpreting for parents at various appointments to do with “adult business” – at the doctor’s, lawyers, bank, landlord, CIC, etc.
- ***Finally, they need to be understood and supported by school personnel.*** 5 to 12 year olds spend a good part of every day in the educational environment. Their families’ hopes and dreams are pinned on

this age group – to become the best that they can be, earn a good living, and contribute to Canadian society. School personnel are tremendously influential and the school experience plays a major role in whether they are successful or not.

4.6.3. Needs of Youth (aged 13-18)

While education is an important area for youth, youth employment, peer relationships and public behaviours are also emphasised.

Priority Outcomes for Youth:

- ✓ Staying in School / Success in Obtaining High School Diploma
- ✓ Alternate Training/Employment Options
- ✓ Positive Mental Health & Peer Relationships
- ✓ Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Education & Services
- ✓ Feeling Supported & Understood by Parents, School & Community

- ***GAR youth struggle to find meaningful ways to stay in school.*** They are often placed in age appropriate classes as opposed to their current aptitude level. This leads to much frustration and worry about academic catch up as they are often quite behind and lost in their classes. Parents worry about this a lot because this is the first wave of children for whom they had visions that the future would be bright and successful. This does not seem to be happening to the degree they had hoped.
- ***There is a need for alternatives that youth can follow to receive training and/or meaningful and rewarding employment*** that is not linked to age appropriate high school completion. This is mostly relevant for those who are not going to be able to catch up academically. Both parents and youth emphasise their need to be able to contribute to the family income. Youth worry about their families' economic realities a good deal and so alternatives that give them an opportunity to work while still addressing their ESL/ELD needs in an appropriate and responsive Adult Education setting are essential for this age group.
- ***Positive mental health and peer relationships are a big concern for GAR youth.*** They want things to do where they can meet and make friends with other youth- not just other refugee youth. However, their life experiences as refugee kids may have exposed them to atrocities or other horrific situations that their peers cannot even begin to fathom. Sometimes their behaviours and issues with respect to managing their resulting anger and frustration – in school, at home and /or in public – make the development of healthy peer relationships difficult. Many service providers suspect underlying issues of Post Traumatic Stress. This is leading some GAR youth to become isolated, spending a lot of time in solitude, while others are forming less positive relationships with

peers who are more on the fringes. Parents and teachers worry about this a lot.

- ***Sexual and reproductive health including birth control and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are another concern.*** There are several female GAR youth who have become pregnant since arriving in Canada. GAR youth are struggling to understand Western teens and their behaviours while at the same time feeling pressure from their parents to maintain customs congruent with their cultural heritage. They also do not have ways of accessing all the relevant information they need to make healthy choices and decisions.
- ***GAR youth, finally, need the understanding and support of multidisciplinary team/group of people as they resettle- parents, school personnel and community*** players such as the police, employment program staff etc. Of all GAR children this group is facing the greatest challenge as they are at the threshold of adult hood. They feel the most pressure to help support their families. They experience a high degree of frustration in school and there is the increased fear among SPOs for this group as the solutions seem to be more elusive.

5.0 A National Strategy for GAR Children and Youth

When all of the needs that have been identified are converted into outcomes, the list is long. CIC Refugee Assistance Unit cannot be expected to address all the needs for at least the following reasons:

- o Many of the needs are linked to the responsibilities of other institutional jurisdictions such as health care or education. While CIC can play a supportive role to these institutional areas, they cannot usurp their responsibilities. Unfortunately, however, the responses of these institutions across the 23 sites where GARS are resettling are uneven. For example, some school boards welcome GARs and have been creative and innovative in their responses to their academic/educational needs while others can barely provide ESL once or twice a week.
- o Many of the needs GAR children and youth will take time to resolve. While CIC can play an initial role, delivering services in particular ways that begin to mitigate needs, they cannot carry the full responsibility over a longer term. Families and their children will eventually need to interface with and receive support from other organisations within the mainstream community.

The current situation within the SPOs across Canada is that there is no dedicated funding from CIC for programs /services targeting GAR children and youth. However, many SPOs are funded to provide a whole range of CIC funded services so are able with ISAP, HOST, and other community based funding to provide important services targeting GAR children and youth along with other

newcomer children. Thus, while there are few programs for **only** GAR children and youth, there are some initiatives, which are having good results for this target group.

Having said this, the breadth and depth of issues and challenges facing GAR children and youth point to the urgent need for a comprehensive national strategy. A holistic concept comprised of 5 key components is being proposed. The components are:

- ✓ Orientation and Life Skills – overseas pre-departure and once in Canada
- ✓ Family Case Management with a focus on children and youth and an emphasis on school support if needed
- ✓ Comprehensive physical and mental health assessment and follow up
- ✓ Childminding
- ✓ Community Capacity Building through partnerships to facilitate access to after school and summer programming, sport and recreational opportunities, youth leadership/ employment and parenting programs.

Diagram 2 below depicts the proposed strategy. It is an amalgam of core elements or direct services delivered by RAP and community capacity building that creates access for GAR children and youth to other supports /services that they need that are the delivery responsibility of other players in the community

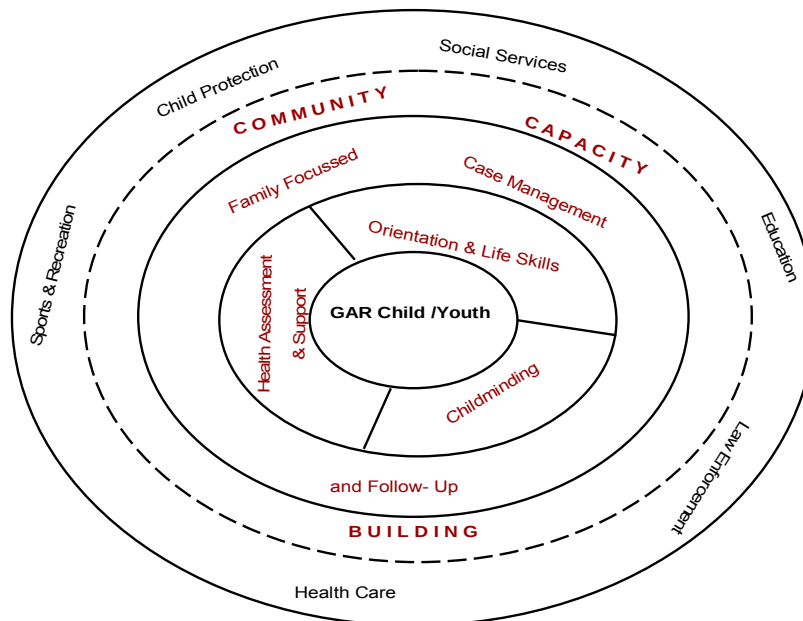
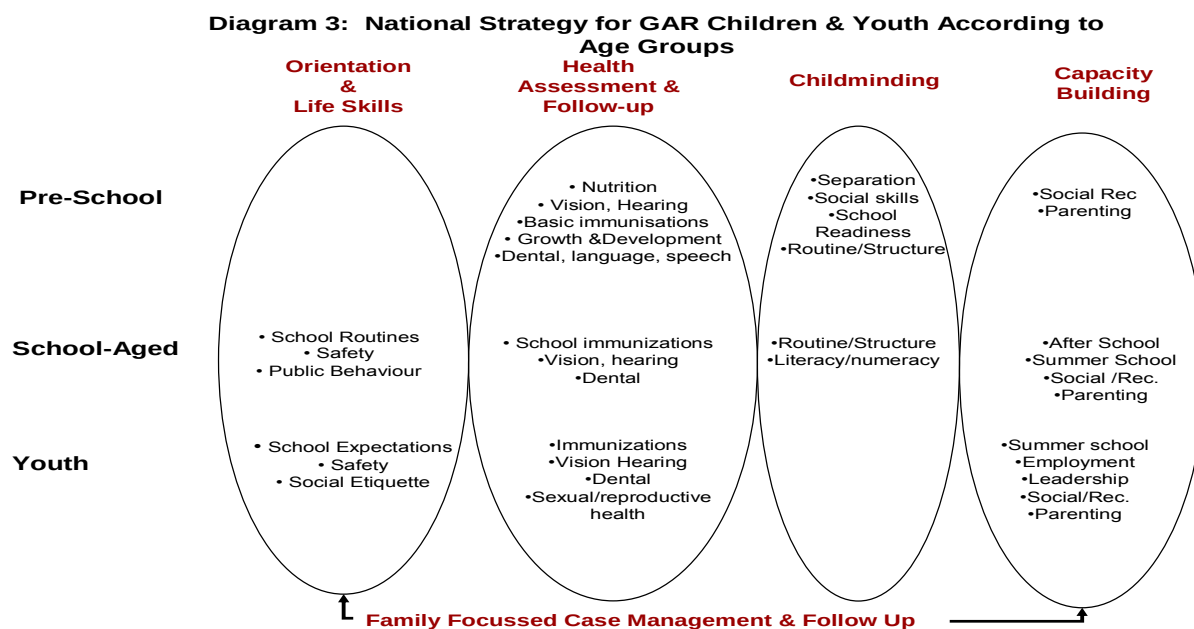


Diagram 2: Overall National Strategy for GAR Children and Youth

Diagram 3 depicts the proposed national strategy from another perspective- the milestones or ages of GAR children and youth. This highlights the similarities

and differences between the various age groups and the types of emphases they might expect from the 5 components.



Finally, Table 3 depicts the National Strategy from the point of view of when and where it might be delivered during a typical resettlement process to children and youth in the target group. It shows that the strategy begins overseas before departure and can be delivered in various key venues where GAR children and youth spend significant amounts of time.

Table 3: Components of a National Strategy for GAR Children and Youth Related to Delivery Sites

Component	Overseas	Temporary Accommodation	Permanent Accommodation	School
Case Management				
Orientation and Life Skills				
Health assessment & Follow up				
Childminding				
Community Capacity Building				

5.1. Components for a National RAP Strategy for GAR Children and Youth

Following is a brief description of each element of the National Strategy. Wherever possible, information about relevant promising practices from the field

are also referenced. Appendix 5 more detailed descriptions of each of the strategy components. Appendix 6 contains more information about select promising practices.

5.1.1. Family Focussed Case Management

Family centered case management with a focus on children and youth is at the heart of the National Strategy. The objective of this component is:

To identify the strengths, abilities, values, resources as well as the needs of each GAR child and youth and ensure that the capacities are maximised and the immediate and pressing needs are met within the 12 month time frame.

In the current program context, RAP Workers assess the family's overall needs with an emphasis on linking the adults to appropriate community resources and services that will facilitate their settlement and integration in Canada. Once the family moves into their permanent accommodation, the RAP Workers frequently find themselves being the "default" case managers because of the strong bond that has been formed with the GARs and because the art of manoeuvring in the maze of human services requires much skill and perseverance.

In order to be responsive to GAR children and youth needs specifically, an age appropriate social development and health care assessment and follow up through deliberate case management over an extended period (at least first 12 months) is key to their successful resettlement. This would be achieved through a designated team of staff from the SPO and the community. Each Case Management Team (CMT) would be unique for each family and would have the expertise/skill sets that are required to appropriately assess and assist refugee families to resettle. Ideally, youth workers, early childhood specialists, mental health professionals, social workers and others with specialised experience related to the impact of displacement and trauma on refugee children and youth would make up the CMTs. Each CMT would have a designated Team leader or Coordinator.

Based on the principle of a client-centered approach, each family including the individual child/youth would be assessed by team members over an initial period of 1-3 months. For the younger aged children, the team's collaboration with the professionals who have been observing, assessing and working with the kids in the child minding component would assist with the assessment.. For older children – 10 years or older - other avenues could be put into place to understand their experience and needs. This could take the form of a more formal "meeting" with children and youth in this age group. Plans would be established with the input of family members to address the issues and maximize the strengths of each family member. The plans would be regularly reviewed with the family and children/youth and adjusted as needed.

Through collaboration with other service providers like childminding professionals, Life Skills Workers, SWIS type staff, health professionals and educators, the CMT would determine which of the available supports and services each child and youth would access. For example if a child or youth only needed some orientation but no life skills because s/he had ample urban living experience, then the CMT would suggest less intense orientation and life skills. See Appendix 6 (i) for Promising Practices related to case management experience in Toronto.

A key feature of the CMT role that would vary from one RAP site to another RAP site is the role it plays in the educational system. A few communities have settlement workers in schools to play a crucial role with teachers, school administrators and other community services interfacing with parents e.g. Child Protection Agencies, Police, etc. The SWIS Workers are actively involved in troubleshooting about issues that arise, analyzing/interpreting unfamiliar or problem behaviours, developing appropriate responses or solutions, etc. In those sites where SWIS exists, the CMT would ideally include those SWIS workers interfacing with the children and youth in the school setting. In those sites that do not have SWIS, the CMT would assign a team member to be the school based liaison /support for the children and youth who require this. Clearly, filling this role would require positive and strong relationships with local schools and clarity about how the CMT member would best support the child/youth in school setting if needed. For Promising Practices related to supports in school systems in Ontario and Manitoba see Appendix 6 (ii) and (iii).

At the end of 12 months, the family and CMT would review and assess the experience, determine the unmet needs/aspirations for the future, and jointly decide how the family, including the children and youth, can continue to be supported in the coming year. On average each family would receive approximately 52 hours (average of 1 hour/week) of Case Management services over the course of their first year in Canada.

5.1.2. Child/Youth Specific Orientation and Life Skills

A robust, comprehensive orientation process specifically geared to children and youth will address many of the outcomes that have been identified. Designed for two (2) age groups- 6-12 and 13- 18 year olds, the idea here is to cover many of the areas of identified need in a series of orientation sessions. The process would not be a one-time event but would be offered over several months, starting at the Temporary Accommodation and then following through within the needs emerging in school and community settings as well as their permanent home. Using a group format, kids can come together, learn new material and discuss how it is going with the areas that have been covered already. This allows for incremental learning and reinforcement of key concepts such as positive public behaviours, how things work in Canada, how kids gain access to free recreation, safety, and, for older kids, content about personal hygiene, sexual and reproductive health etc. Following this in depth orientation, children and youth

could be referred or linked up to community-based resources, as needed e.g. sexual health clinics. For Promising Practices from Australia and the HOST Program see Appendix 6 (iv) and (v).

Orientation and life skills training have been combined because of the obvious synergy that exists between these two broad types of activities. For each GAR child/youth aged 6-18, the CMT will determine the degree of orientation and life skills training that is required. It will vary according to the source country, country of refuge, refugee experience, the age of the child, the site where the family is re-settling etc. Orientation and life skills would begin at pre-departure from the country of refuge (about 5 hours/child or youth) and continue for up to an additional 40 hours once in Canada to meet the following six (6) objectives:

a. Provide GAR Children and youth preparing for departure to Canada with a clear understanding of what to expect, particularly with respect to school.

This objective responds to the frequently cited issue that the expectations that GAR children and youth arrive in Canada with are often not in keeping with the reality they encounter. By providing ~ 5 hours of pre-departure orientation through Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA), it is expected that GAR children and youth will be better equipped to deal with the realities they face upon arrival-the wait for permanent accommodation, school enrolment, friends, language acquisition etc. To facilitate orientation and life skills development upon arrival in Canada, GAR children and youth can be provided with a “Welcome Kit” or Back pack containing all sorts of age appropriate items including toys, games, books, school supplies, samples of healthy snacks, personal hygiene products, etc upon arrival.

b. Ensure the Safety of GAR Children and youth in home and the community

Upon arrival in Canada matters of safety are an immediate element of the orientation for parents/adults. This objective speaks to the additional need for child/youth focussed orientation sessions that emphasize safety and preventative measures. They could be delivered in various locations including temporary accommodation, schools permanent accommodation and other community spaces . Practice of the skills (e.g. knowing home address and landmarks, safely crossing streets, how to get to places without getting lost etc.) would be key so that there is some assurance of the safety as they begin to spend more independent time in the community.

c. Prepare GAR children and youth for entry to school by introducing concepts of age appropriate and socially acceptable behaviours at school and in the community

In order to maximize school readiness, emphasis during orientation would also be placed on what children/youth can expect at school such as start and end times, signals such as bells, fire alarms, announcements on public address systems, playing of national anthem, routines/schedules, recess and lunch breaks, what to bring for lunch, statutory holidays, vacations, professional development days for teachers, role of principal and teachers, typical classroom activities (e.g. sitting at desks, group/circle activities, computer use, physical education), after school assistance, detentions, field trips, visits to school/community library, grading systems, how washrooms are designated, etc. Again, in RAP SPO sites where SWIS type programs exist; this orientation to school can be coordinated as an enhancement of SWIS.

d. Provide in depth skills training and learning opportunities for GAR Children and youth who need to learn how things work in their home, community and school

For those GAR children and youth who require more in depth learning opportunities to master elevators, toilets, understand how to be safe around household appliances etc. life skills would be available. In these sessions GAR children and youth could focus on personal hygiene, how to dress for school, apartment living and building safety, Emergency Services, use of 911 and fire alarms etc.

e. Gather secondary assessment information.

A secondary goal of orientation and life skills is to continue to assessment of the capacities and needs of all GAR children and youth. By spending time with them CMT member(s) will gain new insights into the GAR children and youth- what makes them tick, what their interests are, what some of the more hidden issues might be (e.g. potential effects of post traumatic stress) and how they react to stress, change, newness, peers etc. All of this information can add depth to the assessment process that the CMT is charged with and ensure that the plans are as do-able and appropriate as possible for each family member.

5.1.3. Health Assessment and Follow up

One key activity that everyone agrees must be attended to soon after arrival is an in depth health assessment of every GAR family member, and particularly each child and youth.

Under the auspices of the CMT, the objectives are:

- a. Ensure that every individual GAR child and youth has an in depth medical exam that takes into account the trauma that the child/youth may have experienced as well as the conditions/health issues endemic to the source country and country of refuge***

Special attention needs to be paid in the exam to not only normal growth and development milestones, but also the types of illnesses and conditions that GAR children/youth might be bringing with them from the source country/country of refuge so immediate treatment can be initiated.

A specific area that RAP Case Management team and other staff need to be alerted to in the assessment phase is trauma. Many GAR children and youth have experienced trauma in their refugee situations. Untreated, trauma can express itself in ways that may negatively affect children and youth in their older years. There is some evidence in the literature that early intervention in non-medical ways can support children and youth who are dealing with trauma to be successful. Early interventions, which build on strong family bonds and community support, are protective factors for children and youth. Art Therapy is a promising approach to having children and youth recount their experiences for therapeutic purposes. Ongoing professional consultations and back up support from mental health professionals would be key for GAR children and youth, as well as for the team and other RAP staff. Promising Practices in Toronto and Hamilton are described in Appendix 6 (vi).and (vii)

While many communities across Canada have difficulty accessing family physicians for this type of health screening/assessment along with primary care, there are some SPOs who have struck effective partnerships with public health departments and community health clinics/centres. Promising Practices in Calgary can be found in (viii).

b. Ensure that required health screening and immunisations/health records are current so that timely school enrolment is facilitated.

To enter school GAR children and youth need current immunization records. As part of the initial assessment/work up, these need to be created if the family has not been able to bring such records with them from the source country/country of refuge. This will ensure that school enrolment is not delayed. In addition, routine screening for children/youth's growth and development (e.g. fine/gross motor coordination), vision, hearing, dental as well as speech and language will be important to assess so that any areas of concern that might not have been identified due to displacement and poor access to services, begin to get addressed right away.

c. Ensure that each child/youth is successfully linked to a permanent health care provider for on-going wellness check ups and treatment as required.

On going medical attention may be required for some GAR children and youth. For others, consultations for common ailments and regular wellness check ups may be all that is needed. GAR pre-adolescents and youth need access to sexual and reproductive health information and services that are provided in a

manner that is sensitive to their cultural context, is non-judgemental and confidential. There is a need for clear language, translated and audio-visual resources to inform/educate about pubertal changes, personal hygiene, birth control use, safe sex, date rape, etc. Given this is an area of need/ development where youth experience the most cultural clashes with their parents, supportive counselling in rights and responsibilities in becoming sexually active and how they negotiate limits with partners and parents need to be key elements. Winnipeg has some Promising Practices that are described in Appendix 6(ix).

Because GAR families move from temporary accommodation into permanent homes shortly after arrival, the CMT needs to ensure that each GAR child/youth has been effectively linked up with a health care provider who can be readily accessed on an ongoing basis when required. Providing an orientation to the health care system and the role of the various components (e.g. walk-in clinics, family planning/sexual health clinics, family doctor, emergency rooms, general hospitals, children's' hospitals, diagnostic labs/imaging, home/community care, etc) is also an important part of ensuring that the GAR children/youth get the appropriate type of timely health care/support.

5.1.4. Childminding

Currently childminding is available for some GAR children in various SPO sites. However, in most sites it is limited to the temporary accommodation phase and/or to times when parents are engaged in orientation or other on site activities. Even in LINC programs it is reported that not all GARs can access childminding thorough LINC in order to get language training since all the spaces are full. As well, the full scope of childminding – enriched so that it is much more than looking after children – is not currently within the reach of most SPOs. At present, childminding professionals are also not adequately sensitized or equipped to respond to needs of GAR children and their parents. The objectives of childminding are:

- a. To provide childminding supports to families within the 12-month time frame so that the parents/adults can attend to orientation and life skills sessions, housing search, and language training, other key activities (such as job search/training) that accomplish the goals in their CMT plan.***

In consultation with the CMT, the types of childminding supports that are required for each family will be determined. The overall aim is to ensure that access to necessary supports/services for the parents/guardians is not curtailed due to issues of supervision for children, and that the environment children are left in focuses on some of the needs they have too. The support could be provided on site at the SPO, through spaces in the community, at program sites and/or in the home. They could be provided for infants/preschoolers and children up to the age of 12 to 14 years, depending on the situation/needs.

b. To prepare GAR children for entry to and success at school

Enriched child minding that exposes preschool and young school aged children to various forms of structured or free play individually and in groups is critical for normal growth and development. Toys, games and arts and crafts activities that are appropriate for the age group will help to assist GAR preschoolers to experience healthy separation from their parents and learn interactive play, group behaviour, social skills as well as some basic concepts such as numbers, colours, letters, their name, date/days of the week, weather/seasons, etc. which enable them to become more school ready. For younger children, some of the safety and other relevant areas covered in the orientation and life skills for older children will also be introduced.

With respect to school-aged children, childminding would be more relevant during holidays/breaks like spring and summer. Again, the childminding setting would be an ideal opportunity for reinforcement of social skills, including public behaviour at an individual and group level through sports and recreational activities, as well as tutoring assistance for literacy and numeracy skills being taught at school.

On average it is expected that each infant/preschooler would require 25-40 hours of childminding each week over the course of their first year in Canada. School aged children's needs could be estimated to be about 15 hours per week on average.

5.1.5. Capacity Building

SPOs often find themselves providing direct service programs to meet the immediate and urgent needs of families rather than taking the initiative and time to help mainstream institutions enhance their capacity to serve GARs. This is largely due to funding constraints and the role that SPOs have traditionally filled. It can also be attributed to the fact that changing large institutions takes time and commitment. Special skills are needed to help them assess what needs to be done and understand how to make the necessary changes. This is not the business that SPOs are typically in.

As experts in the lived experience of GAR families, SPOs can provide leadership in preparing their communities to serve GAR children and youth. The capacity building component of the National Strategy has an ambitious but essential objective:

- a. To prepare the local community to customise and/or include GAR children and youth into existing programs that are essential to their successful resettlement in Canada, particularly in the areas of after school and summer programs, social recreational activities, youth leadership and employment and partnering programs.***

To achieve this objective it is anticipated that each SPO will develop a workplan as part of the national strategy that targets its unique community context. In this workplan, it is expected that SPOs will need to identify activities in four (4) broad areas: partnership building, advocacy, education/training and/or research and development.

Partnership Development: Major systems such as education and health care are not equipped to meet the immediate and essential needs that GAR children and youth present. SPOs can “partner” with these institutions in ways that blend the technical expertise of the institution and the target group expertise of the SPOs. Examples of the types of activities that this might entail include:

- Collaborating with schools to ensure that GAR children and youth have adequate access to Breakfast & Lunch Programs in recognition of the reality that the limits of income support frequently result in children going to school hungry and the negative impact of this on their learning/participation.
- Partnering with existing parenting programs which not only meet the needs of GARs but would also increase the reach of such programs to other newcomer groups. In addition to learning new skills and ways to parent to meet new cultural expectations and also address different and never before encountered challenges. Group based parenting programs provide a built in forum for peer support, encouragement and joint problem solving. In addition to various settlement programs, the role of community resources such as teachers, childcare providers, public health nurses, family physicians, police officers and child protection workers can be explained from the point of view of enhancing parent-child relationships, preventing conflict and dealing with crises. This could be a forum where some of the information that is shared with youth about sexual and reproductive health could also be shared with parents. It could reduce some of the isolation that parents might be feeling as a result of cultural clashes with their kids, as well as becoming housebound caring for preschool children. Finally, a group format like this could also add some ESL components so parents could practice English in a non-classroom and non-threatening setting. Kids First in Regina and Morning Glory in Windsor are Promising Practices described in Appendix 6 (x) and (xi).
- Collaborating with schools boards to organize after-school programming is an important way to provide extra tutoring support and skill reinforcement. After-school programming could also focus on objectives related to ESL and social skills. After-school programming could be offered in conjunction with other like programs, e.g. with Boys and Girls Clubs - introducing GAR children and youth to non refugee kids in more relaxed environments. Programs in Vancouver,

Waterloo, Saskatoon and Regina are Promising Practices that are described in Appendix 6 (xii) and (xiii).

- Another joint initiative with school boards can target GAR children and youth who arrive in the summer holidays. A school-like immersion that focuses on ESL, ELD, basic literacy, numeracy and social skills can provide an effective transition to the “real” school in September. Many are arguing that this type of transition model for 3 – 4 months that allows GAR children and youth to be with others who have similar needs should be available all year round.
- Joint ventures with municipal parks and recreation departments and/or local sports leagues are another worthwhile area of investment. Everyone seems to agree that one way that GAR children and youth can meet and form positive relationships with non-GAR peers are through sports or recreational activities. Sports and recreational activities would get GAR children and youth out of the house and involved in positive peer experiences. It would act as a magnet for youth who otherwise may be heading into negative relationships. It would build confidence and a sense of belonging and off set some of the more disappointing experiences they may be having in school. This may be a place where a youth focussed HOST program could be very effective in providing support to link GAR children and youth into relevant, fun community based activities. For Promising Practices in Ontario, see Appendix 6 (xiv).
- Partnering with school boards to focus on youth who will not be able to finish high school in a timely fashion, so they might have some alternative pathways to success. Co-operative Placements in high school allow youth to explore various career options and that turn into apprenticeships can be an alternative. ESL and ELD programming at the Adult Basic Education level would that while GAR youth may need to work out of necessity in the short term, they could also aspire to complete their education as they are able over the longer term. In Appendix 6 (xv), (xvi) and (xvii) Promising Practices being piloted in Manitoba and Saskatoon are described.
- Aside from an educational/training or employment focus, programs for youth need to have a dimension that promotes leadership and social skills development. A Resource Centre type of set up for refugee youth can be a place for networking, mentoring, friendships, peer support in issues related to bullying, racism, stress or anger management. Activities that focus on sharing various aspects of their heritage has the secondary benefit of helping youth retain cultural practices and including language – something that parents value a great deal. Such initiatives can provide connections role models from

the community, including former GARs. They can also lead to volunteering opportunities in the community – something that can generate rich benefits in terms of skills and work experience; community service hours are also increasingly a requirement for qualifying for a high school diploma. Promising Practices in Vancouver are contained in Appendix 6 (xviii)

Advocacy: SPOs need to bring information and awareness to educators and health care professionals about the needs of the target group and lobby for the introduction of policies, programs and supports that ensure GAR children and youth are receiving the equitable education and health care. Advocacy efforts can be targeted as follows:

- Advocate and help schools understand the ELD needs of many GAR children – that children do not just need to learn English but also have experienced severe educational disruption and gaps in core concepts.
- Advocate for and, in a crisis, fill the need for cultural interpretation for accessing systems so that GAR children and youth do not have to miss school in order to accompany their parents to appointments as translators, that they do not get drawn into adult discussions/decisions and that they are safe and healthy.
- Advocate for building affordable housing that is responsive to needs of large an extended family arrangements.
- Within CIC, advocate in the areas of ISAP/ HOST/SWIS/LINC - personnel in these program often see the enhanced needs of GAR families as a burden on already overstretched existing services. HOST might not be as readily available to GAR families because of their increased needs being perceived to be too burdensome on HOST volunteers. LINC class rules on who can receive childcare may prevent a mother with infant child from getting important language training. These government funded programs need to be better informed about the unique capacities that GAR families bring with them as well as the challenges and needs that they have. They need information about best practices also need to think more about how they can better meet these needs. SPOs can play a role in advocacy in these areas.

Training: Many sectors that GAR children and youth intersect with have even less information and/or understanding of the refugee experience and current needs than the educational sectors. They often need information and assistance to understand how to most effectively fulfill their mandated roles with GAR children and youth in supportive, helpful and empowering ways. Some examples of this are:

- Police and child protection agencies need to understand the unique challenges that GAR parents face adjusting quickly to Western ways of disciplining children and the tensions that are often created when children and youth learn their rights to be free of abuse. Parents need both new techniques to parent in legal and effective ways in Canada as well as strategies to maintain their role as heads of the family.
- Child care workers, teachers, primary health and mental health professionals need to understand the realities that GAR children and youth have escaped, the trauma they have endured, and the behaviours that they have adopted to cope in the refugee experience. They need to learn this so they are less inclined to label or blame GAR children and youth for their behaviours but rather see them as useful for their prior life. Then they will be better able to assist them to find new, more socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours in their new lives here in Canada.

Research and Development: There are not ready made solutions or proven best practices to address all the needs of GAR children and youth, Pilot initiatives to test out approaches are necessary to learn from their evaluation about what works well and why are essential. SPOs are, again, uniquely positioned to undertake such initiatives or partner with others in such activities. Examples could be:

- Partner with schools/ Boards of Education to conduct research to determine what practices seem to best support GAR children and youth to be successful in school.
- Pilot partnership initiatives with educational institutions to target specific needs such as how to transition older youth from high school to adult basic education learning environments.
- Pilot and evaluate unique summer programs that assist GAR students to maintain their ESL skills while at the same time experience positive peer based activities and have fun.

SPOs are not the only organisations that have a role to play in these broad capacity building types of initiatives. There is also a role of CIC regional offices to play addressing some of the high level systemic barriers that exist for GAR children and youth. For example, if Ministries of Education do not have ELD on their radar as a core need of GAR children and youth, then even the best intentioned school boards will not have the right types of educational materials/curricula available for those schools to use. Health care interpretation is another systemic issue, which SPOs are not in a position to influence alone. SPOs need the support of regional CIC offices to lobby for tools and/or changes to make these systems accessible and responsive to GAR children and youth.

6.0 Conditions for Success – Rounding out the National Strategy

There is an inherent logic and integrity to these proposed programmatic components of strategy. It addresses all of the needs that emerged in the data-gathering phase of this initiative. It is holistic, looking at GAR children and youth in all their complexity and from the vantage points of their basic needs, social development, family relations, education and health needs. Table 3 highlights the impact and reach of the strategies on the outcomes that are desirable for GAR children and youth.

Table 3: Depth and Reach of Components of the National Strategy

STRATEGY COMPONENTS					OUTCOMES
Family Focused Case Management	Orientation & Life Skills	Health Assessment & Follow Up	Childminding	Community Capacity Building (After School & Summer Programs, Youth Employment & Leadership, Parenting, Sports & ...)	
					<i>[√ Signifies the primary contributor to the outcome • Signifies a secondary contributor to the outcome]</i>
					Basic
	•		√	•	Structure & Routine
•	√			•	Life & coping skills
	•		√	•	Healthy separation from parents
			√	•	Adjusting to new adults
√					Affordable, safe accommodation
					Family Relations
•				√	Adjusting to reunification
•			•	√	Healthy parent/ child relations
•			•	√	New child rearing practices
•	•		•	√	Disciplining children
					Social Development
	√			•	Adjusting to norms re public behaviour
	•	√		•	Healthy views of sexuality & reproductive health
			•	√	Fitting in & making friends
•	√				Withstanding teasing & bullying
•	•			√	Combating vulnerability to criminal behaviour
					Education
√					Access to ESL and ELD
	√		•		Responding to school routines
•	√		•		Meeting classroom behavioural expectations
√					Assessment & placement in appropriate class
•			•	√	Extra support to fill gaps
•				√	Access to extracurricular activities
√					Feeling parent's presence at school
•	√		•	•	Feeling successful, accepted, sense of belonging
					Health

STRATEGY COMPONENTS					OUTCOMES
Family Focused Case Management	Orientation & Life Skills	Health Assessment & Follow Up	Childminding	Community Capacity Building (After School & Summer Programs, Youth Employment & Leadership, Parenting, Sports & Recreation)	
•	√			•	Nutritious food, appropriate clothing
•		√			Remediation for vision, dental, hearing, speech
		•		√	Good mental health
√		•			Access to health care

However, the strategy is based on some specific assumptions or premises that need to be further explored. When these are taken into account, the National Strategy will be complete.

6.1. Lengthen RAP to One Year

With the exception of the family stipend, the current RAP program is generally delivered within a 1-3 month time frame. Then families are transferred to ISAP for continued support. Everyone agrees that this time frame is too short and that in many cases ISAP programming is too stretched to adequately support GAR families. Certainly ISAP programming does not generally focus on children and youth. The National Strategy that is proposed here is 12 months in length. This mirrors the length of time that CIC provides a stipend to GAR families. Thus it is not contingent on where GAR children and youth are residing. In fact orientation would begin overseas before the children and youth have even arrived in Canada. It takes place in various venues as appropriate for the learning and development of the children and youth involved.

Recommendation #1: Extend and fund the RAP program for a 12-month timeframe.

6.2 Ensure Enduring Federal Role

Some provinces that have RAP programs have federal provincial agreements related to settlement and integration of newcomers by which any funding other than RAP funding is funnelled through and administered by the provinces on behalf of the federal government. This National Strategy is based on the assumption that, to ensure that CIC retains its enduring federal role for the resettlement of refugees, all resources for the strategy be flowed in the same manner as current RAP funding is. This will ensure that all funds earmarked for GAR children and youth are indeed invested in efforts towards their resettlement in Canada.

Recommendation #2: Flow funds for the National Strategy for GAR children and youth in the same manner as current RAP resource allocation.

6.3. Ensure Adequate Income Support

One need that was clearly identified in the data-gathering phase of this initiative related to income support. In general issues arose about the affordability of accommodation and the need for parents to be able to earn a good income. Specifically, children and youth need to have access to transportation in their community in order to get to school and form friendships. Younger children need transportation costs covered so they can travel on public or other transit with their parents to appointments etc. The other area of concern that youth raised is the loan repayment that they believe burdens their families and may prevent their acquisition of higher education.

Recommendation #3: Ensure that the transportation costs of all GAR children and youth are covered as part of the 12 month settlement stipend and that consideration be given to forgiving all or part of the loan that GAR families are obliged to repay.

6.4 Maintain a Holistic Approach

This strategy is based on the premise that all components of the strategy are of equal importance. That is, implementing one element without the others would not attain the desired results for GAR children and youth. All areas of need that GAR children and youth are experiencing are interconnected and must be attended to for successful resettlement to occur.

Recommendation #4: Fund all components of the National Strategy for GAR Children and Youth so that it retains its holistic reach and depth, guided by family centered case management.

6.5 Tailor Responses to Unique GAR Needs

In each of the 23 RAP SPO sites it is assumed that the way the national strategy is implemented will be unique. This is in keeping with the current ways that RAP for an adult is delivered. It also honours the reality that each community is different- with varying types and levels of resources, supports and services available or not for GAR families. For example some communities have SWIS programs in schools while others do not. Thus the strategy should be positioned as a framework with specific outcomes that are desirable and each community will then be asked to present a plan for achieving those outcomes.

The other reality is that GAR children and youth vary tremendously in their refugee experiences and the needs they have within the first 12 months for supports and services. These variations also need to be factored into any plans that SPOs develop to implement this National Strategy.

Having said this, there is an opportunity for much of the developmental effort to be centrally coordinated so that there is potential for sharing expertise and experiences among SPOs and that there is minimal duplication.

Recommendation #5: Fund the National Strategy based on unique proposals from each SPO about how it will meet the specific objectives that the Strategy targets. Assess each proposal based on the following principles:

- Continuity of a responsive CMT and specific services for GAR children and youth for the duration of a 12-month RAP.
- Clear funding and lines of accountability to CIC resettlement branch.
- Effective and efficient leveraging of existing funding from other related sources e.g. ISAP, LINC, HOST, Adult Life Skills Training etc.

6.6 Enhance SWIS to Respond to Needs of GAR Children/Youth at School

The importance of education was central thread in all of the input received in the data gathering stage of this initiative. It is so important to parents that their children receive the best possible education so they can achieve their dreams of a bright future. Youth especially feel this hope but also this burden. CIC cannot be expected to fund formal educational activities. This mandate lies squarely with provincial ministries of education and their local school boards. However, CIC has funded SWIS type programs in several of the 23 RAP SPO sites across the country. These in-school supports are intended for all newcomers. This national strategy is premised on the assumption that existing SWIS programs are provided additional resources through the child/youth focussed orientation and life skills component so that enhanced attention can be focussed on GAR students since they are facing the greatest and most serious number of barriers to school adjustment.

Recommendation #6: In those RAP sites where SWIS exists, lobby ISAP to increase the attention paid to GAR children and youth by increasing the funding allocation for GAR specific activities/interventions.

6.7 Allocate Sufficient Resources for a Strong Capacity Building Component

RAP SPOs cannot and should not be the sole service providers involved with GAR children and youth. While they are the most appropriate service provider for some services, other existing community programs and services are mandated and should be serving GAR children and youth in accessible and responsive ways. In these situations the RAP SPO role would be one of advocate, partner, and/or trainer – or the role of capacity builder.

This national strategy is based on the assumption that for several key program areas – after school and summer support, social recreational activities, parenting programs and youth leadership and employment- there is other expertise in communities that needs to be harnessed. It is also assumed that the types of capacity building activities that are required to make these opportunities

accessible, responsive and tailored to the specific needs of GAR Children and Youth are resource intensive. An important example of specialized capacity building is the need for training personnel in various systems/frontline roles to be sensitive to signals of potential effects of post traumatic stress on GAR children/youth.

This strategy assumes that adequate funds will be made available to SPOs to take the time and resources required to strengthen their communities so that GAR children and youth have access to these needed supports.

Recommendation #7: Ensure that Capacity Building efforts are adequately funded so that those necessary supports that SPOs cannot/should not provide can be effectively accessed for GAR children and youth.

7.0 Implementation Considerations

As has been noted, the National Strategy is based on the assumption that in each community, **HOW** it is delivered will be unique and will vary depending on several variables- the size of the community, the type of agency that hosts the RAP program, and the RAP model of delivery. Following is a discussion of the potential ways that SPOS can think about delivery of the National Strategy and a generic framework that will allow for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategy.

7.1 Motel vs. Reception Centre as Type of Temporary Accommodation

Some SPOs provide temporary accommodation in motels/hotels, others in reception centres/houses. The 2006 National Inventory of RAP Practices showed that the type of accommodation provided influences the length of time before GAR families are housed in permanent accommodation. The shorter stay in a motel/hotel scenario will have a similar impact in implementing the strategy for children/youth as it does for the adults/parents. Much of the case management, orientation and life skills, as well as health assessment and follow up will take place once the GARs are in their permanent accommodation, either right in their home, and/or in various community spaces. The congregate living arrangement in the case of a reception centre model would allow for many of the interventions to be group based (especially if there is sufficient critical mass) while families are still not scattered around the city in their permanent accommodation. .

7.2 Size of Community and Number of GARs Destined Annually

The RAP sites vary considerably in terms of the size of the population, the number of other supports and services in the community that target GAR families for service, whether or not there is a public transportation service, and the number of GAR families arriving each year. Again, the impact of this variable is not that different for implementation of the national strategy for GAR children/youth as it is for adults/parents. It is expected that most of the

interventions will be individually focussed and also integrated in existing community resources/services (e.g. childminding spots for GAR children in daycare centres, etc.) as opposed to being able to afford establishment of GAR-specific programs/supports.

75.3 Single vs. Multiple Agencies Delivering RAP & ISAP

As well, within the context of the current short 3-month frame for RAP, there are also several agency models for providing services to GAR families. There are implications for the delivery of a national strategy for GAR children and youth based on the different types RAP delivery models.

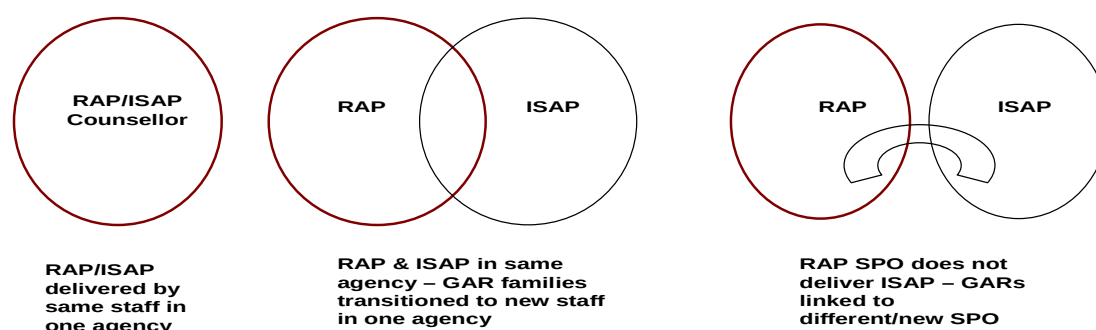


Diagram 4: Models for Delivering Services to GAR Families

In the model where the same staff people work with GAR families throughout their settlement period, the addition of a child and youth focus within a family centered case management approach should be fairly straightforward. Additional staff could be added to the roster of available people within the agency- staff with expertise related to children and youth – and the family CMT could then be augmented with the necessary skills based on the unique needs each family presents. In this scenario whether RAP is 3 months or 12 months in duration does not matter since already there is continuity of service.

Some SPOs provide both RAP and ISAP services to GAR families by transitioning the family to ISAP when RAP is completed. In these SPOs, when RAP is lengthened to a 12-month duration, an approach similar to what as described above could work. That is, additional staff with expertise related to children and youth are recruited and a way to ensure continuity of the CMT for the duration of RAP is devised.

The more difficult scenario is that in which the SPO providing RAP services does not offer any ISAP services. Here, more significant agency growth might be required to ensure the continuity of services to GAR families through the CMT.

Alternatively, CMTs might be designed in a more collaborative manner with key expertise being provided by an external person from another agency as part of the team. This type of partnership approach, while possibly quite effective and desirable, can be challenging. Issues of overall accountability and leadership would need to be addressed, possibly through protocols that formalise the relationships and responsibilities to GAR families.

7.4 Availability of Pre-existing SWIS Program to Leverage

Another key way that each SPO site is unique relates to whether or not a community has a SWIS type program in the schools or not, and whether the SWIS program is funded directly by CIC or through Federal Provincial agreements. This is significant since there is such a heavy emphasis on success in achieving an education among GAR parents and youth. The CMT model suggests that in those sites where SWIS exists, SWIS workers collaborate closely with if not become part of the CMT and resources are made available to enhance their roles related to GAR children and youth. However, in those communities where this type of relationship does not exist with the education institutions, new ways of providing in-school support will need to be developed. This means that resources could be needed for quite different types of activities including partnership building, protocol development, training and development etc.

7.5 Heterogeneity of GAR Children & Youth

Another major implementation consideration is the reality that GAR children and youth vary tremendously in their refugee experiences and the needs they have within the first 12 months for supports and services. It is critical that the GAR children/youth are assessed for their individual capacities, talents and strengths. As well, gender, age, ability and other relevant considerations need to be factored into any plans that SPOs develop to implement this National Strategy.

What is known from the SPOs about providing supports and services to GAR parents is that there is a wide range of need. Some require intensive supports and others far less. Presumably this will also be the case of GAR children and youth. Not all GAR children and youth will need the full Life Skills package. Not all families will have young children requiring childminding.

7.6 Overall Key Principles

These considerations all point to a need to assess the risks and opportunities that implementing a national strategy for GAR children and youth presents in each site. At the heart of the considerations should be the following principles:

- Continuity of a responsive CMT and specific services for the duration of a 12-month RAP.
- Clear funding and lines of accountability to CIC resettlement branch.
- Honouring the unique ways that SPOs are organized to be responsive to their communities needs including those of GAR families.

- Creating room for funding envelopes to be used for differential types of activities to achieve the same outcomes based on the unique community that each RAP SPO is located in.
- Taking advantage of opportunities to develop some elements such as curriculum pieces centrally so that each SPO does not have to reinvent the wheel. Then the materials can be further adjusted to match the local realities that exist in each SPO site.

7.7. Evaluation Framework

Central to an effective National Strategy will be an evaluation framework that can provide information that assesses the degree to which the National Strategy is achieving the outcomes/results that are being targeted. Following is a framework that could provide some direction for such an evaluative approach. It focuses on the broad outcomes that the strategy is attempting to meet and suggests potential indicators that could be tracked by all programs, regardless of the way in which the strategy is implemented locally.

The indicators are currently at the broad level as well. Each SPO would be expected to tailor these indicators depending on the target group. For example, if they are requesting funds for a pre-school initiative, those indicators that are specific to that age group would be further elaborated to be in sync with the specific objectives they have set. Likewise, program initiatives that are targeting young women specifically would set indicators that might be slightly different than if young men were the target.

Table 4: Linking Strategy Components to Outcomes & Indicators for GAR Children & Youth

STRATEGY COMPONENTS					OUTCOMES [√ Signifies the primary contributor to the outcome • Signifies a secondary contributor to the outcome]	INDICATORS
Family Focused Case Management	Orientation & Life	Health Assessment	Childminding	Community Capacity Building (After School & Summer Programs, Youth Employment & Leadership, Parenting, Sports & ...)		
					Basic	
	•		√	•	Structure & Routine	- Teacher/Childminder's report on in class behaviour - Parent/Teacher report fewer incidents of tantrums/difficult behaviour upon separation
•	√			•	Life & coping skills	
	•		√	•	Healthy separation from parents	
			√	•	Adjusting to new adults	
√					Affordable, safe accommodation	
					Family Relations	
•				√	Adjusting to reunification	- Childminder/Case Mgt Team observations of parent's handling of difficult behaviour - Incidents reports by neighbours - Reports to Child Protection & 911 - Self report by Parents & C & Y
•			•	√	Healthy parent/ child relations	
•			•	√	New child rearing practices	
•	•		•	√	Disciplining children	
					Social Development	
	√			•	Adjusting to norms re public behaviour	- School personnel reports on onsite behaviour/incidents - Utilization of sexual health clinic services - Self report re. Friends/mentors/ role models - Incidents in community/with law enforcement - Parents' observation/report
	•	√		•	Healthy views of sexuality & reproductive health	
			•	√	Fitting in & making friends	
•	√				Withstanding teasing & bullying	
•	•			√	Combating vulnerability to criminal behaviour	
					Education	
√					Access to ESL and ELD	- Attendance in ESL and/or ELD - Attendance in after school program for extra support - Improvement/success as noted on school report cards - Teacher/Childminder's report on in class behaviour - Participation in extra curricular activities - Parents' participation at Parent/Teacher Interviews - Parents' participation in school based activities, including volunteering - Participation in leadership roles at school/in community
	√		•		Responding to school routines	
•	√		•		Meeting classroom behavioural expectations	
√					Assessment & placement in appropriate class	
•			•	√	Extra support to fill gaps	
•				√	Access to extracurricular activities	- School personnel reports re. Nutritional quality of lunches - Participation in breakfast program - Use of corrective devices as prescribed - CMT reports that family visits health care provider regularly and as appropriate
√					Feeling parent's presence at school	
•	√		•	•	Feeling successful, accepted, sense of belonging	
					Health	
•	√			•	Nutritious food, appropriate clothing	
•		√			Remediation for vision, dental, hearing, speech	
		•		√	Good mental health	
√		•			Access to health care	

Centrally, an overall evaluation framework would need to be developed that marries some/all of the outcome indicators suggested above with key process indicators that might be necessary for a comprehensive evaluation to be conducted. Key process indicators might include:

- Number of hours of orientation delivered
- Number of hours of Life Skills delivered
- Number of hours of childminding delivered to specific families
- Profile of families utilising childminding/orientation/life skills
- Number /hours of CM sessions/input
- Number of hours of CM support in schools that do not have SWIS
- Number of hours of Capacity building broken down by types of activities
- Number of formalised service delivery partnerships formed through Capacity Building efforts
- Number of referrals to community based supports and services.
- Complaints/concerns from community stakeholders re behaviour of children and youth documented in case files

The regular collection of information would be facilitated by the development of specific tools such as a post orientation interview or survey process to get first hand feedback from children and youth about the effectiveness of the intervention from their point of view. As well, tools for periodic data collection whenever an evaluation is conducted would also need to be developed such as a feedback form for school personnel or partners.

Together these evaluative components will paint a picture of the effectiveness of the National Strategy. As the strategy unfolds SPOs will gain an even deeper understanding of what works and what doesn't with GAR children and youth. As this understanding deepens, there will be a need to adjust the National Strategy. New needs may emerge and/or known needs take greater profile or emphasis in the strategy. With an in depth evaluation planned for the third year after roll out, these adjustments can be grounded in concrete data from across the country.

Recommendation #8: Evaluate the National Strategy after the first 3 years of implementation to determine the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved and make adjustments to the model that are necessary to better reach its objectives.

7.8 Funding Dilemmas

There is one final question that remains to be answered: *Is this the only way that the National Strategy can be rolled out? Are there other options that can be considered?*

The costing out of the proposed National Strategy has not been a consideration as yet in this process. However, the proposed strategy is clearly not a cost neutral

proposal. New funds would need to flow to SPOs in order for them to implement the strategy. If CIC is not able to successfully acquire all the funds necessary to roll this out in its entirety, there are the following implications or questions to consider:

- Sometimes it is tempting to suggest that one part of a strategy could be more contained or completely cut out. For example, Childminding needs can be hard to forecast and the strategy is broad- suggesting that it be available in lots of different venues including in the GAR family home. However, if this is cut back on it must be remembered that women would take the brunt of the cut backs- they would be the ones who might not acquire language skills or employment. Younger women- in their teens- might also be implicated in that they might not be able to consistently attend school or participate in after school events because they needed to baby-sit younger siblings. It is important, then, to consider the impact of cutting any of the components- and who is impacted the most.
- There are potential opportunities for CIC to become creative about how it funds this strategy. For example, what role could IFH play in the initial health screening supports that are needed for each GAR child and youth? Could they provide some resources? Are there other funding streams that CIC can leverage to fund elements of the National Strategy? What role if any can volunteers play in implementing elements of the strategy if there is strong paid staff support for them?
- What would the SPOs advise? If there are insufficient funds for the whole National Strategy would it be advisable to take the issue to the SPOs and ask for their advice. They might be able to assist with such questions, as could this work in 6 months or 9 months instead of 12? What would the impact on GAR children and youth be if the length of time for services were shortened?
- The heart of the national strategy is Case Management with an emphasis on children and youth. This would seem non negotiable and possibly the most costly element of the strategy. Perhaps, in the first three years of roll out, several different models of case management could be piloted to determine what results can be achieved at what costs. For example, if Case Management is thought of as a service and support that is not delivered only by paid staff but also as involving unpaid but committed individuals from the community, what could be achieved? How big a team is required for effective Case Management to occur? How much support do GAR children and youth need to effectively have their voices heard in the Case Management process? Because these questions have not been answered, the full cost implications of Case Management cannot be yet determined.

The following recommendation concerning options is proposed for consideration:

Recommendation #9: Given the wide range of differential needs related to supports and services, that all 5 elements of the national strategy be funded based on unique proposals from each SPO. In order to confirm the best approach to each of the elements, however, in the first 3 years CIC should deliberately fund various pilot initiatives to test different ways of delivering Case Management. Evaluate the pilots after 3 years to determine if there are approaches that are yielding better results than others so that funding outcomes and resources can be adjusted.

8.0 Summary and Recommendations

The proposed National Strategy is an ambitious plan to remedy an existing situation in which most RAP services are targeted to only 55% of GARs arriving in Canada each year – the adults. When the nine (9) recommendations that have been made are factored in, we have the full National Strategy. It is comprised of 5 key components delivered over a 12-month period and is funded directly as current RAP is. All elements of the strategy are funded so that it is a holistic approach and there are adequate funds for comprehensive capacity building. To enhance the educational experience of GAR children and youth, ISAP would initiate SWIS types supports for GAR children in all 23 sites and/or enhance existing SWIS services in those sites where it already exists. Finally, the initiative would be fully evaluated so that it can be adjusted and improved as more learning and experience is gained through the pilot phases.

To recap the following nine (9) recommendations have been made for consideration:

Recommendation #1: Extend and fund the RAP program for a 12-month timeframe.

Recommendation #2: Flow funds for the National Strategy for GAR children and youth in the same manner as current RAP funds.

Recommendation #3: Ensure that the transportation costs of all GAR children and youth are covered as part of the 12 month settlement stipend and that consideration be given to forgiving all or part of the loan that GAR families are obliged to repay.

Recommendation #4: Fund all components of the National Strategy for GAR Children and Youth so that it retains its holistic reach and depth, guided by family centered case management.

Recommendation #5: Fund the National Strategy based on unique proposals from each SPO about how it will meet the specific objectives that the Strategy targets. Assess each proposal based on the following principles:

- Continuity of a responsive CMT and specific services for GAR children and youth for the duration of a 12-month RAP.

- Clear funding and lines of accountability to CIC resettlement branch.
- Effective and efficient leveraging of existing funding from other related sources e.g. ISAP, LINC, HOST, Adult Life Skills Training etc.

Recommendation #6: In those RAP sites where SWIS exists, lobby ISAP to increase the attention paid to GAR children and youth by increasing the funding allocation for GAR specific activities/interventions.

Recommendation #7: Ensure that Capacity Building efforts are adequately funded so that those necessary supports that SPOs cannot/should not provide can be effectively accessed for GAR children and youth.

Recommendation #8: Evaluate the National Strategy after the first 2 years of implementation to determine the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved and make adjustments to the model that are necessary to better reach its objectives.

Recommendation #9: Given the wide range of differential needs related to supports and services, that all 5 elements of the national strategy be funded based on unique proposals from each SPO. In order to confirm the best approach to each of the elements, however, in the first 3 years, CIC should deliberately fund various pilot initiatives to test different ways of delivering Case Management. Evaluate the pilots after 3 years to determine if there are approaches that are yielding better results than others so that funding outcomes and resources can be adjusted.

This National Strategy surrounds GAR children and youth and their families with supports that make it much more difficult for them to be unsuccessful in their resettlement in Canada. With a family centred CMT that works with the family to customise the supports and services that are rallied around the children and youth, after one year in Canada, some examples of what parents might be saying are:

“My child struggled at first in school but is now getting better reports”.

“My teenaged son flirted with a gang but was more compelled to get involved with the SPO’s leadership program”.

“My little one got so much from childminding that when we went for kindergarten registration she could speak full sentences in English and say her colours and name”.

Examples of what children and youth might be saying:

“I have made some friends in the soccer club that I belong to”.

“My parents and I get into a lot of arguments – they don’t always understand what I’m going through at school – but when they come to meet my teacher with the translator, it really helps”

“I am more confident answering questions in class now that my English has improved”.

“I don’t feel so lost at school anymore – I know what to expect and when I’m not sure, I feel comfortable in asking my teacher”.

“On my visits to the doctors I am getting better reports on my medical condition now that I know what to do to get better”.

These outcomes are undeniably the sorts of achievements that GAR children and youth deserve. With a National Strategy that specifically and intensively targets them, they can be achieved.

Appendix 1: Detailed Method

Detailed Method

The process to collect information and develop potential strategies for inclusion as part of RAP services for children and youth was multi-pronged. Diagram 1 below depicts the process overall.

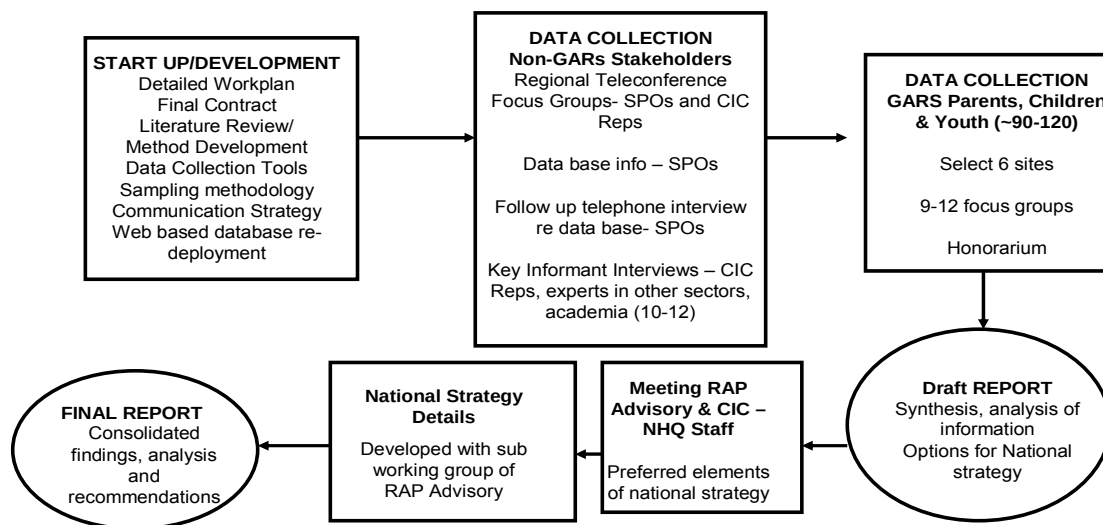


Diagram 1:
CIC Resettlement Assistance Unit
National Strategy for Children and Youth Process

Information was collected from the literature, select Key Informants, SPOs and regional and local CIC Representatives as well as GAR parents and youth.

The focus for data gathering was consistent and focussed on the following major areas:

- o Basic needs
- o Education
- o Social Development
- o Health
- o Family Relations

Together these areas provide a holistic view of GAR children and youth and the challenges they face as they resettle in Canada. All Stakeholders were asked not just to describe needs but also to identify ways that they were meeting the needs – or promising practices they might think could be integrated into a comprehensive national strategy.

1.1. Overview of Data Gathering Strategies

The data gathered for this initiative was qualitative. That is, it was based on stakeholders' perceptions, experience, opinions and advice for how best to support GAR children and youth to successfully resettle in Canada. While the framework for data gathering was consistent, the strategies used to collect data were unique for each stakeholder group. This ensured that barriers to participation in the process were minimized while at the same time the resources available were maximised. As well, for each stakeholder group, specific data gathering tools were developed.

1.1.1 Literature Scan

The literature scan was iterative. That is, initial terms of reference (Appendix A) were drafted outlining the scope of the scan. However, as materials or resources were uncovered, they were added to the materials, dramatically increasing the length and depth of the scan.

1.1.2 Key Informants

Key informants for the process were identified by RAP Working Group members as well as from Key Informants suggesting others that might have an unique or important perspective to provide to the process. Key informant input was gathered mostly via telephone interviews. One of the Key Informants facilitated a connection with Waterloo County Boards of Education representatives, teachers and SWIS workers. A focus group was carried out with this group at their annual meeting. See Appendix B for the Key Informant Interview Guide.

1.1.3. SPOs and Local CIC Representatives

SPOs and local/regional CIC representatives had three distinct opportunities to give input to the process.

Teleconference Focus Groups: Three (3) teleconference focus groups were held with SPOs and Regional CIC reps early in the process. This was to ensure that the subsequent process was fully informed by the issues and concerns that are being experienced in the field with serving GAR children and youth. See Appendix C for the Teleconference Focus Group Guide.

Survey: An on line survey was drafted for SPOs and local CIC representatives to complete (See Appendix D) This was an open ended survey that aimed to get discreet information from each SPO about the specific needs they saw GAR children and youth facing but also the ways they had found to meet the needs. They were also asked to report the outcomes they are achieving with these strategies and to "Blue Sky" about what a gold standard national strategy for GAR children and youth would look like. All SPOs and 10 local CIC representatives completed the survey.

Workshop at Vancouver RAP Conference: The National RAP Conference in February 2007 provided an ideal opportunity to share the findings from the process to date and get input from those SPOs and CIC representatives who signed up for the session. At this session following a PowerPoint presentation, participants were asked to work in groups to outline a national strategy for one of the three following sub target groups of GAR children and youth: Pre-schoolers aged 0-5, School aged children aged 6-12, and Youth aged 13- 18 years. Approximately 50 people registered for this session.

1.1.4 GAR Parents and Youth

To hear from the greatest number of GAR parents and youth possible within the resources available, input was obtained using a focus group method. (See Appendix E for the Focus Group Guide.)

GAR Sample Selection and Profile

Several steps were taken to select the sample for this aspect of the initiative. First data from the NATS for the last three (3) years in all 23 sites was reviewed. It was compared to the national arrival data by country of origin to ensure that the sample would be reflective of the largest groups of GARs arriving in recent years. Then SPO sites across the country were selected based on the critical mass of specific sub target groups. This was important because a group-based strategy needed enough GAR families from one group to work effectively. An effort was also made to have all regions and sizes of SPOs represented in the sample.

SPOs in the selected sites were contacted and asked if they could assist in the process as parents and youth would need to be specifically invited to the focus groups. Focus Group facilitators in each site based on the linguistic and cultural composition of the target group and worked closely with the SPOs to ensure the right mix of focus group participants. That is, efforts were made to have single parents and both male and female parents represented in the parents group while a gender and age balance was also striven for in the youth groups. In most sites the parent and youth groups were separate to ensure participants felt free to express their views. All focus group participants received a \$25 honorarium to acknowledge their time and input.

Focus Group facilitators or local consultants (LCs) were selected in each site based on their linguistic and ethnocultural heritage. They were screened to ensure that they were not primary SPO service delivery people, which might prevent people from speaking freely about the service they received. Orientation and training was provided to the LCs before they were deployed on their assignments. Most LCs were themselves former GARs.

In all, 94 GAR parents and youth participated in the process. Table 1 highlights the profile of the GAR sample.

Table 1: Profile of GAR Sample

	Vancouver	Regina	Ottawa	Hamilton	Halifax	St. John's
Total Sample (N=94)	17	16	14	15	16	16
Gender Representation						
Parents (N=46)						
Male	4	4	3	3		2
Female	4	4	4	6	6	6
Youth (N=48)						
Male	4	4	3	1	7	2
Female	5	4	4	5	3	6
Country of Origin						
Afghanistan	17				16	
Colombia						16
Congo			14			
Liberia				8		
Myanmar		16		7		

1.2. Stakeholder Participation

Overall ~ 175 people gave input to the process. Table 2 below highlights the various ways each stakeholder group was involved.

Table 2: Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder Group	Method	Number
Key Informants	Telephone/In-person interview; Focus Group at a SEPWR Advisory Cttee Meeting	39
SPO Representatives	Teleconference Focus groups; Online survey; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	33
CIC Local Representatives	Local office survey; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	13
CIC Regional Representatives	Teleconference Focus group; Workshop (part of National RAP conference)	6
GAR Parents and Youth	Focus Groups in 6 sites Parents Youth	46 48
	Total Participants	~185

1.3 Data Analysis

A thematic approach to data synthesis and analysis was undertaken. The data from the three main sources - GARs, the field (SPOs, CIC and Key Informants) and the literature – was triangulated. This means that no one source was viewed as any more important than any other. Rather themes were identified based on the degree to which they were shared by various stakeholder groups and/or their uniqueness because of the particular vantage point or lived experience that might be at play in a particular stakeholder group.

Many themes were easily identified as all stakeholder groups noted them. What varied to some extent was the degree of emphasis various stakeholders placed on issues or needs. A debriefing session was held with LCs to ensure the emphases they heard from GARs was clear. The session in Vancouver validated the findings from SPOs and CIC representatives.

1.4. Limitations to the method

There are several limitations to the method that warrant comment.

- There was some confusion about the fact that CIC Resettlement Assistance Unit had commissioned two processes to be done within the same time frame. Both used surveys to gather specific information from SPOs. This confused some SPOs, thus missing critical deadlines.
- Because the SPOs are so steeped in the day-to-day needs and realities of newly settling GAR children and youth, there was a tendency to gloss over some of the information that they might have given in the survey - there was just too much to say. They may also have had some difficulty distinguishing between the categories that were used to tease out the needs, feeling that they had already spoken about something in a previous section.
- Local CIC representatives did not respond to the request for information in as large numbers as desired, in spite of repeated reminders. While it is not clear why, for some it seems that they did not feel that they had enough to contribute about the specific needs of GAR children and youth, deferring to the expertise and first hand knowledge that SPOs would have.

However, in spite of these limitations much rich data has been collected. The limitations are not so significant as to compromise the process or the outcomes
Overall Participation

Appendix A: GAR Children and Youth National Strategy Literature Scan Parameters

Introduction

CIC Resettlement Davison is responsible for resettling ~ 7000 refugees per year in Canada. These individuals and families are coming from refugee camps and urban refugee situations from many source countries. ~50% are children and youth – some of whom have been born in the asylum situation. CIC provides each individual or family with a 12 month stipend and 6 weeks of services from RAP SPOs. These services are intended to orient the families to Canada, help them find permanent affordable housing and get their children/youth registered and into school. Once the RAP services have ended, the families are referred to a broad spectrum of ISAP services, which are not specific for GARS but are geared to general immigrants to Canada.

In recent years, Canada has been accepting GAR families with greater levels of need, placing priority on safety rather than skills and talents that Canada needs. This means that since 2002, the needs that children and youth have are much broader and more seriously impact their ability to successfully integrate into school and the broader community. Their parents are also presenting with greater needs in relation to supporting their children adequately as they integrate into the West.

CIC is now prepared to extend service to GARs to up to 12m months and are concerned that, to date, there have been no targeted programs for children and youth. Given the increase in needs, they are undertaking a process to develop a client centered responsive national strategy to meet the needs of this target group within a 12 month time frame.

Goals for Literature Review

- Locate and provide an annotated bibliography of any published/grey research on this target group specifically – their needs and/or interventions that assist them in successfully settling- needs can be in the areas of social development, health and/or education. We are also interested in programs for parents of GAR children and youth that are identified.
- Look at recent (1997-2007) literature on immigrant children and youth settlement issues that might point to effective strategies for GAR children and youth (i.e. different group of kids but maybe similar issues)
- Talk with any researchers currently undertaking research on GAR children and youth to understand the scope of their work and any preliminary findings
- Summarise the findings on needs and relevant effective programs that have been documented in 3-4 pages. (~ 15-20 articles, contacts)

Target Group: GAR children and youth (age newborn to 18) who have arrived since 2002 and their parents. (While post 2002 is preferred, if work on GAR children, youth and/or their parents specifically is located from 1992 onwards it should be included)

Timeframe

Final version must be completed by February 9, 2007

Appendix B: Key Informants' Focus Group Guide
GAR Children and Youth National Strategy
Focus Group Discussion Outline
Key Informants (Name/role: _____)

Preamble

As you are aware, CIC-NHQ wants to establish a national approach to meeting the needs of Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) Children and Youth Within RAP. The process we're facilitating will examine and assess the child/youth services currently being offered and will recommend a standardized national approach to addressing the immediate and essential needs of GAR children/youth that may be built into the RAP program design in order to enhance client services.

You've been identified as someone with a special area of expertise/interest that is relevant to understanding the needs of GAR children/youth and interventions that might be appropriate for CIC to consider as part of a national strategy. Are there any questions before we begin?

1. What are priority and pressing needs of GAR Children/Youth that you are most knowledgeable about or experienced with?

[Probes: Why are these a priority or essential? What is the specific context for these issues/needs? Can you be specific about the distinctions between age groups or other sub-target groups of children and youth?]

2. What are the ways you/others have found to meet these needs?

[Probes: Who are the key stakeholders that have you partnered? What is the consequence of not responding to these needs?] What are the major lessons that come to mind?

3. What are the types of issues you profile for funders, policy makers or peers within educational, research or advocacy types of settings?

4. If you were making a case for the top 2-3 things that should be standardized supports/services for GAR children/youth within the RAP ie. First 12 month of being in Canada, what would these be?

[Probes: Are these unique to GARs children/youth? Why? Why not?]

Closure

Thanks to all for your input. Is there someone else who has done some relevant work or has a related mandate that we should be consulting?

Name/Contact

info:

Appendix C: Focus Group for SPO & CIC Representatives
GAR Children and Youth National Strategy
Focus Group Discussion Outline – Executive Directors of RAP SPOs &
Regional CIC Specialists

Preamble

As you are aware, CIC-NHQ wants to establish a national approach to meeting the needs of Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR) Children and Youth Within RAP. The process we're facilitating will examine and assess the child/youth services currently being offered and will recommend a standardized national approach to addressing the immediate and essential needs of GAR children/youth that may be built into the RAP program design in order to enhance client services.

Today's conference call has been structured as a focus group discussion. We have some key questions to begin to hear about the different perspectives on what are some of the pressing, unmet needs of GAR Children and Youth and some of the ways that you or others in your jurisdiction have tried to address. At this point, we will not be debating any of these nor trying to get to any consensus on decisions.

Are there any questions before we begin?

5. What are priority and pressing needs of GAR Children/Youth that you are experiencing within RAP?

[Probes: What is the specific context for these issues/needs? Can you be specific about the distinctions between age groups or other sub-target groups of children and youth? What about the needs of parents? Can you talk about the needs from the point of view of basic, health, and educational and social development – within those areas what are the priorities? Why are these priorities or essential?]

6. What are the ways your SPO has found to meet these needs?

[Probes: What are some of the things you've managed to do within RAP without designated funding? What are some of the things you've been able to do on an ad hoc basis through project funding, etc? Whom have you partnered with? What are the results/outcomes that you have been able to observe because of these interventions?] What is the consequence of not responding to these needs?

7. When you think about the programs/services that your RAP or your local partners are delivering that are specific to GAR children/youth, what are the major lessons that come to mind?

[Probes: What are the types of issues you profile for funders, policy makers or peers within educational or advocacy types of settings? What are the systemic issues that GAR C& Y run into as they attempt to integrate/settle?]

8. What are the top 2-3 things that should be standardized supports/services for GAR children/youth within the RAP i.e. First 12 month of being in Canada?

[Probes: Are these unique to GARs children/youth? Why? Why not?]

9. Over the next couple of weeks we would like to reach deeper into the RAP network and obtain more detailed information from the grassroots about what is currently offered, the lessons that have been learned, what should be part of a standardized national strategy and why. Broadly speaking we're thinking of asking about these within a framework that looks at Basic Needs Upon Arrival, and then from a Health, Education and Social development perspective. We also recognize the importance of keeping the age groupings in mind. Are other broad areas that we're forgetting/missing that your RAP would want to place emphasis on?

[Probes: What's the framework that you would use to categorize/organize the needs of GAR children/youth?]

Closure *Thanks to all for your input. After we've spoken to your colleagues over this week, we shall be drafting a framework for collecting for detailed information about the experiences with GAR children/youth in your city. We'll be sending you an email in this regard so that you can get the assistance from your program staff to complete this. We're also conducting a literature scan and talking to key individuals (researchers, program/policy specialists focusing on GAR children/youth) ...we would appreciate getting any leads that you know about from your city/province. Thanks again.*

Appendix D: GAR Children and Youth National Strategy Development Field Survey Tool – For RAP SPOs and Local CICs

Introduction

In 2006, an Inventory of the Current RAP Practices and Services for GARs across Canada was commissioned by CIC Resettlement Division. Some beginning information about Children's Services was included in the Inventory. At the time, SPOs were meeting the needs of GAR children and youth as best they could with the existing resources available from CIC. Because of the obvious unmet needs of GAR children and youth as well as an expected increase in resources available for RAP services, a more detailed process is currently being undertaken to develop a consistent national strategy for children and youth. This survey is one piece of the process that you will be involved in to develop this strategy.

Please give us as much information as you are able, basing your comments and ideas on the GAR children and youth you have served and know about. Wherever possible, please differentiate the age groupings of Children and Youth so that a national strategy can be targeted specifically. Thanks in advance for your contribution.

A. Profile Information

A1. Are you a: ☐ RAP SPO representative
☐ Local CIC representative

A2. Contact person _____ tel number: _____
Email: _____

A3. Region

Atlantic _____
Ontario _____
Prairies _____
British Columbia _____

A4. Your Local RAP/ SPO's Annual GAR Target

1-100 GARs _____
101-275 GARs _____
276+ GARs _____

B. Overview of the Priority Needs and Promising Practices for GAR C&Y

Since 2002, it is reported that the needs of GAR Children and Youth have changed because of changes in the IRPA. In order to develop an effective national strategy it is important to hear about **the pressing, unmet needs of GAR Children and Youth that, if not addressed within the first 12 months of arrival, will make their settlement process difficult.** Thinking about the GAR C&Y your RAP SPO/community has served in this time frame (2002 to present), please answer the following questions.

B1. What are priority and pressing needs of GAR Children and Youth that a 12-month national strategy should be addressing? (Please think about children in

the various age groupings of 0-4 yrs, 5-12 yrs, 13–18 yrs; their parents; the context of the needs, explaining them in as much depth as possible, drawing distinctions between sub target groups if they exist e.g. GAR children and youth from urban settings vs. camp settings, length of time GAR children with the needs have been in refugee situations etc.)

B2. What are the ways your RAP SPO/community has found to meet these needs and major lessons learned?

C. Basic Needs of GAR C&Y on Arrival

Your RAP SPO provides a gamut of services to GARs families when they first arrive. Please comment on the specific needs of Children and Youth when they first arrive in the following specific areas.

C1. Needs of Children and Youth on Arrival *[in RAP Activity areas of Meet and Greet, Temporary Accommodation and Orientation]*

C2. Ways your RAP SPO meets these needs and major lessons learned

The next sections ask you to reflect on the Social Development, Health and Education needs of GAR children and youth. We are also interested in any insights you may have about what the parents might need to support their children in these important areas. Again, keeping in mind the various age groupings of children and youth (of 0-4 yrs, 5-12 yrs, 13–18 yrs) is helpful. As well, please continue to provide depth and context to the needs you are identifying, pointing to sub target groupings of children and youth that might require unique interventions.

D. Family Relations: Needs of GAR Children and Youth

D1. Needs of GAR Children and Youth and their Parents

[e.g. family dynamics, re-unification adjustments, role reversal (husband/wife); intergenerational conflicts/ parents/children, quality and quantity of family time; family activities]

D2. Programs/efforts to address these needs (either within your RAP SPO or externally)

D3. Results/impact of these efforts and major lessons learned

E. Social Development: Needs of GAR Children and Youth

E1. Needs of GAR Children and Youth <i>[e.g. adjustment issues, social skills, life skills, play and recreational activities, peer pressure]</i>	E2. Parents' needs <i>[e.g. childminding and day care, behaviour mgt., discipline]</i>
E3. Programs/efforts to address these needs (either within your RAP SPO or externally)	
E4. Results/impact of these efforts and major lessons learned	

F. Health: Needs of GAR Children and Youth

F1. Needs of GAR Children and Youth <i>[e.g. primary prevention (immunisations), mental health & trauma, nutrition, growth and development (e.g. meeting various milestones) hearing, speech, vision, dental concerns, and treating minor childhood ailments]</i>	F2. Parents' needs <i>[e.g. .learning re prevention & accessing the health care system, nutrition]</i>
F3. Programs/efforts to address these needs (either within your RAP SPO or externally)	
F4. Results/impact of these efforts and major lessons learned	

G. Education: Needs of GAR Children and Youth

G1. Needs of GAR Children and Youth <i>[e.g. literacy issues, English language skills, adjustment issues, and for youth such things as career/vocational concerns, pressures from family to work, get married etc.]</i>	G2. Parents' needs <i>[e.g. how to take on an appropriate role and involvement in their children's education.]</i>
G3. Programs/efforts to address these needs (either within your RAP SPO or externally)	

G4. Results/impact of these efforts and major lessons learned

H. A Responsive 12 month National Client Centered GAR Children & Youth Strategy

Based on the needs you have identified, and some of the lessons learned from strategies that you know about that are currently in place, **what might be the elements of a successful client centered national 12 month strategy for GAR Children & Youth?** You might think about

- National standards or outcomes that every RAP SPO should be funded to ensure are realised.
- Programs/services in the six (6) areas you have already commented on: Meet and Greet, Temporary Housing, Orientation, Family Relations, Social Development, Health and Education that should be universally accessible to all GAR Children and Youth.
- Ways that a national strategy can be flexible, client centered and regionally responsive as well as universal.

This is the time when you can dream and create a vision of the ideal supports and services to make the transition of GAR Children and Youth the most successful possible.

Elements of a successful client centered national 12 month strategy for GAR Children & Youth

Appendix E: Citizenship & Immigration Canada: GAR Children and Youth National Strategy

Focus Group Discussion Outline – Parents/Youth

Preamble

The government of Canada (CIC) is concerned that in recent years, amongst all of the refugees that are sponsored annually, almost half are children between the ages of 0 – 18 years. So far, the services/supports that have been put in place have been mostly from the point of view of adults or the parents. The government wants to now also give special attention to the needs of children/youth so that their resettlement in Canada is as smooth as possible. The process we're facilitating is to find out about the concerns of children/youth in the first year after arriving in Canada, and how these being taken care of at the present time are. It is hoped that we can come up with a recommendation on what should be put into place to address the immediate and essential needs of children/youth during the first few months that they are in Canada.

Today we have some key questions to guide our discussion about the different needs/issues that you experienced as children/youth (or in your role as parents) when you first arrived; what are some of the pressing concerns that you had in terms of your family life, education, health and social well-being. We're interested in hearing what type of programs/services you've received as children/youth (or in your role as parents) that you have found helpful and what you wished had been in place that could have made your early weeks/months in Canada easier/smoothen. You do not have to worry about being critical/negative...your critical input will not affect how or what services you will receive from this agency or elsewhere.

Your experiences/ideas will help improve the situation for families/children/youth who come as refugees in the future. At this point, we will not be debating any of these nor trying to get to any consensus on decisions. Everyone's ideas are welcomed and there are no right or wrong answers.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Basic Needs – Basic Orientation Upon Arrival

1. As you might know, the government tries to provide you/all assisted refugees with supports/services (like those offered by this agency_____) with idea of making your transition to resettling in Canada as smooth as possible.
 - From your point of view what has been the most useful type of help/support you have had since you have been here?
2. During those early days, the staff at ____ (name of agency) _____ provided all of the adults (and maybe the youth) with orientation or information/learning about different aspects of life in Canada, what to expect, how to do things, how to get help, etc.
 - What do you remember about the orientation/information session?

- What was the orientation/information about things to do with your children /youth you received that you appreciated the most at that time?
- Now that you think back, what do you think was really important for you (your children/youth) to know or learn about in those early days related to your children's futures in Canada that you did not get from the staff at the agency ?

Starting/Being at School

3. Getting registered at school and becoming used to being in that environment and all of the daily routines is a major issue for newcomer children/youth (and their parents).
 - Try and remember when you (your children/youth) first enrolled at school here in Canada... what was that like for you? What were you concerned about the most in terms of yourself (as children/youth)...in terms of your children/youth (as parents)?
 - What was the help/support you received that you appreciated the most at that time?
 - Who helped you and what did they do for you?
 - What help (support) was missing that you wish you could have had at that time when you (your child/youth) first started school here?
4. How are things going for you (your children/youth) now at school? What are your main worries? Who helps you deal with these worries/issues?

Social/Recreational Past times/ Making Friends

5. As part of growing up, all children/youth need to have ways of socializing, being involved in play or recreational activities with others who are their own age.
 - Can you describe what you (your children/youth) do for fun, for relaxation, for developing your general interests/skills, etc.?
 - What was the help/support you received in this area that you have appreciated the most?
 - What is missing or that you wish you could have from the point of view of your (your child/youth's) social/recreational past times or activities with friends?

Future/Unmet Needs

6. Now that you have been in Canada for the past few days/months, what are the things that concern/worry you the most ...in terms of for you (your children/youth)?
 - What are your hopes /fears for your (your children/youth's) future? What do you think you need to do to work towards addressing these hopes/fears?

7. What is your advice to the government of Canada about the 2-3 most important types of help/support that could be there for children/youth in the first year that they arrive as refugees?

Thank you very much for your time and input

Appendix 2: List of Participants

List of Participants

[* Note: The following is a list of all of the participants whose names were noted during the consultations. Names of GAR parents and youth were deliberately not included in order to maintain their confidentiality. It is possible that there were other individuals who participated in the focus groups or workshops that have been inadvertently missed below. We apologize this oversight in advance.]

SPO & CIC Representatives

Sarah Amies, Lethbridge Family Services (PRAIRE)
Kevin Arseneault, PEI Association for Newcomers (ATLANTIC)
Lois Berrigan, Association for New Canadians, St. John's (ATLANTIC)
Tara Blanchard, Moose Jaw Multicultural Council (PRAIRIE)
Rob Bray, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (PRAIRIE)
Wendy Browne, COSTI, Toronto (CENTRAL)
Jackie Cameron, CIC Kitchener (CENTRAL)
Hsiao Lei Chang, SUCCESS Vancouver Airport (PACIFIC)
Alice Colak, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton (PRAIRIE)
Fiona Corbin, CIC Regional Program Advisor, Toronto (CENTRAL)
Nigel Couch, Director, Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex (CENTRAL)
Darcy Dietrich, Regina Open Door Society (PRAIRIE)
Marty Dolin, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (PRAIRIE)
Yasmine Dossal, COSTI, Toronto (CENTRAL)
Rose Dunn, CIC Halifax (ATLANTIC)
Bridget Foster, Association for New Canadians, St. John's (ATLANTIC)
Chris Friesen, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (PACIFIC)
Linda Gale, Saamis Immigration Services Association, Medicine Hat (PRAIRIE)
Bertha Gana, Saskatoon Open Door Society (PRAIRIE)
Anna Gregus, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, Halifax (ATLANTIC)
Clark Hamilton, CIC Fredericton (ATLANTIC)
Christy Jacquard, YM-YWCA Saint John (ATLANTIC)
Morteza Jafarpour, Settlement and Integration Services Organization, Hamilton (CENTRAL)
Heather Jessom, COSTI Reception Centre, Toronto (CENTRAL)
Carillon Kinley, CIC Vancouver (PACIFIC)
Ann Kotanko, CIC Hamilton (CENTRAL)
Sherry Kwan-Hopper, Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (CENTRAL)
Chamroeun Lay, Reception House Catholic Immigration Centre, Ottawa (CENTRAL)
Suzanne MacDonald, CIC Regional Program Advisor, Ontario Region
Mira Malidzanovic, K-W Reception House, Kitchener (CENTRAL)
Vesna Miroslavljavic, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, Halifax (ATLANTIC)
Aggie Missaghian, PEI Association of Newcomers to Canada (ATLANTIC)
Carmen Mocayo, Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association, Halifax (ATLANTIC)
Marge Nainaar, Prince Albert Multicultural Council (PRAIRIE)
Uyen Nguyen, Immigration Reception Information Services, Mississauga (CENTRAL)
Joan Pullen, CIC Regional Program Advisor, Winnipeg (PRAIRIE)
Asif Rahman, CIC Charlottetown (ATLANTIC)
Antonio Samayoa, Saamis Immigration Services Association, Medicine Hat (PRAIRIE)
Parampla Sharma, Community Airport Newcomer Network, Richmond (PACIFIC)
Marufa Shinwari, Settlement and Integration Services Organization, Hamilton (CENTRAL)

Bridget Slobodian, CIC Winnipeg (PRAIRIE)
Bill Stewart, CIC Regional Program Advisor, Halifax (ATLANTIC)
Margaret Styczynka, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (PRAIRIE)
Kathleen Thomas, Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (CENTRAL)
Mary Williamson, London Cross Cultural Learning Centre (CENTRAL)
Betty Zangari, CIC Windsor (CENTRAL)

Key Informants

Ugur Ayman, YMCA Toronto Case Management Pilot Program
Joan Belding, Prairies Regional Staff for ISAP
Peter Dorfman, Ontario SWIS Coordinator
Catherine Eddy, Vancouver Board of Education
Susan Hoo, Childminding Monitoring Advisory and Support (CMAS)
Kamara Jeffrey, CIC Summer Intern, Ryerson University Student
Ximena Munoz, Province of Manitoba Immigration & Multiculturalism Division
Liz Robinson, Province of Manitoba Immigration & Multiculturalism Division
Oudalay Boupaphaunh, Regina Open Door Early Childhood Program
Tony Tavares, Manitoba Dept. of Education
Jessie Thomson, CIC Headquarters
Barbara Treviranus, Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

SEPWR Advisory Committee Members:

Catherine Moloney, ESL/ELD Consultant, WCDSB, Co-chair
Sharon Newmaster, ESL/ELD Teacher, WRDSB, Co-chair (for Robin Pearson)
Debbie Hoekstra, Manager, Community Children Services, KW YMCA
Peter Dorfman, Provincial Coordinator, SWIS
Maria Alvarez, Manager, Cross Cultural Community Services, KW YMCA
Jasminka Klacar, Coordinator, SEPWR
Brenda Cox, Principal of Success for All WRDSB
Barb Dickie, ABLE Teacher, WRDSB
Jodi Spall, Equity Officer, WRDSB
Barb Vukets, Teacher, FHCI, WRDSB
Betty Thiessen, Elementary ESL/ELD Teacher, WRDSB
Kathy Dick, Vice Principal St. Mary's SS, WCDSB
Cathy Everett, Guidance Counselor, St. Mary's SS, WCDSB
Margaret Markvart, ESL/ELD teacher, St. Mary's SS, WCDSB
Eva Kruzlics, ESL Teacher, St. Bernadette School, WCDSB
Helen Schroeder, ESL Teacher, St. Aloysius School, WCDSB
Suzanne Johnson, ESL Teacher, St. John School, WCDSB
Tawnya Dosman, Primary Teacher, St. John School, WCDSB
Angela Davis, Intake and Assessment Teacher, Newcomer Reception Centre, WCDSB

SEPWR Advisory Committee Guests:

Colette Snyder, SWIS Programme Consultant, CIC
Branka Djerić, Settlement Worker, SEPWR
Abla Said, Settlement Worker, SEPWR
Abdul Jalil Zalmay, Settlement Worker, SEPWR
Chander Gosain, Settlement Worker, SEPWR
Gloria Elisa, Settlement Worker, SEPWR
Hang Liu, Settlement Worker, SEPWR

Appendix 3: Literature Review

GAR Children and Youth National Strategy

Literature Review

(prepared by Taslim Madhani, Associate, Kappel Ramji Consulting Group)

Introduction

There is a lack of literature addressing the needs and experiences of newcomer children and youth in spite of the fact that 36% of newcomers to Canada are identified as part of this demographic (OPBSA 2005). In particular, no real attention has been paid to the category of immigrants known as government-assisted refugees (GARs). The needs of GAR children and youth have not been systematically identified anywhere. At present, research on children and youth largely identifies the needs of immigrants and refugees grouped together under the category of “newcomer.”

Some researchers have pointed out important differences between the settlement experiences of immigrants and refugees. For example, refugees are usually forced to leave their countries of origin because of persecution, while immigrants choose to come to Canada in search of opportunity. As a result, migration for refugee children and youth is accompanied by a variety of compounded stresses. Cultural challenges, language barriers, economic pressure, environmental change, discrimination and racism make the resettlement process more problematic for refugee children and youth than for immigrants (Beiser, Shik & Curyk 1999). While differences between immigrant and refugee children and youth cannot be overlooked, literature on newcomers is generally all that is available to identify effective strategies and might be used to address refugee settlement in particular.

Education

Academic success is a key indicator of settlement success for GAR children and youth. GAR children have often had limited or no access to education in their home countries as a result of government neglect, civil war and a lack of educational resources available in refugee camps. In cases where GARs have had access to education, their schooling has been fragmented and frequently interrupted by displacement (OPSBA 2005). Literature suggests that once placed in Canadian schools, both refugee and immigrant children and youth face a unique set of problems. These include language barriers and discrimination from students and teachers, all of which can hinder a child’s integration and academic achievement (Jeffrey 2006). As well, children who suffer from behavioural and mental health issues such as post traumatic stress disorder, have difficulty adjusting to a school environment. Often times, the response from schools is to suspend students that act out, rather than assess and support their needs (Scott 2001). Teachers also admit to being ill-equipped to accommodate the needs of newcomer students in the classroom (Reynolds 2004).

Some of the barriers affecting the academic success of newcomer students are systemic. For example, Ontario Public School Board Association reports that English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) programs currently operate on a four year model. However evidence shows that up to seven years of instruction is necessary for newcomer students to attain the same level of fluency in English as native English speakers. Other systemic gaps of ESL and ELD programs include an absence of common tracking mechanisms to follow a student’s progress, as well as an absence of

national language benchmarks to assess the level of literacy and language acquisition of school-age children and youth (OPSBA 2005).

A report by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, confirms that addressing the ESL needs of newcomers, especially those that come from war-affected or refugee backgrounds, is critical for newcomer success in Canadian schools. According to this report, the drop out rate for older youth that enter English language learning at the beginning level, ranges from 60 – 95% - a number that will only continue to grow without appropriate supports for newcomers. Manitoba schools that were surveyed as part of the report also recognize the lack of appropriate ESL programming for not only newcomers, but for refugee students in particular (Mackay and Tavares 2005).

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

Waheed Soroor and Zarsang Popal's (2005) study on the mental health needs of Afghan youth recommends that educators should be familiar with symptoms of common behavioural problems in order to support youth and help them achieve greater levels of academic success.

Without significant support, refugee students are at significant risk of dropping out of school and of becoming either unemployable or employed only marginally in menial work. There is an urgent need to create programs that can provide meaningful assistance for refugee students that will enable them to become contributing Canadian citizens. The 2005 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario includes a review of ESL and ELD programs and notes that existing language courses are directed at students who have missed two or three years of schooling and do not meet the needs of refugee students who have significant gaps in their education. The report suggests that the Ministry of Education should consider working with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to develop effective, long-term programs that focus on refugee students in particular (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2005).

Other recommendations for improved academic success of newcomer children and youth include involving school boards as crucial components in the settlement process. For example, school boards should have curriculum consultants who can coordinate the delivery of appropriate programs and provide support to teachers with models and resources that best meet the needs of newcomer students. School boards should ensure that all teachers, not just ESL/ELD instructors should have qualifications in the areas of ESL/ELD. School boards should also promote parental involvement in their children's education, through providing a "Welcoming Kit" in the family's first language that outlines how the school system works, provide examples of how parents can support their children, including parent-teacher interviews and curriculum nights. One successful parent outreach initiative offered by some Ontario school boards has been to provide school newsletters in the various languages of the school's communities (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario 2005). A study conducted on interventions for refugee children in Australia and New Zealand has gone beyond the scope of recommendations made in Ontario and proposes that all teachers should be trained on how to effectively deal with traumatization and children who come from war-affected areas in teacher's college, not just those teaching ESL. This same study also recommends that refugee children and parents should be included in discussions regarding curriculum planning at all levels (Hamilton & Moore 2004).

Drawing from Canadian examples, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board implemented STRIDES, a program which offers refugee children a place to develop social and developmental skills, confidence and better work ethic through small group activities. Reports show that all children who have participated in the STRIDES program have demonstrated a noticeable improvement in social interaction, oral communication as well as academic achievement (Woolley 2006). Further, the Sudanese Homework Club, also implemented by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, has been a meaningful source of academic support for Sudanese students and has also opened up lines of communication between schools and parents (Waterloo Catholic District School Board 2005).

Promising Pathways is another education initiative underway in Manitoba. The aim of the project is to develop linkages between language programs, learning centres, training programs and post-secondary institutions for older youth that come from war-affected and refugee backgrounds. The project is also focusing on addressing policy and programming gaps through enhancing existing education and language courses, developing effective education assessment tools for newcomer students and promoting inter-sectorial collaboration that will build capacity and program supports for both newcomer youth and their families (Promising Pathways).

Developed by Regent Park Community Health Centre, Pathways to Education is another effective model of academic support aimed to help youth at risk. The program focuses on four key areas: academic support; social support through mentorship programs; financial support, including providing bursaries to students accepted to post-secondary institutions; and advocacy by acting as a liaison between parents, students and schools. Since its inception, Pathways to Education has reduced the high school drop out rate of youth in Regent Park from 56% to 10% and increased enrolment in college and university from 45% to 80%. The program has been so successful that it is now operating in a number of sites across Canada (Pathways to Education).

It would be useful to examine how other Western contexts approach integrating refugee children and youth into the education system. *Refugee Children and Education*, as an example, examines the challenges faced by refugee children in the British school system. The book identifies a number of areas of improvement to support the successful integration of refugee children in the education system. Among the areas identified are the need to collect accurate information and statistical data so that local services and school policies can be made more effective. The book also calls for improved coordination and communication between government agencies and refugee community groups in order to ease the burden on schools that often become a key source of information for refugees but lack the expertise necessary to address the range of settlement issues. Another important recommendation is that of recognizing the strength that lies within refugee communities. In this regard, the book suggests establishing advocacy centres managed by refugees. These centres would provide a forum for refugees to develop expertise within their communities to better deal with public services, including educational institutions (Rutter & Jones 1998).

Mental Health

That many refugee children have been exposed to or witnessed extreme violence in their home countries such as shelling, bombing, exposure to dead bodies, looting and killing has been well documented by many researchers. Research findings indicate that children who have been exposed to such violence are at high risk of experiencing psychological disturbances and mental health problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (Simich 2004).

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

Unlike most services offered in the area of trauma and mental health, the Children's Mental Health Outreach Program (CMHOP), an initiative of Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) focuses primarily on providing mental health services to GAR children and youth (SISO, 2007). CMHOP, as an advocate for early intervention programs to reduce the risk associated with settlement, can be used as a model approach to addressing the mental health needs of children and youth. . Their approach to mental health care is one of trust, recognizing that establishing a relationship of trust between professional service providers and GAR families is critical for the successful integration of GAR children. CMHOP is a family-focused delivery system that offers a variety of long-term, programs and services in partnership with other service provider organizations, not just in the area of mental health. The program focuses on assisting families in all aspects of settlement, as GAR children from strong family units are more resilient and thus more likely to recover from mental health challenges. The services provided through this one stop agency are also linguistically and culturally sensitive to newcomer needs, a recommendation cited in several studies regarding mental health issues (Simich 2004; Soroor & Popal 2005).

Some studies conducted on the health and wellbeing of children and youth attribute their ability to adapt successfully to the norms of society to resiliency. For example, a study on the resilience processes of children in post-Taliban Afghanistan revealed that children in this context were able to overcome adversity because of their strong family bonds and community support. Both of these factors acted as protective barriers that enabled these children to acclimatize to their environment and function successfully. The report suggests that understanding the processes of resilience for immigrants and refugees can give service providers a basis for working with newcomers to improve their health in the Canadian context (Kanji 2007).

Social Development

Sexuality / Sexual Education

Struggling with sexuality is an issue common to all youth. Despite this commonality, refugee and even immigrant youth experiences with sexual and reproductive health are seriously under-researched. One project, piloted by Sexuality Education Resource Centre in Winnipeg on prevention education, shows that newcomer youth face a number of stresses, which can contribute to the way in which they view their sexuality and interact with others. For example, intergenerational conflict on issues such as dating and the

need for information on sexual and reproductive health can be exacerbated by the clash of cultures between newcomer parents and children.

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

The SERC project, aimed at both immigrant and refugee youth between the ages of 14-21, addresses issues of acculturation, intergenerational communication, family violence, child abuse, dating and sexuality through prevention education and other activities. A report on the project shows that the pilot has been successful in building relationships with newcomer communities, providing accessible services to youth, and assessing youth interests and needs for future programming. The report also indicates a strong need for increased youth programming in this area (SERC 2005).

Risk of Criminal Behaviour

The inability of newcomer youth to adjust to a new culture, language, environment and peer expectations place youth at greater risk for criminal behaviour. Refugee Overcoming Using Transformative Education (ROUTE), a program established in Winnipeg in partnership with refugee families, local police and community groups, has identified a number of factors that make refugee youth in particular more vulnerable to criminal activity. For example the breakdown of the family unit owing to displacement in refugee camps, difficulty finding good housing in safe neighbourhoods, language barriers, as well as a low self-esteem, lack of supervision and role models all place refugee youth at risk of exhibiting delinquent behaviour, committing crimes and joining street gangs (ROUTE 2005).

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

The ROUTE program aims at lowering the risk of criminality among refugee youth through connecting youth with mentors, providing workshops on education and employment opportunities, organizing sports activities, and increasing access to information and education for parents of youth at risk. Inspired by the lack of programming available for refugee youth at risk for criminality, the ROUTE programs offers to bridge the gap in services provided – or lack thereof – and lower the risk of newcomer youth in criminal activity.

GAPS for Youth aged 16-20

A report on meeting the needs of newcomer youth between the ages of 16 to 20 suggests that the needs of immigrant and refugee youth in this age group are not being met. As Anisef and Killbride (2001) put forward, youth in this age group encounter a unique set of problems in the settlement process: this group has difficulty adjusting to new surroundings and integrating into the school system and, given their age, does not qualify for programs meant to help children. In the same vein, this age group is still too young to receive help from services geared towards newcomer adults. There is a distinct gap in programs and services to facilitate the settlement process of youth in particular.

Research studies also show that one of the major issues confronted by this age group is identity development. Youth in this category often express the need for help in understanding Canadian culture, but also want their new Canadian community to understand them and not simply tolerate their presence (Anisef et. al 2007). Moreover, male and female newcomer youth between the ages of 16 to 20 experience settlement and identity stresses in different ways. Females have greater difficulty adjusting to a new

environment than their male counterparts. As well, females experience difficulty within the home as a result of the clash of cultural values, whereas males experience more difficulties outside the home, for example with school or employment integration. This difference can be attributed to the fact that males in some cultures are afforded greater freedom than females (Anisef and Killbride 2001).

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

Anisef and Killbride's (2001) examination of "best practices" for youth in this age group reveals that school-based programs, including tutoring, counselling, and mentoring, would help youth make a successful transition into Canadian society and reduce isolation and frustration that youth in this demographic experience all too often.

A study on the HOST program, a settlement program funded by CIC that facilitates the settlement process by matching newcomers with Canadian volunteers, recommends that a separate national youth Host program should be developed on guidelines and principles for services geared to youth. The study suggests that a youth HOST model would offer a reciprocal relationship where Canadian youth can learn about and appreciate newcomers, while newcomers can receive assistance with adjusting to life in Canada. This same study suggests that reaching out to youth should be a top priority for service providers. Information about programs and services for youth should be made available and publicized. Special efforts on promoting awareness of social services should be made to reach youth "at risk to" in order to prevent them from falling between the cracks (Anisef et. al 2007).

The Australian Department of International and Multicultural Affairs recently released a policy directive on the settlement of refugee youth and recommended developing social programs that build social capital as a tool to bridge the gap in services for refugees. The directive posited that such programs "can be highly effective at building bridging relationships, increasing cultural understanding and improving social integration and support for all young people involved." Other suggestions included delivering pre-arrival orientation packages to youth under the age of 25. This could be followed by a post-arrival orientation facilitated by specially trained "youth guides" that would assist youth in areas such as enrolling in school, connecting with the local community and accessing youth services and activities (CMYI 2006).

Youth Employment

John Shields and Khan S. Rahi's research on the labour experiences of visibly identifiable African and Asian immigrants and refugees reveals another obstacle for youth between the ages of 16 and 20: access to gainful and meaningful employment. Shields and Rahi identify the slow process of immigration as a major structural barrier for youth to obtain gainful employment - a barrier that "force[s] them into a holding pattern of financial hardship and dependence upon government support" (Shields & Rahi 2002). Lack of recognition of foreign work experience and foreign education also prevent youth from finding employment. Other obstacles include language barriers, hostility to religious clothing, and above all, lack of adequate education. Other researchers point out that many newcomer adolescents often feel pressure to drop out of school and find work in order to provide for their families. Finding gainful employment in such circumstances can be hampered by a lack of education, as well as lack of support for youth in general (Anisef et. al 2007).

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

It is evident from the literature reviewed that academic progress is critical to finding meaningful employment and obtaining economic independence. A report on “Consultations on the Settlement and Language Training Services Needs of Newcomers” (2006) funded by CIC suggests that schools should be flexible and conscious of the needs of newcomer students and support the transition from school to the workplace. School boards should take a more proactive approach to career training and involve employers in career counselling sessions as well as offer leadership development opportunities that highlight career and goal planning for newcomer students in particular.

Youth experiencing employment barriers could also benefit from programs offered outside of school, such as networking opportunities, job matching, mentoring programs and co-op experiences. Research also suggest that service provider organizations that offer such programs should promote awareness of programs available and reach out to youth who could benefit from their work (Anisef et. al, 2007).

Sports and Recreation

Studies show that refugee and immigrant children and youth participation in recreational activities is at a particular low in Canada. Newcomer children and youth are more likely to come from low-income households and thus face economic barriers that limit their opportunities to participate in sports and recreation. Youth from such backgrounds also often have many household responsibilities to compensate for parents that work often two or more jobs. This demographic is subject to heavy obligations and even heavier time constraints. The benefits of sports and play have been widely documented. Quality recreation plays an important role in a child’s healthy development, improving physical and mental health as well as self-esteem and academic performance. A recent report published by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) maintains that engaging newcomer children and youth in recreational activity is especially important “since sports and recreation may play an even more critical part of their development and adjustment to a new society.” This same report also cites a number of challenges faced by service providers in offering such programs, perhaps the most significant of which are a lack of affordable community space and limited financial resources. Parents of newcomers also often object to participating in sports because of religious beliefs or cultural reasons (OCASI 2005)

Promising Practices / Recommended Strategies

OCASI is currently testing a provisional model of an effective recreation program for newcomer children and youth. The model outlines strategies for working with other organizations, communities and funders to implement quality programs and also proposes different types of sporting activities that could successfully engage immigrant and refugee children. For example, soccer is considered a desirable sport since it requires little equipment, is easy to learn by persons of any age, can be played formally or informally, can be played with few or many participants, and can be played indoors or outdoors. Cricket is cited as another possible sport, since it has historic significance for many young newcomers which could help spark their interest. Most important to consider is in recreational programming is that sports can act as a “hook” to attract youth to other

programs and services which can buttress the development of the leadership, social and cognitive skills learned through sports (OCASI 2006).

Parenting

Child rearing practices vary across cultures, and can be exacerbated when families have to adapt to a new culture and environment. Recent studies on newcomer families in Ontario show that isolation and lack of understanding of parenting expectations in the Canadian context pose as major challenges for newcomer parents (Anisef, et al 2001). Parental attitudes towards Canadian culture may affect children's settlement and development. For example, in one study on the Sudanese experience of settlement in Ontario, parents reported a change in relationship with children because of "different cultural values" which children learned from media and mainstream Canadian culture (Simich 2004). Rajko Seat (2000), in his study on assessing the needs of newcomer youth, notes that parents of 16 to 19 year olds often worry about their children becoming "too Canadian" and fear that this may lead children to abandon their native culture, beliefs, language and traditions.

Seat's study also shows that a common concern among newcomer parents is difficulty in disciplining their children. The challenges of adjusting to life in Canada, including finding adequate housing and employment, leave parents with little time to effectively monitor their children's behaviour. Changes in family dynamics also contribute to discipline concerns. The roles of children and parents are often reversed upon arrival in Canada. Melpa Kamateros (1998) identifies a common trend in which children are often forced into the role of "social interpreters" which accounts for a shift in traditional roles of authority. As well, in many cases, the support of extended family members who help look after and discipline children in the country of origin is no longer available.

Studies on the challenges faced by newcomer parents identify a number of barriers to receiving adequate help for their needs, including a lack of cultural awareness and shortfalls in interpretation and translation services among service providers (Scott 2001; Simich 2004). As well, a study by Rummens and Seat (2003) reports that parents show a lack of awareness, denial or unwillingness to recognize their children's needs. In some cases, this lack of recognition is due to cultural predispositions that make it difficult for people in cultural communities to speak openly about their difficulties and seek help.

It has also been documented that parental involvement in the education of their children is essential for academic success. Literature shows that newcomer parents experience a sense of frustration about their children's schooling. Difficulty in helping children with homework because of language barriers and lack of time are pervasive concerns among newcomer parents (Seat 2000). A study by Jacqueline Scott (2001) found that Eritrean and Somali parents in Toronto had difficulty understanding the Canadian school system and felt that Canadian schools were not sensitive to the needs of their children. These concerns were more strongly expressed by parents who came to Canada as refugees.

Promising Practices/ Recommended Strategies

Research on best practices points to providing information and orientation sessions for parents about expectations in Canadian schools. Information about the school system should also emphasize the importance of extracurricular activities and their link to the

success of a child's social integration and academic achievement. Parents should also be educated about health issues and behavioural disorders such as learning disabilities, ADD, ADHD, etc., so that they can identify challenges their children may be experiencing at an early stage (CIC Consultations on Settlement 2006).

Seat's study recommends that services offered to newcomers should focus on a more integrated and holistic approach that engages the entire family unit in the settlement process, rather than focusing on needs of individuals within the family in isolation. Settlement programs that use a family-based approach elicit changes at both the individual and family level and also foster better communication within the family unit (Seat 2000). Other suggestions include providing families with counselling to resolve intergenerational conflicts, or what Noorfarah Merali calls the "cultural brokering process." Merali proposes that counselling for parents and children can help normalize assimilation-related conflicts as a common challenge among immigrant and refugee families and assist families in the process of negotiating a new culture and varying values (Merali 2004).

In addition, Scott in her study of Eritrean and Somali parents in Toronto recommends that initial settlement programs, services and materials as well as information on parenting programs should be translated and interpreted in the newcomer's first language. Parenting programs should also be sensitive to the cultural and religious beliefs of the newcomers. Scott reports that the parents interviewed for her study unanimously expressed the need for education on the expectations of parenthood in Canadian society *before arrival* (Scott 2001).

Conclusion

A review of the literature on the settlement needs and concerns of GAR children and youth has revealed that little research has been conducted in this area. Recent studies have highlighted this oversight and point to the need for more research on this demographic.

The literature reviewed identified a number of systematic barriers for GAR support, among those were insufficient available programs, lack of inter-agency coordination and lack of funding for services geared to both children and youth in general, and refugees in particular. These barriers suggest that unique strategies are needed in areas of education, employment and general orientation and support for refugee children and youth. Much of the literature identified academic institutions as the most important point of contact for children and youth and recommended school-based programs as the most effective strategy to meet the needs of refugees in the settlement process. Recommended programs include training for educators in ESL and mental health issues, employment counselling for GAR students as well as orientation programs geared towards parents that are both culturally and linguistically sensitive. Given that refugee children and youth arrive in Canada at different stages of their life, programs developed for GAR settlement should also be age-specific and consider their multi-faceted needs.

Dealing with trauma is essential for successful settlement. Refugee children and youth that have been affected by violence and trauma in their home countries often carry these experiences with them to Canada. It is important to note that youth may experience re-traumatization even within the Canadian context, despite the fact that Canada is considered a haven from the violence experienced in their home countries. The effects of

trauma on a child's development need to be properly understood by agencies dealing with GARs. Agencies need to have the capacity to deliver service provisions sensitive to refugees who suffer from traumatization and provide support that will allow these children to develop both physically and mentally.

Some literature suggests that children and youth are protected by resiliency and are thus quick to recover from traumatic situations and are well equipped to adapt to settlement in Canada. While it is important to acknowledge the varying ways in which newcomer children and youth cope with both trauma and the challenges of settlement, resiliency should not be used as a tool for effective settlement. Without access to support programs, even the most resilient of children and youth are placed at greater risk of exhibiting delinquent behaviour, experiencing difficulty in school, and exacerbating or developing new mental health problems. Traumatization can compound the already numerous stresses of settlement. Early intervention programs are critical for the successful integration of GARs. Refugee children and youth that suffer from trauma need to be connected to appropriate support services immediately upon arrival, in order to help them overcome trauma and settlement stresses and adjust to their new environment.

Successful settlement of GAR children and youth is also dependent on the number of "assets," or positive influences and personality traits, available to them. Studies show that assets have a direct relationship with the successful development of children in general.. Assets include external factors such as family support, positive adult role models and participation in youth programs, as well as internal factors such as school engagement, high self-esteem and interpersonal skills. The greater the number of assets available in a young person's life, the more successful his/her transition into adulthood. Research shows that even some children born in privileged North American societies do not have sufficient developmental assets required for healthy development. GAR children and youth suffer from an even greater lack of assets which places them at greater risk of not only successful development, but also affects their threshold for resiliency and successful integration in Canadian society. What has been termed "asset-building" is central for the positive development of GAR children and youth. Asset-building can be achieved through community programs that foster the development of positive behaviours and actively engage GAR children and youth in healthy activities (Search Institute).

Effective settlement of GAR children and youth essentially requires a system and programs that are accessible from multiple points of entry. Outreach and promoting awareness of relevant programs should be a priority for service provider organizations. It is especially crucial to reach youth at risk before they fall through the cracks of the system. Above all, programs developed for refugee children and youth should provide them with the opportunity to realize their aspirations and support GARs in becoming full participants and contributors to Canadian society alongside their Canadian-born peers.

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Appendix 4: Summary Data

Components of a National Strategy – Data Summary				
	SPOs-Survey Data	GAR Parents*/Youth (Parents of youth so focus on younger kids is a gap)	Key Informants/ Educators	RAP Conference -Workshop Participants
Overseas Pre-Arrival	Orientation for C/Y about life in Canada; typical day at school - roles, rights and responsibilities; social behaviour expectations			x
	Accurate pre-arrival information about special needs of C/Y sent to SPO			x
	Stress to Parents about importance of taking all health (e.g. Immunization) and education (e.g. Report cards) related documents		x	x
Upon Arrival Meet & Greet	Avoid overnight stay for unaccompanied minors who are going to another destination city other than POE			
	In addition to Winter clothing, provide age-appropriate back pack - with toys, books, pencil case, pencils/crayons, personal hygiene products, healthy snacks, lunch box		x	x
Temporary Accommodation	Age appropriate equipment/supplies: strollers, cribs, playpens, toys, play area			
	Childminding - enhanced; opportunity to assess for PTS, need for Life Skills			x
	Longer stay at Temp Accommodation to allow for more "let down" time and thus more effective orientation			
	Follow up support after moving out			x
Orientation	Orientation for C/Y about life in Canada; typical day at school - roles, rights and responsibilities; social etiquette/behaviour expectations, personal hygiene, healthy choices	x	x	x
	Life skills - relevant to C/Y- carryover from Orientation, more in-depth and hands-on for those who need this, with emphasis on school and public behaviour	x	x	
Assessment/ Linking	C/Y focussed assessment - deliberate focus as part of overall family assessment			x
	Art/Play therapy - incorporate as part of C/Y Assessment			
	Ongoing link/support - community based case management to include emphasis on needs of C/Y		x	x

	SPOs-Survey Data	GAR Parents*/Youth (*Parents were of 13-18 yr olds and so focus on younger kids is a gap)	Key Informants/ Educators	RAP Conference - Workshop Participants
Permanent Accommodation	Advocacy for adequate housing for large /extended family arrangements	x	x	
	Right accommodation in right neighbourhood with right schools	x	x	
	Orientation for C/Y re. home and neighbourhood safety, role of EMS, social etiquette/behaviour expectations		x	
Income Support	Coverage for costs related to transportation and extra curricular activities	x	x	x
		CIC Loan Re-payment - strategy to diminish this faster	C/Yworry too - impact on their schooling/future	
Health Care	Standard protocol for screening for communicable diseases, vision, hearing, dental, developmental milestones; nutritional counselling, personal health practices/hygiene; orient to need for preventative check-ups; sexual health counselling/safe sex and birth control; mental health assessment through review of observations made by all who have been working/interfaces with C/Y			x
	IFH - should include coverage for dental, mental health support, cultural interpreters			
Childminding (enhanced) Infants/ Preschoolers	Start with infants and not limit it to only LINC settings but other key programs too			x
	Parenting Skills/Mentoring			x
School Readiness/ Academic Success	School based orientation, interpretation and advocacy by SWIS type program/worker for GAR C/Y	x	x	x
	3-4 month transition program focusing on ESL, ELD - basic literacy, numeracy and social skills required		x	x
	Appropriate assessment and grade/class placement	Also need accommodations eg. Extra time for tests	x	x
	After-school programs - homework clubs, tutoring, social-recreational		x	x
	Breakfast and Lunch programs		x	
	Summer programs - reinforcement/catch-up for ESL, ELD and social skills	x	x	
	Pre-kindergarten readiness - spring/summer prior to kindergarten enrollement		x	x

	SPOs-Survey Data	GAR Parents*/Youth (*Parents were of 13-18 yr olds and so focus on younger kids is a gap)	Key Informants/ Educators	RAP Conference - Workshop Participants
School Readiness / Academic Success (Cont.)	Youth - Pathways to Education type program: stress/anger management, dealing with bullying/teasing from others, tutoring, mentoring, financial support/incentives	Dealing with Bully/teasing; getting into fights, suspensions	x	x
			Sufficient support for parents so dependency on C/Y is lowered - to allow more regular school attendance	
	Parental Role/Effective behavior management skills, Parent Mentor/Advocate in School	x	x	x
Youth Development	Leadership Skills Training - Refugee Youth Support Resource Centre - friendships and mentoring, stress/anger management, dealing with bullying/racism, opportunities to share/retain cultural heritage, volunteering opportunities			x
		Host for Youth/Mentoring by non-Refugee peers		x
		Dealing with boredom - joining sports teams		x
	Career/Educational Planning - specialized, hands-on; academic and alternate pursuits	Including course selection	x	x
	Employment preparation/search - supported employment		x	
	Parenting Skills/Mentoring - being caught between cultures and dealing with conflicts that arise from this	Also need to know consequences of calling 911 for family conflicts		
Capacity Building/ Partnerships	Policy Analysis, Research, Education/Training, Advocacy - Education, Health care, Child Welfare, Justice System, Law enforcement;		x	Include SPO/RAP staff
	Advocacy/problem solving re. waiting periods, funding gaps/discrepancies			

Appendix 5: National Strategy Components- Details

	<i>Family Focussed Case Management- Community</i>
Target Group: (age range, gender, all or %)	Children 0-12 years: all Youth 13 -18: all Parents: all
Description: Objectives	Identify the strengths, abilities, values, resources and needs of each GAR C&Y and ensure that they are appropriately met.
Specific Activities	- Complete a thorough assessment of the basic, social development, education and health aspects of GAR C&Y lives within the context of a Family based approach - Develop an Action/Service Plan for each child/youth as well as the parents/family unit, attending to basic, social development, education and health needs - Assign a multidisciplinary Team with a lead Case Manager to the family that will ensure all aspects of the service plan are completed - Refer/Link to services/resources and proactively follow up to ensure connections made. Accompany and/or re-refer if necessary - Advocate for C&Y to within the family context (?) - Follow up/Ongoing review of case with full team - Monitor/track outcomes/results
Content /detail	<u>Assessment</u> For each family and C&Y, information is be obtained on family composition, living conditions prior to arrival, family losses, living conditions and social status, past traumatic experiences, process of reaching Canada, educational background, orientation to Canada prior to arrival, and knowledge of English, attainment of milestones, hopes and aspirations for the future. The assessment is on-going. That is, it will be started as soon as the family arrives and adjusted as new information become available. While much of the information will be family based, it will be important to keep separate profile information on each distinct family member so individual needs can be more appropriately met. Assessment will be conducted by the team- with the CM taking the lead. Other team members will add detail as they observe the C&Y in other venues e.g. childminding, orientation/life skills sessions etc. <u>Education</u> Within school context, identify their strengths, abilities, values, resources and needs. In collaboration with Teaching Staff and parents, plan services; intervene on their behalf and/or assist participants to become involved in activities that will lead to child/youth's adjustment in the school. In the absence of a SWIS-like program, much of the intervening might relate to providing onsite or school based orientations and life skills training

	<i>Family Focussed Case Management- Community</i>
Content/Detail (cont.)	Work with SWIS staff (if available), teachers and other school personnel to determine what at-home/in community supports or resources need to be mobilized in order to complement objectives of adjusting to school and addressing learning gaps Follow through in helping with making links/referrals in community Health status Facilitating access to health screening, assessment and supports will be an important area of focus for the CM in the early days post arrival for GARs C & Y. Results of health screening (eg. Vision, hearing, dental, immunizations, etc) may require prompt follow up so that C & Y and their parents are assisted with obtaining the appropriate services/aids (eg. Eyeglasses) in order for success in overall learning and adjustments. Monitoring and Evaluation A tracking system regularly monitors the achievement of goals and identifies any arising challenges. Client assessments are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the services, which have been identified as needs, have been delivered. Computerized client information and program evaluation information is maintained to generate client reports and ensure all performance indicators have been met. Client files are maintained and contain all appropriate information
Timing/Duration	Begins while GARs still in Temp Accommodation and follow up for up to 12 months. . At the end of 12 months, the Case Manager helps all interested clients to set up longer-term plans and refers them to community agencies and/or services in the community that may continue to provide assistance. On average each family would receive approximately 52 hours (average of 1 hour/week) of Case Management services over the course of their first year in Canada.
SPO Role	Direct service provider. Supported by other team members from SPO and the community
Potential Partners	Children's Aid, Mental Health services, Public Health, translators, educators/school boards, parks and recreation, libraries, etc.,
Outcomes (Primary)	• Affordable, safe accommodation • Access to ESL and ELD • Assessment & placement in appropriate class • Feeling parent's presence at school • Access to health care
Indicators	• C&Y and parents report that they are beginning to meet their needs and realise their hopes/aspirations. • SPO staff report C&Y have 85% of GAR C&Y have completed the first 12 months of re-settlement with few pressing or immediate

	<i>Family Focussed Case Management- Community</i>
	needs still unmet • Attendance in ESL and/or ELD • Attendance in after school program for extra support • Improvement/success as noted on school report cards • Teacher/Childminder's report on in class behaviour • Participation in extra curricular activities • Parents' participation at Parent/Teacher Interviews
Evaluation Method	Part of C&Y – 6 month and 12 month survey Periodic SPO staff input - focus group or survey Periodic staff input – focus group or survey – from school personnel and other community agencies where GAR C & Y are commonly referred.

	<i>Health Assessment and Follow up</i>
Target Group: (age range, gender, all or %)	Children 0-12 years: all Youth 13 -18: all Parents: all
Description: Objectives	Ensure that every individual GAR child and youth has an in depth medical exam that takes into account the trauma that the child/youth may have experienced as well as the conditions/health issues endemic to the source country and country of refuge. Ensure that required health screening and immunizations/health records are current so that timely school enrolment is facilitated. Ensure that each child/youth is successfully linked to a permanent health care provider for on-going wellness check ups and treatment as required.
Specific Activities	- Complete a thorough medical exam/health assessment - Determine diagnostic testing to be carried and facilitate referral - Develop a treatment plan for each child/youth as well as the parents/family unit - Communicate/collaborate with Case Management Team to ensure all aspects of the treatment plan are clarified/understood so that there is optimal support for follow through. - Refer/Link to services/resources and proactively follow up to ensure connections made. Accompany and/or re-refer if necessary - Follow up/Ongoing review of case with full team - Ensure connection with ongoing/permanent health care provider based in the community is made. Orient to roles of various players/entities within health care system. - Monitor/track outcomes/results <u>Dr/patient confidentiality laws likely disallow this.</u>
Content /detail	<u>Assessment</u> For each family and C&Y, information is be obtained by the Case Management Team on family composition, living conditions prior to arrival, family losses, living conditions and social status, past traumatic experiences, process of reaching Canada, educational background, orientation to Canada prior to arrival, and knowledge of English, attainment of milestones, hopes and aspirations for the future. This overall assessment would be shared with the health/medical practitioners, who in turn will add findings and recommendation based on a comprehensive medical exam/health assessment with focus on health screening (including growth and development, vision, hearing, speech and language, dental), nutritional status, mental health status and communicable diseases– especially those prevalent in source country and country of refuge.

	<i>Health Assessment and Follow up</i>
	<u>Treatment Plan</u> This will be based on findings of the assessment, including results from diagnostic testing – will attend to growth and development and health and wellness needs. Treatment plan will be shared with Case Management Team so there's appropriate support in follow up. Results of health screening (e.g. Vision, hearing, dental, immunizations, etc) may require prompt follow up so that C & Y and the parents are assisted with obtaining the appropriate services/aids (e.g. Eyeglasses) in order for success in overall learning and adjustments. <u>Ongoing Monitoring/Follow up</u> Assessment, treatment plan and follow- up will be conducted by the health care personnel- with the Case Management team member playing a key role in sharing observations, identifying challenges, opportunities, other concerns. Links to community based health care provider who can provide ongoing care/support are established. Provide orientation about role/responsibilities of various components of the health care system e.g. Family doctor, walk-in clinics, emergency rooms, general hospital, children's hospitals, home/community care, family planning/sexual health clinics, diagnostic labs/imaging departments, etc.
Timing/Duration	Begins while GARs still in Temp Accommodation (within first week post arrival) and follow up for up to 12 months. . At the end of 12 months, the Case Management Team along with assistance from other health care personnel ensures that effective links/referrals have been made to health practitioners in the community who will provide ongoing health support/services for the family and children/youth.
SPO Role	Ensures accessible health care assessment, follow up services through partnerships with health care practitioners in the community – services may be provided onsite at Temporary Accommodation or offsite in community venue.
Potential Partners	Mental Health services, Public Health, Diagnostic labs/imaging centres, translators, case management team
Outcomes (Primary)	• Healthy views of sexuality & reproductive health • Remediation for vision, dental, hearing, speech • Immunizations up to date
Indicators	• C & Y and parents report that the case management team and health care personnel have been working seamlessly. • C&Y and parents report that they have been able to access therapies and corrective or assistive devices as prescribed by health care team. • SPO staff report C&Y have 85% of GAR C&Y have completed the first 12 months of re-settlement with few pressing or immediate health needs still unmet • 85% of families and C & Y will have been connected to an ongoing health care provider beyond 12 months. • Utilization of sexual health clinic services • Use of corrective devices as prescribed ie. Glasses, hearing aid, braces, etc. • Case Management Team reports that visits health care provider regularly and as appropriate

	<i>Health Assessment and Follow up</i>
Evaluation Method	Part of C&Y – 6 month and 12 month survey Periodic SPO staff input - focus group or survey Utilization statistics File/chart audits.

	Childminding
Target Group: (age range, gender, all or %)	Children 0-14years: all Parents - all
Description: Objectives	To provide childminding supports to families within the 12-month time frame so that they can attend to orientation and life skills sessions, housing search, and language training, other key activities (such as job search/training) that accomplish the goals in their CMT plan. To prepare GAR children for entry to and success at school
Specific Activities	- Supervision of children in structured environment with professional childminders to allow parents to attend programs/services - Provide age appropriate stimulation so environment is enriched for children and responds to their needs. - Observation/assessment of children in supervised environment - Share findings/experiences from childminding context with Case Management Team members. - Provide support/direction to parents so that behavioural changes are reinforced in the home/family setting.
Content /detail	Focus on healthy ways for parents and children to separate – provide support sensitively, keeping background/context of family's history in mind. Structure and routines at childminding centre will provide sense of stability/security and predictability for children Enhanced activities onsite with emphasis on age appropriate growth and development and learning – for younger children, aim is to increase readiness for school type setting; for older kids, literacy and numeracy skills to reinforce learning at school is key. Make keen observations about parents and children's behaviours to ensure there is early identification and interventions with respect to behavioural/management issues – including potential effects of post traumatic stress.
Timing/Duration	Begins while GARs still in Temp Accommodation (within first week post arrival) and follow up for up to 12 months. . At the end of 12 months, the Case Management Team along with assistance from other members of the childminding team ensures that effective links/referrals have been made to child care and/or other programs in the community so that children can continue to reap benefits of enriched learning environments and that parents are able to participate in programs/services that address their needs. (eg. LINC employment training, etc.). On average it is expected that each infant/preschooler would require 25-40 hours of childminding each week over the course of their first year in Canada. School aged children's needs could be estimated to be about 15 hours per week on average.

	<i>Childminding</i>
SPO Role	Ensures accessible childminding through partnerships with providers in the community – services may be provided onsite at Temporary Accommodation or offsite in community venue.
Potential Partners	Day care centres, early childhood education programs, children’s mental health services, Public Health, translators, case management team
Outcomes (Primary)	• Structure & Routine • Healthy separation from parents • Adjusting to new adults
Indicators	• Parents report that the childminding personnel and case management team have been working seamlessly. • Parents report that they have been able to access necessary programs/services due to availability of childminding support.. • At 9 months, case management team and childminders report that 85% of GAR Children have improved with respect to: separation from parents, attention span, responding to structure/routine, frequency of tantrums or behavioural challenges. • 85% of families and Children will have been connected to an ongoing childcare provider beyond 12 months. • Teachers of GAR children going into kindergarten will report improved readiness upon entry to school. • Teacher/Childminder’s report on in class behaviour • Parent/Teacher report fewer incidents of tantrums/difficult behaviour upon separation
Evaluation Method	Part of Parental – 6 month and 12 month survey Periodic input from case management team and childminders – focus group or survey Periodic teacher input - focus group or survey Utilization statistics File/chart audits.

Orientation and Life Skills	
Target Group: (age range, gender, all or %)	<u>Orientation</u> Children 6-12 years: all Youth 13 -18: all <u>Life Skills</u> C&Y with hi needs &/or no urban living experience
Description: Objectives	• Provide GAR Children & Youth preparing for departure to Canada with a clear understanding of what to expect, particularly with respect to school • Ensure safety of GAR Children & Youth in home and community • Prepare C&Y for entry to school by introducing concepts of age appropriate and socially acceptable behaviours at school and in the community • Provide in depth skills training and learning opportunities for GAR Children & Youth to learn how things work in their home community & school • Gather secondary assessment information
Specific Activities	<u>Pre-Departure Orientation</u> Two age appropriate modules delivered in group format with Q&A in language of target group. Preferably delivered by young person(s). <u>Orientation</u> Two age appropriate modules delivered in group format in language of target group, preferably delivered by young person(s). Modules will be a combination of - In home meetings and - Community outings to introduce C&Y to specific places such as school, recreation venues, stores, transportation etc. <u>Life Skills</u> Individual and/or group based life skills training in the home & community. Content is based on assessment of needs C&Y present.
Content	This curriculum is not set out in a gender, culture, or age appropriate manner. <u>Pre-Departure Orientation</u> • The trip to Canada- what to expect re the airplane, length to time it will take, what will happen at POE (who will meet them) ; kind of food they will have on the plane • First few weeks: temporary accommodation – what type of home will they be staying in; what they & their parents will be doing with their time; how family will support itself & what this means re acquisition of belongings • Entry to school: when that will happen; how they will be placed in class; how they will learn English; how long it will likely take them to finish school (particularly Youth); opportunities/realities re timing of secondary education <u>Orientation</u> • School: grading system; school routines; how to use school facilities, washroom designations & other signage; how to get help; what to

Orientation and Life Skills	
Content (cont)	wear, what to bring for lunch, rotation of classes, how to share in life of school • Community: how to cross streets, use of 911/emergency services; how fire alarms work & what happens if pulled; appropriate public behaviours (no spitting, use of washrooms, litter, etc.); how to use transit; currency; where important places are & how to get to them , available community resources & when they can use them (fees if applicable) ; Food/nutrition in Canada, importance of good dental hygiene • Rights & Responsibilities : child welfare issues, rules at school, authority figures – roles as helpers & enforcers; racism/discrimination & how to deal with it; Gender roles & expectations n Canada • Family Relations: roles that they may take on for family- banking, shopping interpretation, etc & how they can handle this – what they need to know; how to deal with culture shock • For youth: Sexual & reproductive health; dating, driving, drinking in Canada; youth employment pros & cons; <u>Life Skills</u> • Personal health & safety: appropriate use of personal & dental hygiene/cleaning products; toileting in public places; cleanliness of clothing, how to manage body odour & menstruation; appropriate attire for home, school & community ; specific nutrition issues • Safe & secure at home: safety around/use of appliances, appropriate use of plumbing, washers & dryers, telephone, intercoms etc. • Building safety: use of elevators & common space; smoke detectors use/risks; responses to fire alarms; role of superintendent. • Public transit use • In depth neighbourhood orientation – what is where, how to get around, how to use facilities/playgrounds. • Making and keeping friends – appropriate social interactions, how to link up & participate in team sports; free activities for C&Y • More in depth exploration re the roles C&Y might need to take on e.g. banking, shopping, translation etc.
Timing/Duration	<u>Pre-departure Orientation</u> ~ 5 hours total pre departure over several sessions <u>Orientation</u> ~ 20 hours total over first two months <u>Life Skills</u> ~20 hours total over first 6 months – generally starts once in permanent accommodation
SPO Role	<u>Pre-Departure Orientation</u> Arms length form COA; Provide site specific details re type of accommodation, what the community is like, pictures/symbols from the community; names of important places <u>Orientation</u> Direct provider. Modules centrally developed for reference. Each site determines best approach to delivery & specific outings to provide. <u>Life Skills</u> Direct provider: May use other service providing organisations in community to assist e.g. orientation to a local recreation centre done by the centre staff. While menu of content areas may be standardised, what gets delivered & how will depend on community & needs of C&Y
Potential Partners	COA Municipal Parks & Recreation

Orientation and Life Skills	
	Local Community Centres & libraries Schools Financial Institutions Local Transit System
Outcomes (Primary)	Life & Coping Skills (age appropriate) Adjusting norms re. Public behaviour Withstanding teasing and bullying Responding to school routines Meeting classroom behavioural expectations Feeling successful, accepted, sense of belonging Nutritious food, appropriate clothing
Indicators	<u>Pre-Departure Orientation</u> • C&Y report that what they expected is what happened • SPO staff report C&Y have understanding about what is happening and why <u>Orientation</u> • C&Y demonstrate that they can navigate the new environments without significant mishap • SPO staff report that there are few issues with C&Y's abilities to understand & follow through successfully in the new environment • School personnel reports on onsite behaviour/incidents • School personnel reports re. Nutritional quality of lunches • Participation in breakfast programs <u>Life Skills</u> • C&Y demonstrate that they have the knowledge & skill to behave safely & responsibly at home & in community • SPO staff report fewer complaints from landlords, police, school personnel re issues related to basic life skills
Evaluation Method	Part of C&Y End of orientation survey C&Y evaluation form at end of Life Skills Periodic SPO staff input - focus group or survey focus group or survey

	<i>Community Capacity Building</i>
Target Group: (age range, gender, all or %)	Children & Youth: all Parents – all Service Providers in Systems: Education, Childminding, Health, Social Services, Child Protection, Law Enforcement, Youth Employment, Settlement services, Sports & Recreation, etc.
Description: Objectives	To prepare the local community to customise and/or include GAR children and youth into existing programs that are essential to their successful resettlement in Canada, particularly in the areas of after school and summer programs, social recreational activities, youth leadership and employment and partnering programs.
Specific Activities	- Networking - Information and Awareness - Advocacy - Coalition building - Joint program proposals/ program development - Partnerships – joint delivery or direct service - Training and development - Change management
Content /detail	- After school and summer programming – address academic gaps; reinforce learning so it's not “undone” over the summer - Parenting Programs – deal with behaviour management issues resulting from cultural clashes and needs of parents - Sports/recreational programming – reinforces confidence, self esteem; opportunity for building social relationships, learning English and general orientation - Youth employment or alternate career pursuits after high school for those who are not academically inclined or able - Youth leadership programs – improve confidence, self-esteem, social interaction with peers who are in similar situations, opportunity to be role models for younger children, etc.
Timing/Duration	Ongoing – within and beyond 12 months of RAP
SPO Role	Change agent
Potential Partners	Schools, Day care centres, early childhood education programs, children’s mental health services, Public Health, Cultural Interpretation services, law enforcement personnel, child protection agency staff, sport/recreation centres and/or leagues, youth employment centres, youth services/leadership forums.

	<i>Community Capacity Building</i>
Outcomes (Primary)	• Adjusting to reunification • Healthy parent/ child relations • New child rearing practices • Disciplining children • Fitting in & making friends • Combating vulnerability to criminal behaviour • Extra support to fill gaps • Access to extracurricular activities • Good mental health
Indicators	• 75% of children/youth participate in after school and summer programs. • Parents and teachers report that after school and summer programs have complemented children's learning at school • 75% of children/youth participate in at least one sports/recreation activity. • Parents report that they have been able to reduce children/youth's idle time and boredom as a result of engaging in various sports/recreational activities. • Fewer incidents/complaints from community venues eg. Malls, corner stores, etc. • Childminder/Case Mgt Team observations of parent's handling of difficult behaviour • Reports to Child Protection & 911 • 75% of parents have accessed group based parenting support programs or receive guidance in this area regularly from Case Management Team • 50% of GAR Children/youth report openness in communication with parents. • 75% of youth have participated in employment readiness and/or leadership programs. • 50% of youth have succeeded in securing employment or volunteering opportunity • Peer service providers report concrete changes in their program/practice as a result of capacity building effort of SPO • Self report re. Friends/mentors/ role models
Evaluation Method	Part of Parent and Child/Youth – 6 month and 12 month survey Periodic input from peers service providers – focus group or survey Utilization statistics File/chart audits.

Appendix 6: Promising Practices in Response to Needs of GAR Children & Youth

PROMISING PRACTICES: In Response to Needs of GAR Children & Youth

Given that children and youth have not been a deliberate focus of resettlement assistance programs in Canada or other western hemisphere countries, there is a limited amount known about what are some of the promising practices that can effectively address their key issues. Despite the confines of the current RAP, various SPOs have been able to implement some responsive initiatives. Additional insights have also been gained through research and evaluation of various programs that may not have been designed specifically for GAR children and youth, but still have much relevance and promise for this target group. The following promising practices are some examples that have been referenced in this report. They are listed in the order that they appear in the body of the report (Section 5.0).

i. Community Based Case Management– A New Initiative for GARs in Ontario

This is a client-centered strategy, which begins with a thorough assessment of GAR families to identify their strengths, abilities, values, resources and needs. It serves as the foundation for service planning and also explores non-traditional resources that can support and assist clients, such as the role of family, friends and other community members.

Information is be obtained on family composition, living conditions prior to arrival, family losses, living conditions and social status, past traumatic experiences, process of reaching Canada, educational background, work experience, orientation to Canada prior to arrival, and knowledge of English. With the involvement of the clients, an initial short-term settlement action plan of twelve months or less is set up that can help them to achieve their goals. Activities are framed within the context of the Resettlement Assistance Program Agreement. Participants are referred to services; the Case Manager intervenes on their behalf and/or assist participants to become involved in activities that will lead to the achievement of their goals. There is involvement with outside resources such as Children's Aid, Mental Health services, Public Health, translators, etc.

A tracking system regularly monitors the achievement of goals and identifies any arising challenges. Client assessments are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the services, which have been identified as needs, have been delivered. Computerized client information and program evaluation information is maintained to generate client reports and ensure all performance indicators have been met. Client files are maintained and contain all appropriate information. At the end of 12 months, the Case Manager helps all interested clients to set up longer-term plans and refers them to community agencies and/or services in the community that may continue to provide assistance.

This case management strategy has been piloted in Ontario and is now being implemented across the six RAP sites in the province. While the approach for

this strategy in Ontario is family-centered, there is a compelling argument to add a Child and Youth Worker to the case management team so that a focus on needs of kids can be deliberate.

Contact Person: Ugur Ayman, Case Manager, YMCA, 416 928 3362 X 4126

ii. Settlement Workers In School (SWIS)– A Cross-Sectoral Partnership in Ontario

To help newcomer students and their families settle in their school and community, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Settlement Agencies and School Boards have established a school based outreach program called Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS). There are SWIS programs in six communities in Ontario.

Since the first few years in Canada are particularly difficult for newcomer students and their families, SWIS connects newly arrived families to services and resources in the school and the community in order to promote settlement and foster student achievement. Schools are one of the first services that newcomers connect with in the community. With the cooperation of the school, the SWIS worker systematically contacts all newcomer families to orient them to school and community resources and to refer them to specific services.

Learning about the education system is part of the settlement process. The SWIS worker will explain essential school information and refer the newcomer to the appropriate school staff as necessary. The SWIS program focuses on newcomer families that are in their first few years in Canada and on newcomers that have unresolved first year settlement needs. Families with long term settlement issues or who need intensive support are referred to settlement agencies and other community services.

In elementary schools, SWIS workers meet with parents and guardians. In secondary schools, SWIS workers meet with students, parents and guardians. SWIS is an entry point for the newly arrived to the broad range of settlement services offered by settlement agencies and other community services.

Contact Person: Peter Dorfman, SWIS Provincial Coordinator at pdorfman@cicswis.ca

iii. Pathways to Education – A Private Foundation Initiative for At Risk Youth

The Pathways to Education™ Program is a recognized best practice that is currently being replicated in communities across Canada. Beginning in 2006/2007, The Pathways model will be adopted by and implemented through community partners in different regions of the country including in one school system serving high numbers of GAR children and youth.

Pathways to Education™ is a distinct program that provides **four key supports**

to ensure that a far greater proportion of at-risk, economically disadvantaged young people will successfully complete high school, continue on to post-secondary programs and become actively engaged in their career development. They are:

Academic. Tutoring in five core subjects provides a safe, social learning environment for our kids 4 nights out of the week;

Social. Group mentoring for grades 9 and 10, specialty and career mentoring for grades 11 and 12, provides a venue for our kids to observe and become leaders and explore the academic and professional opportunities that exist for them;

Financial. Bus tickets tied to attendance, distributed by our staff provide students with the means to get to and from school everyday (there are no local high schools in the community). A bursary is held in trust until high school graduation and disbursed directly to the accredited post secondary program upon proof of acceptance;

Advocacy. Our staff, Student-Parent Support Workers, help build stable relationships between young people, parents and school staff by monitoring attendance, problem solving with school administration and teachers, and advocating on behalf of the students when the parents are unable to do so themselves. Wherever possible these services are provided to parents in their first language.

The Program takes a holistic approach, ensuring that the four supports are delivered in a cross-communicative style and not in isolation.

Reference: <http://pathwaystoeducation.ca/regent/pathways.html>

iv. “Youth Guides” to Orient Refugee Youth –Proposed in Australian Policy Directive

The Australian Department of International and Multicultural Affairs recently released a policy directive on the settlement of refugee youth and recommended developing social programs that build social capital as a tool to bridge the gap in services for refugees. The directive states that such programs “can be highly effective at building bridging relationships, increasing cultural understanding and improving social integration and support for all young people involved.” Other suggestions included delivering pre-arrival orientation packages to youth under the age of 25. This could be followed by a post-arrival orientation facilitated by specially trained “youth guides” that would assist youth in areas such as enrolling in school, connecting with the local community and accessing youth services and activities (CMYI 2006).

Reference: CMYI. 2006. *Settling In: Exploring Good Settlement for Refugee Young People in Australia*. Victoria: The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.
<http://www.cmyi.net.au/uploads/downloads/cmyi/pdfs/Publications/Research/SettlingIn.pdf>

v. Youth HOST Model - Proposed in Study of HOST Program

A study on the Host program, a settlement program funded by CIC that facilitates the settlement process by matching newcomers with Canadian volunteers, recommends that a separate national youth Host program should be developed on guidelines and principles for services geared to youth. The study posits that a youth Host model would offer a reciprocal relationship where Canadian youth can learn about and appreciate newcomers, while newcomers can receive assistance with adjusting to life in Canada. This same study suggests that reaching out to youth should be a top priority for service providers. Information about programs and services for youth should be made available and publicized. Special efforts on promoting awareness of social services should be made to reach youth “at risk ” in order to prevent them from falling between the cracks

Reference: Anisef, P., Poteet, M., Anisef, D., Farr, G., Poirier, C. and Wang, H. “Issues Confronting Newcomer Youth in Canada: Alternative Models for a National Youth Host Program,” *CERIS Policy Matters* No. 29, January 2007. <http://www.ceris.metropolis.net/PolicyMatter/2007/PolicyMatters29.pdf>

vi. Children’s Mental Health Outreach Program (CMHOP)– A Program in Hamilton

Children and Mental Health Outreach Program (CMHOP), an initiative of Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) in Hamilton, is a model approach to mental health care for GARs.

The Children’s Mental Health Outreach Program (CMHOP) is a collaborative program delivered jointly by the Community Child Abuse Council, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), Contact Hamilton and le Centre de sante Communautaire Hamilton/Niagara. The program is funded through the Ministry of Children and Youth.

CMHOP’s goal is to provide culturally sensitive mental health services to children and youth (0-18 yrs) and their families who are refugees or immigrants. CMHOP is designed to address the gaps in mental health services for these clients, and aims to collaborate with families, schools, social service organizations and community groups in order to address the emotional difficulties of this population.

CMHOP’s primary focus is on refugee children and youth who have faced trauma through war or time spent in a refugee camp. Refugee claimants or permanent resident children and youth with emotional, relational or behavioural challenges are also part of CMHOP’s target population. Assistance in promoting resilience in new immigrant and refugee children, youth and their families is a further priority, along with advocacy, case management and direct interventions.

Specifically, the linguistically and culturally sensitive mental health and trauma-related services that are offered through CMHOP are:

- Individual counseling
- Group counseling

- Family counseling
- Advocacy
- Case consultation and case management

Contact Person: Morteza Jafarpour; 905-667-7499; morteza@siso-ham.org

vii. Art Therapy – An Ongoing Feature at COSTI, Toronto

The Art Therapy Program allows both children and adults to work through their trauma while supporting their healing process. It is the process of engaging in art-related activities, which helps to externalize the overwhelming feelings that are difficult to deal with. By projecting his/her trauma into artwork, the child gains control over it while also maintaining suitable distance.

Art Therapy has been a feature of the Childcare Program at COSTI, Toronto.

Contact Person: Yasmine Dossal; 416-789-7925; dossal@costi.org

viii. Reception Centre Based Medical Services – A Program in Calgary

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society has established a transitional reception centre based medical clinic, where doctors have developed the necessary expertise. They also deliver significant health promotion programming, which is also much needed.

Contact Person: Margaret Styczynska; 403.262.2006; mstyczynska@ccis-calgary.ab.ca

ix. Sexuality Education Resource Centre – Pilot Project in Winnipeg

The SERC project, aimed at both immigrant and refugee youth between the ages of 14-21, addresses issues of acculturation, intergenerational communication, family violence, child abuse, dating and sexuality through prevention education and other activities. A report on the project shows that the pilot has been successful in building relationships with newcomer communities, providing accessible services to youth, and assessing youth interests and needs for future programming.

Reference: SERC. 2005. *Final Report: Immigrant and Refugee Youth Pilot Project*.

Winnipeg: Sexuality Education Resource Centre

http://72.14.221.104/search?q=cache:GZiWbX_rHwJ:www.serc.mb.ca/SERC/content/dload/iryouthpilotproject/file+refugee,+youth&hl=en&gl=ca&ct=clnk&cd=8

x. KidsFirst Regina– A Provincial Program Partnering with a RAP SPO

GAR families with children under the age of two are immediately screened for KidsFirst program. This is a program, which provides intense home visiting support to parents to be the best caregiver to their children and to have the healthiest children possible. The program enhances knowledge, provides support, and builds on family strengths. It provides assistance regarding child development, parenting and connecting to the community and help with accessing services such as childcare and parent support groups. In addition there are early learning opportunities for children, help regarding literacy,

nutrition, transportation and specialized counselling services. KidsFirst provides intensive training for agency employees, weighted caseloads, and access to wider support services such as a mental health team

Contact person: Darcy Dietrich, Regina Open Door Society; 306-352-3500; exdir@rods.sk.ca

xi. Morning Glory Moments Program – A Drop-In for Parents in Windsor

Morning Glory Moments Program is offered at the Multicultural Council and Teen Health Centre. Most of the participants are RAP clients. Mothers with children between the ages of 0-6 attend a drop-in program to meet other moms and talk about parenting concerns, stress management, injury prevention, nutrition, dealing with sleep deprivation, baby massage and music and art therapy. Participants are given diapers, baby food and small gift cards to buy formula. This program has been very successful in offering support, socialization, new friendships and avoiding isolation for newcomer mothers.

Contact Person: Sherry Kwan-Hopper, Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County; 519-255-1127 x33; skwanhopper@multicultural-council.org

xii. After School Programs – Examples of Homework Clubs from Waterloo and Vancouver

“Afghans Together”, a multi-year community capacity building initiative, has implemented two interpreter-supported after-school homework clubs in Burnaby. Both clubs meet weekly throughout the school year. They are supported by tutors drawn from Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia working with support from community volunteers.

Contact Person: Chris Friesen, Director of Settlement Services – Immigrant Services Society (ISS) – Vancouver; 604-684-7498; chris.friesen@issbc.org

The Sudanese Community resettling in Kitchener-Waterloo was concerned for their children. A respected member of the Sudanese Community approached the School Board to discuss ways of providing support to the families and their children. Out of these discussions grew the idea of a centrally located Homework Club. This Homework Club was to provide:

- A place for students to receive help with homework assignments;
- Information to parents about school expectations in Ontario (report cards, interviews, testing);
- Support to parents about school related matters as they arose throughout the school year;
- A means for communication between the home school and the parents; and
- A link for parents to be able to communicate with the school via the teachers supervising the program.

After reviewing the experience of this initiative, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board concluded that there is a need for Homework Clubs to support the ongoing needs of students who are new to Canada and / or who have gaps in their education. However, Homework Clubs also assist the parents because they are not familiar with our school system, school expectations, and curriculum expectations. For a variety of reasons, the parents are not able to assist their children with schoolwork at home; however their commitment to attending indicates a desire to support the children's education. The need to support the parents with respect to their children's education is as important as assisting the children themselves. Homework Clubs support the whole family.

Contact Person: Catherine Moloney, Intake and Assessment Teacher; Waterloo Catholic District School Board; Catherine.Moloney@wcdsb.edu.on.ca

xiii. Summer Program – An Example from Saskatoon

Summer Fun is a seven-week program for school-aged immigrant and refugee children of both genders between the ages of 6 and 12. The program provides a balance of recreation, community orientation and English as second language activities. The purpose is to assist immigrant and refugee children in their English language development and their social skills development to enable them to adjust more successfully to the Canadian school environment. The program is organised around weekly themes designed to also provide an orientation to Saskatoon and the associated recreational activities and cultural activities.

For immigrant and refugee children, the summer break is a time when they traditionally lose ground in the advancements they have made during the school year – particularly in the area of language development. The Summer Fun Program is designed to address this need and to provide an organized educational forum for children these children.

The program is staffed with two (2) summer students and a facilitator. Its specific objectives of the Summer Fun Program are as follows:

- To provide interactive activities to immigrant children to orient them to Canadian cultural norms;
- To deliver an activity-based orientation to the Saskatoon community to school-age children to increase participation in recreation, sport and cultural activities;
- To deliver an age-appropriate ESL program that is communicative and integrated into the daily play, craft, drama and field trip activities;
- To promote cultural and racial equality and respect for differing traditions among the children and their parents;

- To provide a variety of social activities and learning experiences that encourage development of self-confidence and the ability to get along with others;
- To encourage creative activities that develop self-discipline, decision making and problem solving;
- To prepare children and their parents for the social behaviours and norms that are required for successful school integration.

Contact Person: Bertha Gana; Saskatoon Open Door Society; 653-4464; execdir.sods@sasktel.net

xiv. Sports & Recreational Programming- Research Based Proposed Model in Ontario

Following the testing of a Provisional Model developed through a two-year study involving 3 SPOs, the final model is proposed by OCASI. It places emphasis on the following features that were considered most crucial to an effective program:

- Combining educational with sports and recreation activities;
- Introducing sports and recreation activities that immigrant and refugee youth found familiar and popular, due to prevalence in their countries of origin, and use of these as vehicles to build confidence to learn new sports and recreation activities;
- Boosting parental involvement;
- Developing youth leadership, especially in the areas of officiating and coaching;
- Building working and collaborative relationships with other service providers;
- Acquiring affordable and accessible space;
- Developing supportive internal organizational structure and top management support;
- Funding and developing strategies for working with funding partners;
- Mobilizing immigrant and minority communities;
- Engaging diverse communities in the youth recruitment activity;
- Training diverse community coaches and people who are skilled in sports;
- Operating under an anti-oppression and anti-racism framework;
- Acquiring transportation for youth; and,
- Where possible, acquiring sportswear for youth.

Reference: OCASI: 2005. *OCASI Research on Inclusive Recreation Model for Immigrant and Refugee Youth - Provisional Model – For Ministry of Tourism and Recreation*. Toronto: OCASI

xv. ROUTE– A Collaborative Community Partnership in Winnipeg

The ROUTE program aims at lowering the risk of criminality among refugee youth through connecting youth with mentors, providing workshops on education

and employment opportunities, organizing sports activities, and increasing access to information and education for parents of youth at risk. Inspired by the lack of programming available for refugee youth at risk for criminality, the ROUTE programs offers to bridge the gap in services provided – or lack thereof – and lower the risk of newcomer youth in criminal activity.

Reference: ROUTE. 2005. *Backgrounder: Refugees Overcoming Using Transformative Education (ROUTE) Program*. Winnipeg: The Needs Centre for War Affected Families <http://mb.workinfont.ca/info.php?page=29>

xvi. Promising Pathways - An Education Initiative in Manitoba

The aim of the project is to develop linkages between language training programs, learning centres, training programs and post-secondary institutions for older youth that come from war-affected and refugee backgrounds. The project is also focusing on addressing policy and programming gaps through 3 major areas of focus:

- i. *Enhancing and Extending programming Provided by Intensive Newcomer Programming and Adult Learning Centres:* Currently, adult learning centres are limited in the support that they can provide to newcomer learners with EAL and limited formal schooling. Building the capacity of adult learning centres to address the needs of newcomer youth will focus on policy changes related to mandate and eligible students, specialized course development, improving and linking intake and referral services with senior years schools and adult language training programs. Similarly, intensive newcomer programming in schools needs to be extend and strengthened. The support provided will encourage the development of joint initiatives and allow schools and adult learning centres to build their capacity.
- ii. *Effective Assessment and Educational Planning:* Developing effective protocols, processes and assessment tools for newcomer students for their initial reception and ongoing monitoring is a critical aspect of ensuring that newcomer youth are provided with appropriate educational plans and programming. The support provided will assist in developing resources for the assessment and monitoring of newcomer youth and educational planning and referral.
- iii. *Collaborative Initiatives:* Many school divisions and Adult Learning Centres face similar challenges in meeting the needs of newcomer youth from war-affected backgrounds. Inter-divisional or inter-sectoral collaboration or partnerships may be an effective way of building capacity and accelerating the implementation of appropriate programming and supports for newcomer youth and families.

Contact Person: Tony Tavares, Consultant, Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth; 204-945-6879; tony.tavares@gov.mb.ca

xvii. Literacy for Youth – A Summer Program for Young Immigrant and Refugee Men

ConnectED is a summer program whose need was identified through the Homework Help Program offered in Saskatoon. This program provides a set of group activities and individual support from various agencies in Saskatoon. Participants greatly increase their vocabularies and knowledge of their city and available resources through the following methods: assessments of participants' needs, family communication, group discussions, information sessions, actual visits to various facilities, and referral services.

For the most part immigrant and refugee youth come from one of two educational backgrounds: One comprised of intensely structured education systems which work (often with parents) to clearly dictate everything from its students' schedules to seating to work ethic and quality; and the other where youth are only expected to attend school if they have nothing else to do; a loose view of education usually the product of families which either need their kids to work, or where formal education is simply not valued (This is also the case with some Canadian families).

The objectives of this summer program are:

- To improve immigrant youth's ability to succeed socially and academically (through session discussions & recreational activities)
- To enhancing youth's academic standing (through the cultural/history discussion, creative writing, drama and presentation).
- To establish a bridge between immigrant youth/families and the host community (through youth-family communication)
- To increase positive attitudes towards and association with the immigrant youth and the youth in general (through the sports activities and visiting educational institutions)
- Increase intercultural sharing and understanding (through the conversation circles and recreational activities)
- Help Immigrant youth better understand and enjoy the benefits of new community's facilities and resources (by partnering with YMCA, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, Meewasin Valley Authority, Mendel Art Gallery, Folkfest and City of Saskatoon's Leisure Service)
- Improve social and self-discipline skills (through all social and recreational activities)
- To decrease the potential of juvenile delinquency
- To decrease the family tension caused by summer holiday (by reinstalling a school like structure to prevent youth's restlessness)
- To reduce feeling of isolation

- To increasing participants sense of contribution to their new community - (through volunteering in Food Bank or Friendship Inn)

Contact Person: Bertha Gana; Saskatoon Open Door Society; 653-4464;
execdir.sods@sasktel.net

xviii. MY Circle– A Peer-Support and Leadership Program in Vancouver

The Multicultural Youth Circle program is an innovative multicultural peer support program designed to assist immigrant and refugee youth facing challenges integrating into Canadian society. MY Circle trains newcomer youth to become facilitators / community leaders, so that they can create support circles in high schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses for other newcomer youth facing challenges adjusting to their new lives in Vancouver. These support circles help other youth to address issues and share coping strategies around isolation, mental health, self-esteem, identity, racism and discrimination, intergenerational conflicts and community leadership. Facilitators are also actively involved in events that increase awareness of newcomer youth issues as well as promote a "newcomer youth voice" in public educational events, media stories, and conferences and as participants in public policy development.

Contact Person: Chris Friesen, Director of Settlement Services – Immigrant Services Society (ISS) – Vancouver; 604-684-7498; chris.friesen@issbc.org