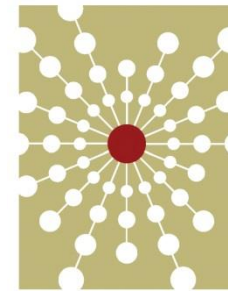




Understanding Refugee Populations: Key Considerations for Educational Environments

Presented by:
Roxanne Felix-Mah, MSc.

Acknowledgements



**CENTRE
FOR RACE
AND CULTURE**

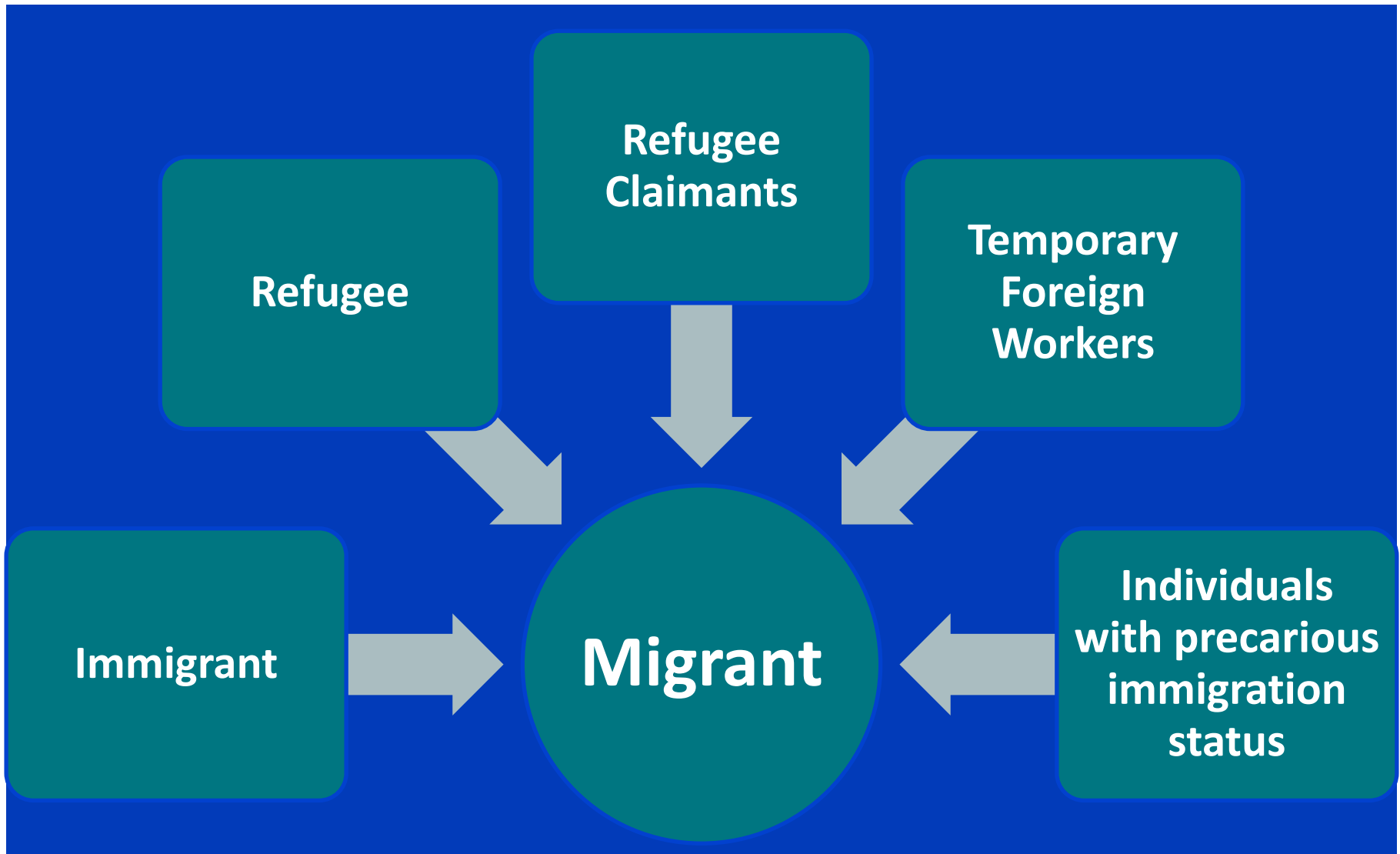


**End the Burden of
Refugee Transportation Loans**

SAAIRCY Sub-Committee on Refugee Transportation Loans



**CRC
Consulting**



Economic Immigrants - 69.3%

Skilled workers
Entrepreneurs
Investors
Provincial Nominees
Canadian Experience

Family class – 18.2%

Spouses and children
Parents and
grandparents
Other family members

Refugees - 9.2%

Admitted based on protocols
of the 1951 Geneva convention
(well-founded fear of
persecution)

- Government-assisted
- Privately-sponsored
- Joint sponsorship (government
& private)
- Refugee claimants

Temporary Foreign Workers*

- Recruited to fill labour shortage (US, Philippines, Mexico, India, China)
 - There are about 300,000 TFWs in Canada (2013)
 - Roughly 70,000 in Alberta (2013)
- 2006- first time more people entering as TFWs than permanent residents

*Ethnocultural Council of Calgary, "A Guide to Canada's changing Immigration Policy," May 2013

Independent Immigrant

- **Plans to leave** home and settle in a new country

Refugee

- **Forced to flee**, often under traumatic conditions (war, political persecution, natural disaster, etc.)

Who is a refugee?

“A person who is outside his/her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion”

1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

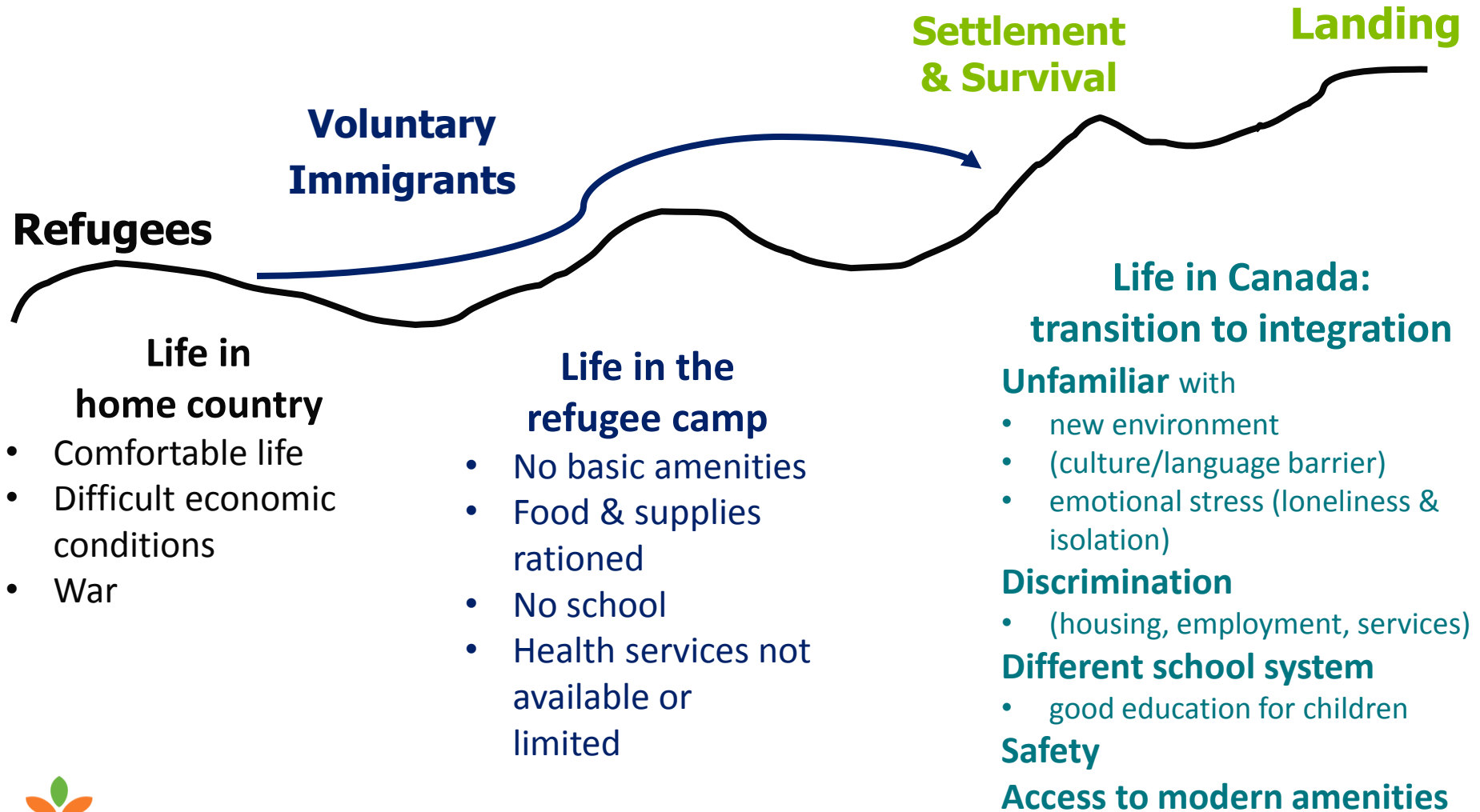
Who is a refugee?

- Worldwide: 19.5 million refugees in 2014
 - an average of 42,500 persons per day left their homes and sought protection elsewhere.
- 51% of refugees are under 18 years old
- Total number of refugees resettled in 2014 by UNHCR: 103,890
- In 2015, Canada offered to place 15,032 refugees, but only 7,233 arrived. 1K more than Australia; 40K less than USA.

Canadian Government Commitments

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Syria					1,300		26,000		
Iraqis and Kurdish	23,000								
Colombians							900		
Eritreans							4,000		
Congolese							2,500		
Turkey (Iraqis, Iranians, Syrians, Kurdish)					5,000				

The Journey from Home Country to Canada



Immigration Policy

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act Regulations
(2002) - Change from selecting most skilled refugees
to most vulnerable

Transportation Loan Facts

- Issued by Government of Canada to cover costs of refugees' pre-entry medical exam and travel to Canada
- Loans are capped at \$10,000 per family
- Loans for other family members older than 18 can increase a family's total debt
- Refugees receive monthly letters requesting payment of set amount

Things to Consider

- Refugees are very heterogenous - ground initiatives in context and history
- Understand the importance of identity and culture
- Familiarize yourself with pre-migration and also post-migration challenges (i.e. economic integration, isolation, racism, uncertain migration status)
- Consider **long term** and **holistic** integration to also strengthen family and community ties

Best Practices – Holistic Scope

Refugee students can be supported in **learning, social and emotional** areas

- If you can, invest in thorough assessment
- Mental health and other social needs – invest in *school, community and family partnerships*
 - AAISA, libraries, FCSS, etc.
- Other activities like sports and arts can provide a space to transcend daily challenges and concerns

Best Practices – Holistic Scope

- **Leadership** from school leaders is essential; “advocacy is a practical way to demonstrate that the school cared about the student” (Taylor Sidhu, 2012)
- Family and communities of refugee students can be a huge **resource** and key facilitator for student success

Recognizing Strengths

Examples of social and cultural capital

Bilingualism

Biculturalism

Education; Hope and Aspirations

Resilience and Adaptability

Supportive Community Networks

Latitude in Early Childhood

Collective and Family Capital

Give rise to

Cognitive Versatility

Cross-cultural Awareness

Motivation

Hopefulness

Social supports

Family responsibility

Sense of Belonging

Resilience

Creativity

Best Practices – Whole School Inclusion

- School health / social environment approaches focusing on **social cohesion** and “**ethos of inclusion**”
- Recognize and acknowledge discrimination can influence students’ lives
- **Integrating student supports** (ie. EAL teachers) **with rest of school**

Solutions – Community Building

Community-Building can be targeted too; evidence shows that groups focused on specific identities *translates* to involvement in the greater community

- Enns, Kiurova & Connolly (2013) shows that *both* intracultural relationships (“bonding”) and intercultural relationships (“bridging”) correlated with increased trust in others
- Bicultural Socialization (Scherman, 2010): Higher self-esteem; More positive racial and ethnic identities; Higher educational achievement; Higher levels of adult adjustment

Solutions – Whole School Inclusion

An explicit commitment to **social justice**

- **Build upon the values and principles you have in your vision and mission**
- Because situations are so unique for each community, **principles** can be more of a guide in complex situations

Reflection on Practice

- What are some of the barriers and facilitators to recognizing the unique needs of youth with multiple cultural identities?
- What are some of the barriers and facilitators to meeting the mental health needs of youth with multiple cultural identities?
- What benefits could we gain from addressing these concerns?
- Are there areas in my program that could better recognize the diversity of cultural identities that my youth might carry?
- Are there areas where my program could benefit from professional development or updating of resources?

Resources

“Here Comes Everyone: Teaching in the Intercultural Classroom” The Alberta Teachers’ Association

<http://www.teachers.ab.ca>

Caring for Kids New to Canada:

www.kidsnewtocanada.ca

Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation

<http://www.cmef.ca/connections.html>

Centre for Race and Culture – www.cfrac.com

Bamboo Shield

Resources

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Taylor, S. & Sidhu, R.K. 2012. "Supporting Refugee Students in Schools: What constitutes Inclusive Education?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16 (1): 39-56.



Thank you for your time.

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