

MYTH BUSTING

ADAPTED FROM THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES' "DID YOU KNOW?" RESOURCE

TOP 5 MYTHS ABOUT REFUGEES IN CANADA

1. REFUGEES ARE A SECURITY RISK - FALSE!

Refugees, and others seeking protection, pose very little risk to Canada's security. Rather, refugees are seeking security and protection from threats to their own lives. It is far more difficult to enter Canada as a refugee than as a visitor, because the refugee determination process involves security checks by CSIS and the RCMP, fingerprinting and interviews. For refugee claimants, they all go through a rigorous front-end security screening and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act excludes any claimants if they are found to pose a security risk.

2. REFUGEES WILL STEAL "OUR" JOBS - FALSE!

With an aging population, Canada needs immigrants and refugees to fill jobs vacancies in many sectors and expand our tax base so we can continue to afford our strong social programs. Meanwhile, due to challenges surrounding foreign credential recognition, lack of professional networks and other barriers, many new arrivals to Canada have to take vacant low-skill "survival jobs" that many Canadians do not want, rather than ones that take full advantage of their skills and training. Ideally, we need to create a system where people can do the work they are trained to do, particularly in fields where Canada has shortages of skilled workers. For example, a nurse should be working as a nurse, not a health care aid. Furthermore, refugees are known for their resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills and many newcomers will in fact create jobs – not take them – by opening restaurants and other small businesses that employ multiple people.

3. REFUGEES ARE UNEDUCATED - FALSE!

In many newcomer families, education is valued as the key to future success and families often pull together to help ensure their children take full advantage of the opportunities that Canada offers. Refugees come from very different backgrounds and some are highly educated and were accomplished professionals prior to their displacement. It is true, however, that due to conflict in their home countries, some refugees were not able to access on-going educational opportunities – but with a high level of motivation and commitment to education for the next generation, this group is quickly catching up.

4. REFUGEES ARE ILLEGAL, QUEUE JUMPERS - FALSE!

The fact that an asylum seeker or refugee claimant entered a country illegally does not mean his or her case lacks credibility. How people arrive in Canada – by boat, plane, by foot across the border – tells us nothing about why they left. To decide if they need our protection, we need to know why they left and what dangers they would face if they returned. We have a robust refugee determination system to find this out. Sometimes claimants have no choice but to use illegal documents or smugglers to enter a place of safety. For example, many Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in the mid-twentieth century used false documents to reach safety and to find protection as refugees. Repressive governments often refuse to issue passports to known political dissidents – or to imprison them if they try to leave the country. Sometimes refugees are stripped of their identification as they flee from conflict or they have no time to collect their official documents before fleeing for safety.

5. REFUGEES MILK THE SYSTEM - FALSE!

Refugees come to Canada in different ways, but no matter the category, refugees receive very limited income assistance from the government and often need to use food banks and live in less than adequate housing during their initial years in Canada to simply have their basic needs met. For Government Assisted Refugees who receive one year of financial support from the federal government, for example, a single refugee living in Manitoba would receive a monthly allowance of \$584, while a family of four would receive \$1260 per month, in addition to support for one-time start-up costs. Most resettled refugees arrive in Canada with a significant debt burden, since they are expected to repay the Canadian government for their airplane ticket (also called transportation loans) to Canada. This means that refugee families often begin life in Canada with a debt of thousands of dollars in transportation loans, creating additional stresses on an already challenging settlement journey.

FAMOUS REFUGEES

DID YOU KNOW THAT ALBERT EINSTEIN (SCIENTIST), MICHAËLLE JEAN (PAST GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA), KNAAN (HIPHOP ARTIST) AND THE DALAI LAMA (TIBETAN LEADER) WERE REFUGEES. AMONG MANY OTHER SUCCESSFUL AND FAMOUS INDIVIDUALS? BRINGING REFUGEES INTO OUR COUNTRY IS NOT SIMPLY AN ACT OF COMPASSION, BUT IT IS ALSO A POSITIVE LONG TERM INVESTMENT IN THE BUILDING OF OUR NATION.



REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN CANADA

REFUGEES ADMITTED TO CANADA	
TOP 10 COUNTRIES, 2014	
IRAQ	2890
ERITREA	1725
IRAN	1400
CONGO	1340
SOMALIA	1320
SYRIA	1290
AFGHANISTAN	1005
ETHIOPIA	770
PAKISTAN	740
CHINA	715

2005-2014 REFUGEE ARRIVALS

263,702

SYRIAN REFUGEE ARRIVALS SINCE NOV. 4, 2015

30,371

SOURCE: CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION CANADA, 2014

FORCED DISPLACEMENT FIGURES



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

GLOBAL TRENDS 2015

21.3
40.8
3.2

MILLION
REFUGEES

MILLION
INTERNALLY
DISPLACED

ASYLUM
SEEKERS

65.3

MILLION
FORCIBLY
DISPLACED
WORLDWIDE

54% OF REFUGEES WORLDWIDE COME FROM 3 COUNTRIES:



SYRIA (4.9M)



AFGHANISTAN (2.7M)



SOMALIA (1.1M)

CATEGORIES OF REFUGEES COMING TO CANADA

GOVERNMENT ASSISTED REFUGEES (GAR'S): Convention refugees selected from abroad by the government of Canada for resettlement. GAR's hold permanent resident (PR) status upon arrival and receive financial support (that is similar to social assistance rates) and other settlement supports from government funded agencies for up to one year.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES (PSR'S): Convention refugees selected from abroad by a private sponsor (faith group, ethno-cultural group, group of 5) who agrees to provide financial and other supports for one year. PSR's also hold permanent resident status upon arrival.

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS: Foreign nationals who apply for refugee protection from within Canada, or at a port of entry. Once their asylum claims are heard and approved by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), they can apply for PR status.

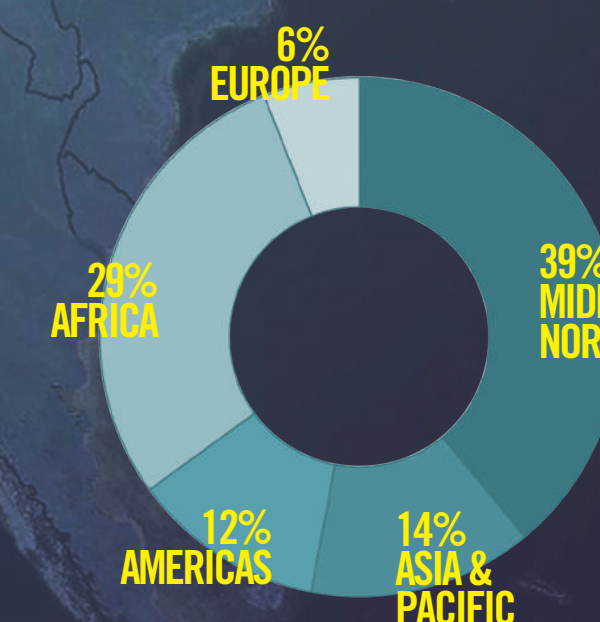
A MANITOBA INFOGRAPHIC ON REFUGEES

A REFUGEE is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, gender, sexuality, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

FLIGHT OF REFUGEES AROUND THE GLOBE

WORLD GRAPHIC ADAPTED FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES: "FLIGHT OF REFUGEES AROUND THE GLOBE" (JUNE 20, 2015)

WHERE THE WORLD'S DISPLACED PEOPLE ARE BEING HOSTED:



SOURCE: GLOBAL TRENDS 2015, UNHCR

WHEN REFUGEES FLEE THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, MOST WIND UP WITH THEIR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS, OFTEN SOME OF THE WORLD'S POORER NATIONS

TOP HOST COUNTRIES, 2015

TURKEY	2.5M
PAKISTAN	1.6M
LEBANON	1.1M
IRAN	979,400
ETHIOPIA	786,100
JORDAN	664,100

SOURCE: GLOBAL TRENDS 2015, UNHCR

REFUGEE SETTLEMENT IN MANITOBA

10%
OF ALL
IMMIGRANTS TO
MANITOBA ARE
REFUGEES

IN 2014, MANITOBA SETTLED NEARLY 6% OF CANADA'S GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES (435) AND 22 % OF PRIVATELY SPONSORED REFUGEES (1,004): THE HIGHEST NUMBER PER CAPITA IN CANADA.

SOURCE: MANITOBA IMMIGRATION FACTS, 2014 STATISTICAL REPORT, PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

4 WAYS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES IN MANITOBA

VOLUNTEER AT A LOCAL REFUGEE SERVING AGENCY

Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOC): www.ircoc.ca
NEEDS Centre for refugee youth: www.needsinc.ca
Welcome Place Settlement agency: www.mnic.ca
MOSAIC – Newcomer family resource centre: www.mosaicnet.ca

DONATE OR BECOME A FRIEND OF THE CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES (CCR)
www.ccrweb.ca

SPONSOR A REFUGEE FAMILY

www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/sponsor/index.asp
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC): www.mccc.ca/learn/what/refugees

ADVOCATE FOR REFUGEES, MYTH BUST AND EDUCATE

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