



SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT 2014-2016

We Can We Will

A progress report of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) from its 2014 inception to April 2016 and the release of its Strategy and Action Plan — Everyone in Surrey Belongs!



We

are the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership, a consortium of government, public and private institutions, business groups, and nonprofit and community agencies working together to strengthen Surrey's integration of newcomers and build a more inclusive and welcoming city.

In pursuit of the shared interest of our fellow citizens, we have spent the past two years doing extensive research and outreach, leading to the unveiling in April 2016 of an Immigrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan, entitled Everyone in Surrey Belongs! This fall we will complete work on a similar strategy that is specific to refugees. Today we stand ready to begin the process that will see the words put into action.



Who We Are

Our Surrey LIP Committee

Representatives from 30 local agencies and organizations make decisions and provide leadership.

Our Surrey Immigrant Advisory Roundtable

Eighteen local immigrant/refugee residents representing 16 different countries of origin provide advice, link us to their communities and undertake important initiatives geared to involving newcomers in Surrey life *(like the block party you can read about on page 10)*.



Judy Villeneuve



Anita Huberman

Our Co-Chairs

A City of Surrey Councillor for 25 years, Judy Villeneuve is Chair of the City's Social Policy Committee and a longstanding advocate for refugees and other newcomers.

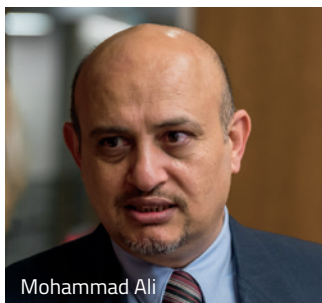
A second-generation Indo-Canadian, Anita Huberman is CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade and the first South Asian woman to hold such an office in a Canadian municipality.



Drastant Mehta



Magdalena Mot



Mohammad Ali

IMMIGRANT ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE MEMBERSHIP

Aydin Nozhat
Anthony Margery Cantil
Clementine Iweh
Dongmei (Lily) Yang
Drastant Mehta (Co-Chair)
Faisal Durrani
Khaleda Banu
Luis Guerra
Michael Liang
Magdalena Mot (Co-Chair)
Mohammad Ali (Co-Chair)

Monica Haiping Wang
Nina Dorcas Bazie
Rehab Marghany
Robert Jin-chein Lin
Tumadhur (Tuma) Altokhais
Wafa Al-jabiri
Yasin Muktar Mussa

SURREY LIP COMMITTEE

City of Surrey
The Surrey Board of Trade
Alexandra Neighbourhood House
Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC
City of Surrey, Human Resources
City of Surrey Social Planning (Contract Manager)
City of Surrey, Surrey Parks, Recreation & Culture
Surrey Libraries
DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
Douglas College, Training Group at Douglas College
Human Resources Management Association
Fraser Health Authority, Population and Public Health
Fraser Health Authority, Primary Health Care
Immigrant Employment Council of BC
Immigrant Services Society of BC
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society
Options Community Services Society
Pacific Community Resources Society
Progressive Intercultural Community Services
Semiahmoo House Society
SFU Surrey
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Surrey Delta Service Centre
Surrey School District #36
Surrey RCMP
Sources Community Resources Society
Surrey Interfaith Council
Umoja Operation Compassion Society
Vancity
YMCA



Our Plan (But First, Our Research)

The Immigrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan unveiled in April 2016 (see Our Strategy: Everyone In Surrey Belongs!) wasn't developed in a vacuum. Extensive consultation took place, and careful deliberation ensued, but most important of all was the research. In total, the Partnership undertook three major research projects relating to newcomer integration and a fourth focused on refugees. These became the building blocks for developing two Strategies: Surrey Immigrant Integration Strategy (April 2016) and Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy (fall 2016).

Belonging and Inclusion Research

What do newcomers think of their lives in Surrey? What do longer-term residents think of the new arrivals? Where are the greatest successes and what are the sticking points? These are important questions that a successful strategy would have to take into account, so we contracted with CitySpaces Consulting (in partnership with the Mustel Group and Kari Huhtala + Associates) for our Immigrant Integration Research Project, which surveyed both immigrants and Canadian-born residents (see "Integration or Isolation?") on important questions.

INTEGRATION OR ISOLATION?

Overall the Belonging and Inclusion survey found many positives. For example, residents feel comfortable shopping and accessing public programs and services. But discrimination does exist, finding appropriate work remains a key frustration, and immigrants and longer-term residents alike find it difficult to connect.

"I feel a strong sense of belonging in Surrey"

89% of immigrants and 83% of non-immigrants agreed

"I have difficulty finding employment that matches my education, skills and abilities in Surrey"

41% of immigrants agreed

"I feel that discrimination is a problem in Surrey."

54% of immigrants and 59% of non-immigrants agreed

"I have a hard time connecting with people of ethnic backgrounds different from my own."

28% of both immigrants and non-immigrants agreed

Labour Market Research

According to virtually all the Canadian data (ours included), difficulty in finding employment appropriate to qualifications has proved to be the single biggest barrier to immigrant satisfaction. Meanwhile, in an economically healthy region such as Metro Vancouver, employers complain of skills shortages. These are two very different problems, but with the same solution. To investigate how newcomers could enjoy better success within the labour pool, we contracted with Human Capital Strategies, which connected with 175 employers, immigrant-serving agencies, and immigrant job seekers in a search for answers. Several potential enhancements, many of them easily attained, were identified, even as the general nature and specific requirements of Surrey's labour market were clarified. See "Understanding Surrey's Employment Opportunities" for a small sample.

UNDERSTANDING SURREY'S EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Based on 114 survey responses, these points provide a picture of Surrey's employers and how immigrants can better meet their needs.

- Nearly **one-third** of employers are immigrants themselves.
- More than **two-thirds** forecast employee growth in the next three years.
- The vast **majority** employ immigrants and recruit through referrals from their existing employees.
- Over **70%** have a workforce diversity policy, but only **35%** proactively recruit immigrants.
- They strongly desire **assistance** in verifying foreign credentials, recruiting qualified immigrants, and accessing training grants and information on legal working requirements for immigrants.
- Less than **one third** of employer respondents have worked with an immigrant service organization.



Youth and Surrey LIP

Surrey has one of the youngest populations in Metro Vancouver, and newcomers are even younger than the general population. Meanwhile, a telephone survey conducted as part of our Belonging and Inclusion research, found that young immigrants are more likely to feel discriminated against than older ones.

Clearly, it was crucial for us to understand the very specific conditions faced by newcomer youth. Accordingly, four high school students were hired as youth engagement advisors; they helped design and deliver two youth focus groups and a pop-up public event during the Surrey Leadership Action Conference.

Later we partnered with the Vancouver Foundation Fresh Voices Initiative to mount Youth Consultations attended by approximately 50 immigrant and refugee youth in their teens and 20s. More than three dozen discussion points and recommendations were recorded, further organized within the categories of employment, intercultural connections, family, and access to services.

Our Immigrant Integration Strategy

In April we unveiled a Strategy and Action Plan geared to making Surrey a more inclusive and welcoming community. Here's the concise version:

Our Vision

Everyone in Surrey Belongs!

Our Surrey LIP Mandate

- Strengthen the capacity of service providers and others to work collaboratively and cooperatively so that newcomers gain improved access to settlement and integration services.
- Help achieve coordination between organizations that primarily serve immigrants with those that serve the whole community, so that services can be enhanced.
- Ensure that the body of research compiled by the LIP is employed at the community level as well as in immigrant-specific sectors, and that it is used to raise community awareness of newcomers and their needs.
- Help improve newcomers' outcomes in the crucial areas of social inclusion, labour markets integration and civic participation.

This will be our template as we work together to strengthen Surrey's integration of newcomers and build a more inclusive and welcoming city.



Our Refugee Plan

Our Refugee Needs Research

Surrey receives more refugees than any other Metro Vancouver community, and has played a key role in the current Syrian effort, settling about half of all Syrian Government-Assisted Refugees. The federal government has made it known that the country intends to increase its role as a refugee recipient, indicating that the number of refugees arriving in Surrey will likely increase in years to come. Refugees have unique needs that require

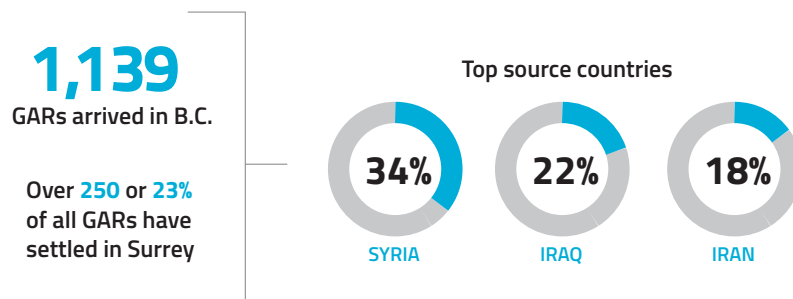
specific strategies and approaches in the settlement process. For these reasons and others, the Surrey LIP has opted to develop a distinct strategy and action plan for refugee settlement and integration.

In the past year, SFU-Surrey was contracted to do research and consultations that will inform the development of the Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy. An additional significant benefit of the project, entitled Our Community, Our Voice, has been an operational approach that has increased community capacity by hiring 12 research assistants, seven of them refugees themselves. The Surrey Refugee Integration Strategy will be released in Fall 2016.

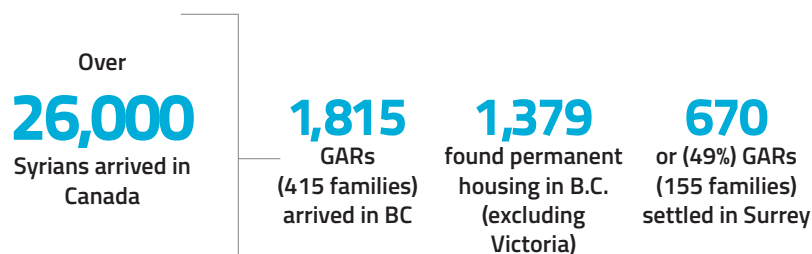
The project is investigating five key questions:

- 1 What are settlement barriers faced by refugees and how are they being addressed?
- 2 How do existing settlement practices support refugee integration, and are there gaps?
- 3 What level of understanding and awareness do civic stakeholders have of refugees?
- 4 What community settlement planning for refugees exists, and how does it impact refugees and the community?
- 5 How can provision and coordination of refugee settlement supports be improved to benefit refugees and the community?

GOVERNMENT ASSISTED REFUGEES (GARs) IN 2015



SYRIAN REFUGEES, NOVEMBER 2015 - APRIL 2016



SURREY AND SYRIA

How our City, our community and our organization rose to a historic challenge.

The arrival in Surrey of 670 refugees between November 2015 and April 2016 resulted in unprecedented activity across the community. With the support of Surrey LIP, the City of Surrey organized a public forum, produced bilingual brochures and web material for Arabic speakers, and mounted staff training sessions focussing on Middle Eastern culture and religion—calling on a member of the LIP's Immigrant Advisory Council for help to do so.

Health, education, and public safety agencies were among the additional sectors that mobilized in response. We were proud to be a part of this exceptional effort, and proud as well that the needs of refugees were so eagerly prioritized by the citizens of Surrey.

Our Activities and Achievements, 2014 – 2016

How goals and objectives fit into our activities

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



Enhance community knowledge on issues



Enhance community collaboration capacity



Increase participation of mainstream agencies and businesses



Improve immigrant access to leadership / civic engagement opportunities



Increase municipal engagement



Improve newcomer access to services



Increase local academic capacity




Enhance community capacity to make Surrey more welcoming and inclusive

Developing a Strategic Plan Activities

 Over 1,000 people participated in consultations


 Over 30 consultation events and focus groups

 10 LIP Committee meetings

 The LIP is Co-Chaired by Councilor Judy Villeneuve and Anita Huberman, CEO of the Surrey Board of Trade


Fostering Collaborations Activities

 City has become an employer partner in the Connector program with close to 30 staff members matched with immigrant professionals


 Over 200 residents attended a Welcome to Surrey Centre Block Party organized by our IAR in partnership with 15 other agencies


 8 Inclusive City Philosophers Café meetings took place


 A Refugee Settlement Research Project was led by SFU-Surrey in partnership with 8 local service providers. Seven refugee youth were hired and trained as Research Assistants

 Two short documentaries were created by SFU-Surrey students

 5 Immigrant Advisory Roundtable meetings

 Produced online settlement services map

 4 Surrey LIP Research Project Reports

 Surrey LIP received \$20,000 to investigate the issues of racism and discrimination in Surrey

Facilitating Community Response to the Arrival of Syrian Refugees Activities


 Two local stakeholder dialogues attended by more than 50 agency representatives


 City of Surrey Inter-Departmental Working Group

 Community forum on Syrian Refugees attended by over 200 residents


 Welcome to Surrey brochure translated into Arabic

 Monthly e-updates sent to over 3,000 employees


 Two staff training sessions on the Middle East culture and a call to action to volunteer

 An information session for Arabic-speaking newcomers organized by Surrey IAR


Public Awareness and Engagement Activities

 10 Surrey LIP e-bulletins delivered to over 800 subscribers


 8 newsletter issues and 8 facts sheets published


 News and events promoted through the Surrey LIP website


 31,000 Surrey LIP website pages viewed in the past 12 months


 1,000 documents downloaded in the past 12 months


 Supported 6 external Surrey newcomer integration research projects (Fraser Health: Newcomer access to public health services, UBC: Newcomer Civic Engagement, etc.)

 A Surrey IAR member joined the City Social Policy Advisory Committee

 A Surrey IAR member participated in the Igniting Champion community training program

 Surrey IAR members presented at a number of community events and forums

 The IAR received \$3,000 from three funders to organize a Welcome to Surrey Centre Block Party

 The IAR received \$2,500 from the Province to organize a Newcomer Welcoming event in Surrey

Community Projects



Our Immigrant Advisory Roundtable's Block Party

One of our first actions as a newly established Partnership was to recruit an Immigrant Advisory Roundtable (IAR), and as time has proven, it was also one of the most important. The IAR was always expected to occupy a central role in the Partnership's strategy, fulfilling three key roles: to provide input; to help increase awareness of and engagement in cultural diversity and intercultural issues; and to reach out to ethno-specific communities to disseminate information and encourage participation in the LIP's work.

What wasn't necessarily expected is how active the 18 Roundtable members would prove to be. For example, in response to research findings that

Surrey residents wanted to reach across cultures but struggled to do so, the IAR decided to act by throwing a party. A block party, to be precise.

With the assistance of some seed funding from the Neighbourhood Small Grants (Vancouver Foundation), Vancity and City of Surrey, they sought and attained the participation of a dozen additional agencies, organizations and businesses, arranged for food and entertainment, and on September 25, 2015 attracted more than 200 people to Surrey City Hall Plaza, which for one evening was transformed into the most lively block in town.

Our Philosopher's Cafes

Simon Fraser University's Philosopher's Cafes have become an institution across Metro Vancouver. We partnered with SFU Surrey to initiate a special series of Inclusive City Cafes dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming place for local residents to discuss the challenges and opportunities of living in a diverse community.

Cafes to date have dealt with topics ranging from honouring diverse beliefs to the failings of Canada's Aboriginal record, with well-qualified moderators ensuring that discussion remains on point and interesting.

Our Connector Program

The Immigrant Employment Council of B.C.'s new **Connector Program** is a referral program that helps new immigrants build professional networks and connect with local job opportunities, while increasing employers' access to top-tier talent who may not make it in through regular recruiting channels.

The City of Surrey became one of the first Connector employer partners in B.C. after the Surrey LIP team helped introduce the program to the City's Human Resources department. Of the 13 City employees matched with newcomer professionals, all said they would recommend the program to colleagues, while the newcomer professionals reported a similar level of satisfaction. In 2016, the City is going through another round of matches.

Raising Awareness

One of the LIP's mandates is to enhance awareness of Surrey's diversity and the drive to make it as welcoming and inclusive as possible. These are some of the ways we got the message out.



Our website, www.SurreyLIP.ca, collected over 31,000 page views.



We delivered electronic updates to a distribution list of over 800 residents and stakeholders.



We produced eight newsletters that reported on our activities in a timely, readable and thoroughly researched manner.

All the newsletters and fact sheets can be found on www.SurreyLIP.ca

ISSUE 1 Introducing the New Surrey Local Immigration Partnership

ISSUE 2 The City's Role. Describes the programs and services offered by the City to newcomers.

ISSUE 3 The Service Ethics. Provides an overview of the settlement sector challenges in Surrey.

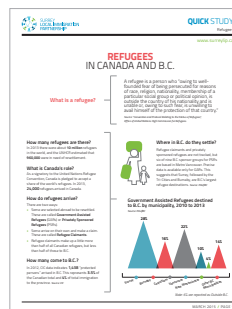
ISSUE 4 Education That Works and Welcomes. Introduces innovative welcoming programs and services offered through the education sector in Surrey.

ISSUE 5 Putting Surrey On the Map. Provides an overview of the Surrey LIP Service Mapping research and featuring interviews with local service providers.

ISSUE 6 Part Way There. Explores the findings from the Surrey LIP Immigrant Integration research.

ISSUE 7 Getting to Work. Provides an overview of the Surrey LIP Labour Market research.

ISSUE 8 Surrey & Syria. Focuses on the community and city activities to welcome Syrian refugees in Surrey.



We compiled eight fact sheets that collected the most important elements of our research and strategizing in a format that is easy to read and visualize.

- FACT SHEET 1**
Who Are Surrey's Newcomers?
- FACT SHEET 2**
The Big Picture: Why Do Immigrants Matter to Surrey?
- FACT SHEET 3**
Recent Changes to the Immigration Process and How They Affect You
- FACT SHEET 4**
Refugees in Canada and B.C.
- FACT SHEET 5**
Surrey's New Settlement Services Map
- FACT SHEET 6**
How Well Are Immigrants Being Integrated?
- FACT SHEET 7**
Newcomers and Employers
- FACT SHEET 8**
Our Immigrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan
- FACT SHEET 9**
Our Refugee Settlement Plan. A Progress Report



SURREY LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT 2014-2016

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Human Capital Resources, SFU-Surrey,
Jim Sutherland, Doris Cheung Art + Media,
John Pesochin, Printhink Solutions Inc.

We would like to acknowledge generous
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Contact Us

SURREYLIP.CA