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## Abbreviations

AF	Accueil francophone
CAMM	Canadian Arab Association of Manitoba
CDEM	Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba, CDEM)
OLMC	Official Language Minority Community
DSFM	Division scolaire franco-manitobaine
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
IPW	Immigration Partnership Winnipeg
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IRCOM	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba Inc.
MIA	Manitoba Islamic Association
RIF	Francophone Immigration Networks (Réseaux en immigration francophone, RIF)
SFM	Société de la francophonie manitobaine
USB	Université de Saint-Boniface
WP	Welcome Place



## Abstract

This research report examines the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In order to better understand this issue, the report starts by contextualizing it historically and conceptually. Chapter 1 focuses on the experiences of refugees. We examine the profile of the French-speaking refugees participating in our research, their trajectories from their home country to Canada, their assessment of government programs relative to their settlement, and their sociocultural and economic integration and challenges. The chapter ends with a presentation of the services received by the refugee participants interviewed, whom also provided an assessment of these services. Chapter 2 focuses on the perspectives of organizations serving newcomers in Winnipeg. After presenting a profile of the organizations that participated in the research, we examine the challenges that these stakeholders have experienced regarding the settlement and the integration of francophone refugees, the services offered by the organizations, their assessment of these services and their view on the government settlement and integration programs for refugees. Chapter 3 analyses and discusses the results presented in the two previous chapters in light of the main issue identified. The settlement and integration of francophone refugees in Winnipeg are examined through six variables in terms of gaps, the issues these raise and the relevant recommendations: housing, employment and training, education, official languages acquisition, health and social integration.

## Executive summary

This research report is in response to a request for proposals issued by IRCC in the summer of 2016, for settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In order to understand this issue, the report starts by contextualizing it historically and conceptually. The notions of immigration, of language policy, of official language minority community and of refugees are closely intertwined. We then define the research methodology of the project. It is mostly of qualitative nature, although we have collected some quantitative data through socio-demographic index cards that each refugee participant had to fill before his/her interview. The qualitative analysis draws on individual interviews and group discussions. We conducted 29 individual interviews with French-speaking refugees and two group discussions involving 11 other French-speaking refugees. We also conducted 17 interviews with organizations serving newcomers in Winnipeg. These interviews allowed us to have a more global perspective on the question of the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg, taking into account both the refugees and the organizations serving them. The report has three chapters. The first two present a descriptive analysis. Chapter 1 focuses on the experiences of refugees. After presenting the profile of the refugees participating in our research through a few sociodemographic variables, we examine their trajectories from their home country to Canada, a trajectory that affects their settlement and integration in the host society. We then focus on their perception of government programs relative to their settlement, their sociocultural and economic integration and challenges. The chapter ends with a presentation of the services received by the refugee participants interviewed who also gave us an assessment of these services. Chapter 2 focuses on the experiences of organizations serving newcomers in Winnipeg. After presenting a profile of the organizations that participated in the research, we examine the challenges that stakeholders have experienced regarding the settlement and the integration of French-speaking refugees, the services they offer, their assessment of these services, and their view on government settlement and integration programs for refugees. Chapter 3 analyses and discusses the results presented in the two previous chapters in light of the issues identified. The settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg are examined through six variables, in terms of gaps, the issues they raise and the relevant recommendations: housing, employment and training, education, official languages acquisition, health and social integration.

## Recommendations relative:

### To housing

- The number of transition housing units for refugees could be increased
- The federal government could learn from the best practices of private sponsorship of refugees.
- The federal government could invest more in social housing.
- The federal government could create a program to help refugee housing.
- Refugee housing could be more decentralized.

### **To employment and training**

- Training centers for refugees could be created.
- Current employment services could be replaced by job market support services.
- Employment and training services offered to newcomers could be more decentralized.

### **To education**

- The modalities of education given to French-speaking refugees could be logistically reorganized in order to better respond to their needs.
- The content of education could be modified in order to be more relevant to the specific and diverse needs of French-speaking refugees.
- Financial incentives could be created to make it easier for French-speaking refugees to better balance work and education.

### **To the mastery of official languages**

- Language courses could be organized in cooperatively to allow newcomers to have a direct contact with the workplace and the language used there.
- Languages courses could be better funded.
- Translation activities in community organizations involved with refugees could be supported.
- French-speaking families could be matched to English-speaking families to allow for exchanges and fast language acquisition.
- Activities could be organized to make French language learning attractive.
- Language instructors could be made aware of the problems experienced by refugees and give them psychological support as soon as they arrive on Canadian soil.

### **To health**

- The federal government could increase the resources in order to provide better care for refugees as soon as they arrive in Canada.
- Organizations offering front-line services could be allowed to direct refugees to health professional as soon as they arrive in Canada.
- Health for refugees could be approached from a holistic perspective; that is by looking at all of the principal determinants of health - employability, environment, mental health – physical health being only the tip of the iceberg.

### **To social integration**

- Some social organizations involved in the social integration of refugees in the host community could receive public funding or be better funded.

# Introduction

## Background

This study examines the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg and St. Boniface. The study focuses on refugees who settled there over the last ten years (2006-2016). To understand this issue, we interviewed 41 French-speaking refugees and 17 practitioners from agencies serving newcomers. Historical considerations and conceptual explanations are also necessary for a full understanding of this theme.

Canada's history cannot be understood without taking into account the important role played by immigration in its various forms: economic immigration, family reunification and refugees. Canada has been built in large part by successive waves of immigrants who have contributed to the country's wealth and diversity. Immigration to Canada has been legislated since 1869, barely two years after the British North America Act created the Dominion of Canada. It would not be until a century later, in the wake of the tabling of the Reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the adoption of a language policy recognizing French and English as the two official languages of Canada (1969), that proficiency in one of these languages became a selection criterion for immigration. Since that time, Canada's language policy and immigration policy has been closely linked.

In this regard, Part VII of the Official Languages Act stipulates that the Canadian government must ensure positive measures are taken to not only foster the promotion of official languages, but also to enhance the vitality of OLMCs. One of the ways in which the Canadian government seeks to (re)vitalize OLMCs is through immigration. Yet, according to a recent report by the Commissioner of Official Languages, "Francophone minority communities outside Quebec received little benefit from...immigration" (Fraser et al., 2014: 5). From this perspective, the challenges such communities and the immigrants who decide to settle and integrate in them face must be understood; immigrants and communities alike will benefit.

Winnipeg and St. Boniface are an example of a Francophone OLMC that welcomes immigrants. Winnipeg, proud of its love of French, joined the Réseau des villes francophones et francophiles de l'Amérique in 2015 (Radio-Canada, 2015). In 2012, Chedly Belkhodja et al. produced for IRCC a typology of Francophone OLMCs in which Winnipeg is portrayed as a community which, despite having "significant assets" such as Francophone schools and universities, some government services in French and cultural vitality contributing to a dynamic economy, nonetheless faces a number of specific issues in part related to the fact that French does not have as favourable a status here as in other Francophone OLMCs in Canada, such as those in New Brunswick and Ontario, and that the proportion of Francophones is particularly low (4%) and continues to wane, despite the ongoing migration (Belkhodja et al., 2012).

It is clear that Winnipeg as a welcoming place for immigrants has been the focus of a number of studies that have looked at the role of housing and neighborhoods in the immigrant resettlement process (Carter et al., 2009a and b), newcomers from Francophone Africa and housing (Ba et al., 2011), access to services in French (Buissé, 2005; Nyongwa, 2012), the cultural and linguistic identity of new Francophones (Nyongwa and Ka, 2015) and immigrants' impressions regarding their new home (Freund, 2015). In accordance with the

request for proposals, this study focuses on a category of immigrants that has received little attention in the literature on Francophone immigration in Winnipeg, namely French-speaking refugees. It is even more worthwhile to focus on this category of immigrants to Winnipeg, since they account for a fair share of the immigrants that this city receives each year. This makes Winnipeg a unique case in the study of Canadian immigration issues.

Our definition of “refugee” is a person requiring protection under international law. In Canada, refugees belong to one of three categories of immigrants under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the others being the “family class” (family reunification) and the “economic class” (economic immigration). Canada is home to two main types of refugees: government-assisted refugees (GARs) and privately assisted refugees (privately sponsored refugees - PSRs).

Since immigration is a shared jurisdiction in the Canadian federation, Manitoba, like other provinces, has an immigration department, Manitoba Labour and Immigration. Immigration has long played a significant role in Manitoba’s growth and prosperity. Manitobans continue to welcome and support refugees from around the world in their communities. In 2014, Manitoba welcomed 16,222 immigrants, accounting for 6.2% of total Canadian immigration. The most recent immigrants to Manitoba come from more than 150 countries. In addition, 9.2% of the province’s immigrants (1,495 individuals) were refugees—the highest number of refugees in Manitoban history. Moreover, 6% of GARs (435 individuals) and 22% of PSRs (1,004 individuals) settled in Manitoba, the highest per capita in Canada. About one-third (29%) of Manitoba’s refugees were government-sponsored, while two-thirds (67%) were sponsored by the private sector. About 57% of the GARs came from Somalia, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Eritrea. About 92% of PSRs came from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia and the DRC.

It is important to take into account the fact that French is not one of the 10 most common mother tongues of immigrants, despite Manitoba having a Francophone Immigration Strategy. While Manitoba has welcomed more than 400 Francophone immigrants each year since the early 2010s, these numbers have never accounted for more than 4% of the total number of immigrants settling in the province—a rate far below the target of 7% set by the province and the community ten years ago (Radio-Canada, 2016). In 2014, Manitoba welcomed 407 Francophone immigrants, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and France. Of these immigrants, 60 were refugees, 50% of whom were sponsored by the private sector and 40% of whom were sponsored by the government. Lastly, Winnipeg was the main destination for 85.1% of immigrants to the province (13,850 individuals). Winnipeg ranks 6th among Canadian cities receiving the most immigrants. Our study sought to better understand the place of Francophone refugees in OLMCs in Winnipeg between 2006 and 2016.

A study on French-speaking refugees in the Winnipeg OLMC is important for a number of reasons. First, settlement and integration of refugees is a priority in the Government of Canada’s immigration strategy. Furthermore, it will give policy makers, those at IRCC in particular, better knowledge to ensure optimal social cohesion in the OLMC and to optimize the social and economic prosperity not only of newcomers to Canada, but also of Canadian society as a whole. Moreover, the proposed study is relevant given that the Société de la francophonie manitobaine began a community consultation in 2015 to assess its concerns and

major challenges. To this end, various projects have been implemented and we consider our project to be central to the process of redefining the identity of Franco-Manitoban society (SFM, 2017). This process cannot be complete without taking into account Francophone newcomers, including refugees.

### Study objectives

The study aims more specifically at understanding the needs of immigrants and their immigration experiences, and at possibly improving existing services and remedying potential shortcomings. We have set six objectives to operationalize the issue:

- i. Document the experiences of French-speaking refugees in St. Boniface and Winnipeg with a view to deriving recommendations from them to facilitate the settlement and integration of newcomers. We will seek to better understand the specific issues raised by the settlement and integration of these “double minority” refugees in the Winnipeg OLMC. What are the factors and conditions which can influence settlement and integration (needs of refugees and access to services meeting their needs such as health care, religion, housing, child care, education; or incidents of discrimination)?
- ii. Establish a socio-economic profile of the refugees (country of origin, sex, age, education). Identify the cultural, social and religious characteristics of refugees that facilitate or hinder integration as well as the strategies that promote the successful integration of refugees. Do some of these refugees experience more integration difficulties, discrimination and stigmatization according to their origin and their refugee status? Which resources and skills, language for example, do refugees mobilize to overcome difficulties? Do they turn to the Anglophone or to the Francophone community for support? Do Anglophone and Francophone practitioners working with refugees collaborate? What positive experiences have French-speaking refugees had in the communities (in terms of the socio-economic dimension, education, with their children, etc.)?
- iii. Identify the resources available to refugees and measure the availability of services offered in French and access thereto. To what extent does the Winnipeg OLMC serve as a resource and community of belonging for French-speaking refugees?
- iv. Understand how the status of refugees influences their dealings with the agencies and networks of the Francophone community. How are the links and partnerships between refugees and Francophone and Anglophone reception-settlement agencies forged?
- v. Identify the roles that the Francophone communities of Winnipeg and St. Boniface play in welcoming and supporting refugees.
- vi. Assess the coherence and relevance of the policies and programs of the three levels of government as well as community initiatives benefiting French-speaking refugees.

## Methodological considerations

We have used a multi-pronged methodology. We therefore feel it appropriate to identify them in terms of steps and operations.

- i. The first step of our survey was to obtain an ethics certificate, in accordance with the Université de Saint-Boniface policy on research involving human subjects. This certificate enabled us to interview the participants in our survey.
- ii. Prior to field work and analysis, we compiled existing qualitative and quantitative data to describe the socio-demographic profile of French-speaking refugees. To this end, we identified these refugees by their country of origin, how they were assisted (public or private), their year of arrival, sex, age, marital status, labour force status, their place of settlement and any other available information (see the socio-demographic data sheet in Appendix B)
- iii. We then conducted ethnographic research using a qualitative data collection and analysis approach. By giving voice to Francophone refugees and those who work with them through one-on-one interviews and group discussions, we believe that we have achieved the objectives that we have set out above.
- iv. Location: We met project requirements by working in the OLMC of Winnipeg and more particularly St. Boniface, which has the largest number of Francophone immigrants, while relying on socio-demographic information.
- v. Population of study: The population is made up of French-speaking refugees and the practitioners who serve them and facilitate their settlement and integration. First, the Francophone refugees among the immigrant population had to be identified. We then adopted the typical sampling technique, which allowed us to draw an accurate picture of the settlement and integration of these French-speaking refugees in St. Boniface and Winnipeg and to understand how the characteristics of the various groups of French-speaking refugees and their backgrounds had an influence.
- vi. After profiling refugee immigrants, we identified agencies, groups (including sponsorship groups) and networks that could be a resource for refugee settlement and integration. Thus, within the agencies, we started by identifying and consulting Francophone practitioners (with the CDEM, AF and DSFM, for example) that facilitate settlement and integration, as well as the people in charge of resources available to refugees, to learn about the availability of and access to services in French.
- vii. Similarly, we found it relevant to consult with Anglophone practitioners supporting refugees in Winnipeg, such as IRCOM or the Manitoba Start program, which is provided in partnership with non-profit agencies and is a nationally recognized best practice in welcoming newcomers, preparing them for the job market and providing them help in finding a job. We should also point out that some refugees are supported and assisted by community or professional associations outside the RIF, such as the CAAM, which played an important role in the reception and settlement of Syrian refugees in 2015-2016, and the MIA. We asked for input from the leaders of this type of agency that is active in this area as

- well as from the employers of Francophone refugees to get a more complete picture of the settlement and integration process of French-speaking refugees. In this final report, we have linked data from interviews and focus groups.
- viii. Data collection tools: We used one-on-one interviews and group discussions. We conducted 30 one-on-one interviews with refugees chosen to reflect their diversity in terms of sex, age, country of origin and other relevant variables. Thus, according to the criteria that we have selected, our sample is composed of approximately 50% women and 50% men, between the ages of 18 and 30 (40%) and between the ages of 30 and 50 (60%). We also targeted people with children (75%) and others without (25%). In terms of country of origin, the sample is faithful to the population of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg in that Congolese refugees are prominent in our sample. We always strove for a sample that reflected these intersecting characteristics and the full diversity in the people we met and their experiences. We used an interview guide that tracks the migration trajectory, settlement and integration of these refugees. During these interviews, the participants—to whom we gave fictitious names—were given the opportunity to talk about the key moments and milestones in their immigration process (e.g. leaving home, being selected by Canada, arrival, starting the francization process, studies, employment, etc.), the positive and negative events for them and their families (diploma, arrival of other family members, moving, etc.), dealings with service providers, agencies and networks (health, social, education, employment) of the Francophone host community (interview template in Appendix B).
  - ix. We identified 17 organizations and groups in three different categories where practitioners work facilitating the settlement and integration of refugees. First, there are agencies that are part of the RIF, then Anglophone practitioners supporting refugees in Winnipeg, and lastly community or professional associations and employers outside the Anglophone and Francophone immigration networks. We conducted ten one-on-one interviews with RIF practitioners, five one-on-one interviews with key practitioners in Anglophone organizations, and two interviews with the leaders of community and professional associations and employers. These interviews focused on the relationships between agencies and refugees, and their accessibility and support strategies. These interviews also made it possible to identify the impact of private sponsorship and volunteering on the reception and integration of refugees in the OLMC. In addition to these one-on-one interviews, we analyzed the grey literature related to refugees produced by these various practitioners (interview template in Appendix B)
  - x. We also used group discussions with these refugee immigrants to gain a better understanding of their behaviour and attitudes. We thereby gained a deeper understanding of the answers given in the one-on-one interviews. This tool therefore allowed us to understand the social behaviours adopted by our respondents to facilitate their integration. (Facilitator's guide for group discussions in Appendix C).
  - xi. Recruitment of participants: Participants were recruited through a contact person in the Francophone and Anglophone organizations providing services to

newcomers in Winnipeg, who sent the letter of invitation in writing or by electronic means to refugees, members and practitioners in their organization. This contact person was not the immediate supervisor of these practitioners, so that a hierarchical relationship of power or authority would not influence their participation in this study.

- xii. Data constitution and analysis: Once the interviews were completed, we transcribed them verbatim. We encoded these transcripts with Nvivo speech analysis software. This encoding was done in accordance with the categories and codes stemming from the IRCC request for proposals itself; the codes and categories were in turn modified according to what the participants told us during their interview. This encoding gave us the data on which chapters 2 and 3 of our study are based.
- xiii. Limitations and biases of the study: These take different forms. First, the language of the refugees participating in our study posed a methodological challenge and is undeniably a significant limitation of this report. Although they chose French as their settlement and integration language, many refugees had difficulties expressing themselves in French during the interviews. This may be due to several factors. We can assume that their knowledge of French was tested by their migration experience, especially if they went through traumatic events in that language, if they lived in camps or transition countries where French was of little or no use, or if there was a lengthy delay between the time they left their home country and their actual entry into Canada. Of course this limitation is not attributable to refugees alone: it results from the very dynamics of the interview process. Different accents may cause communication problems between the interviewer and the interviewee. We have tried to minimize these problems by having all members of the team read the interview transcripts. Another limitation of our survey is due to the representativeness of our sample. This is actually a double limitation. First, although we strove to have a sample that was as representative as possible of the French-speaking refugee community in Winnipeg, it is clear that refugees who did not seek help from agencies working with newcomers are under-represented in our study. In fact, participants were recruited largely thanks to two such agencies. If these agencies do not know refugees who chose not to seek their help (for any number of reasons), then our sample is unlikely to include these refugees. However, this limitation must be put into perspective since very few French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg have slipped through the cracks of the institutional net. Second, although refugees who did not seek the help of agencies serving them are under-represented, there is a good chance that refugees living in St. Boniface will be over-represented in our study. One of the partners who assisted us with the recruitment of our refugee participants is in fact located in St. Boniface. This agency serves all newcomers in Winnipeg, but those living in St. Boniface are over-represented in its pool of recipients. Here too, this limitation must be put into perspective since the IRCC request for proposals placed the St. Boniface ward front and centre in the development of theme 3 on the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg. A last bias or limitation of our study lies in the very nature of the methodological approach that we have adopted. There is no question that the

semi-structured interviews and the group discussions by which we obtained our “data” involve a degree of subjectivity. This subjectivity stems, on the one hand, from the participants who often had to call upon their memory—which can fail or distort—to answer our questions, or who may have been tempted—consciously or unconsciously—to alter the truth to make themselves appear in a better light. Subjectivity bias also originates with the researchers themselves. We know that the relationship of the subject to the object, in any scholarly enterprise, is never immediate or direct. It is mediated in particular by the mind of the researcher—his or her methodological training, values, and experiences—which determines how he or she apprehends his or her object. In concrete terms, this mediation is apparent in the selection and formulation of the questions we asked the participants, and those that we did not. However, this bias also needs to be put into perspective. While the researcher’s involvement in the survey process inevitably introduces subjectivity, it is also a *sine qua non* of the survey itself. Indeed, without a researcher wanting to learn something, knowledge is impossible. The desire to learn, which is inevitably driven by the researcher’s subjectivity, is what makes knowledge possible. The biases introduced by the qualitative methodology have been corrected, at least in part, by adding socio-demographic data sheets using quantitative data to our methodological framework. Lastly, it should be noted that the very fact that there were multiple one-on-one interviews and that two focus groups were added also helped to reduce the bias stemming from one-on-one interviews.

The report has three chapters. In this first chapter, the refugees we interviewed speak about their background, settlement and integration. This chapter is divided into seven sections: a profile of the French-speaking refugees interviewed (1.1); their trajectories (1.2); government policies and programs related to refugees (1.3); their integration (1.4); their challenges (1.5); the services they received (1.6); and their evaluation of these services (1.7). In the second chapter, practitioners working with agencies serving the newcomers we interviewed speak about the services they provide to French-speaking refugees. This chapter is divided into five sections: Section 2.1 profiles the agencies serving newcomers where the practitioners we interviewed work. Section 2.2 addresses the challenges that these agencies face with respect to refugees. Section 2.3 discusses the services provided by these agencies. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 look at the evaluation, by the practitioners from the agencies interviewed, of refugee settlement and integration services and programs. Chapter 3 analyzes and discusses the findings presented in the two previous chapters in light of the main issue identified. The settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg are examined through six variables based on their shortcomings, the issues they raise and the relevant recommendations: housing (3.1), employment and training (3.2), education (3.3), language acquisition (3.4), health (3.5) and social integration (3.6). Our conclusion will be in two parts. The first part highlights best practices in the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg. The second part opens with some possible directions that future research can take.

# Chapter 1 Research results: The voice of refugees

## 1.1 Profile of refugees

This is where we will profile, using various elements, the 41 French-speaking refugees interviewed in the study. The first element to be emphasized is the representativeness of our sample. The sample reflects the reference population in terms of gender distribution, age distribution and country of origin. We have respected the structure of the total population of French-speaking refugees living in Winnipeg and St. Boniface since 2006. Demographic aspects are the second element of the sociodemographic profile of the subjects in our study. As in the reference population, nearly 29% of participants (12) are under 30 years of age, nearly 59% (24 participants) are between the ages of 30 and 60, and nearly 12% (5 participants) are over 60 years old. In terms of gender distribution, 46% (19 individuals) of participants are female and 54% (22 individuals) are male. It should be noted that the social and economic integration of this generally young population has raised interesting questions and issues for the study.

Our study also reveals that more than one in three people are single (35%), that more than half (52%) of the study participants are married or in common-law relationships and that only 13% are widowed or separated. The marital status of the sample reflects the presence of families. Nearly 3 out of 4 participants have children (73%): 7 have 1–2 children (17%), 17 have 3–6 children (41%) and 6 have more than 7 children (15%). At home, 56% of the interviewees speak French in combination with another mother tongue and 25% speak both Canada's official languages in combination with another mother tongue.

Knowing that the French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg come from French-speaking Africa, we interviewed 30 refugees (73%) from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 3 from Côte d'Ivoire (7.3%), 3 from Chad (7.3%), 3 from Burundi (7.3%), 1 from Angola (2.4%) and 1 from the Central African Republic (2.4%). It is clear that many of the French-speaking refugees in Manitoba come from the Democratic Republic of Congo. These refugees are fleeing the ongoing civil war that began in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

Our study also shows that these refugees had to wait for varying periods of time to enter Canada. Nearly 1 out of 3 interviewees waited more than ten years as a refugee in another country under the responsibility of UNHCR before obtaining permanent resident status in Canada; 1 out of 4 interviewees waited more than two years, but less than ten; and 1 out of 7 interviewees waited less than two years. This variable waiting period between obtaining refugee status and actual entry into Canada determines their settlement and integration experience, as we will see later in the study.

With regard to housing, it should be noted that nearly half of our participants occupied social housing, and at the time of the interviews 95% of the participants were still renting. This is explained by the precariousness of their situation in the job market. We note that 41% of the interviewees are unemployed, 30% are employees, 5% are self-employed or independent, and 7% are students. This precariousness is also evident in the fact that most are doing general work, food service, cleaning, and sales. Furthermore, 3 out of 4 interviewees expressed their intention to go back to school to increase their employability. It should be noted in this regard that 50% say that their diploma is not recognized in Canada, while nearly 30% have a

university education, 54% have completed secondary school, and 15% have attended elementary school. Lastly, it should be noted that more than half of our respondents confirmed that their credentials are not recognized in Canada and only 1 in 3 respondents confirmed that their credentials were recognized. Finally, in geographic terms, our study reveals that the majority of the interviewees settled in the city centre and in St. Boniface (see map in Appendix D).

## 1.2 Trajectories of refugees

In this section, we will describe the trajectories of refugees up until the time they arrived in Canada and obtained permanent resident status. The trajectory on Canadian soil (integration trajectory) will be analyzed from section 1.3 onward.

### 1.2.1 The journey up to actual entry into Canada

It is relevant to focus on the trajectories of refugees before they arrived in Canada and obtained permanent resident status. The experience of French-speaking refugees before their arrival in Canada is not without impact on their settlement and integration and is even determinative. The journey refugees make before they arrive in Canada is not an easy one. The period of time between the quite often difficult decision to leave their country of origin and their entry into Canada was for most survey participants a long and stressful one. This period is certainly difficult, but one that has been formative for many of our survey participants. The experiences during this transitional phase undoubtedly had an impact on their path after arriving in Canada, hence the interest in giving it some consideration.

This trajectory before obtaining permanent resident status can be examined through five variables: (1) the factors or circumstances surrounding departure from the country of origin; (2) the waiting period between obtaining refugee status and their actual arrival in Canada; (3) the type of journey that refugees made during this transitional period; (4) their knowledge of Canada or lack thereof; (5) the type of sponsorship.

The factors or circumstances that led our survey participants to leave their country of origin are diverse. We have no way of comprehensively analyzing this question. We simply identified a few factors and circumstances that led some of our study participants to seek refuge outside their country of origin. There were essentially two that are interrelated: the violence of war and political reasons. We should note, from the outset, that these factors explain why Winnipeg's French-speaking refugees are mainly Congolese who fled the civil war that has raged in the Congo since the mid-1990s: [translation] "In Congo we have suffered cruelly from wars.... And, in this case, we had no assurances of safety or survival because we do not know where it will come from or when."(Odile) But the Congo is not the only country of origin. Some participants come from Liberia (Gaston) and others from Chad (Norbert).

Intimately linked to the factor of war, political reasons were also invoked by our study participants to explain why they left their country of origin.

[translation] I was a human rights advocate when I was at university. ... I was forced to leave the Congo because these people [rebels] came after me. In my native village, the tribal chief gave in to the rebels. And since they were the ones who already controlled

everything, then they really had to silence all the people who had already been talking about human rights issues. (Quentin)

With regard to the wait time, it should be noted that 27% (11) of the refugees interviewed waited less than five years, 20% (8) between five and less than ten years, 33% (14) ten years or more, and 20% (8) of the refugees participating in the study were unable to provide us with specific information on obtaining their refugee status. This is probably due to psychological reasons: they may have wanted to repress this traumatic experience. It is significant that while not all of our participants remembered the date they acquired refugee status from the United Nations, all of them could cite the exact day, month and year of their entry into Canada, or in other words when they became permanent residents. The exactness of their answers shows us the importance they attach to that new status. The actual date of entry is in fact a confirmation of their permanent resident status and is, therefore, a momentous milestone in their trajectory.

During this transitional period of varying durations, 41% of the participants came through UNHCR camps. Their migratory experience was marked by the various problems they experienced in these camps, including, for example, problems with violence and rape, access to food and separation of families. Often times, refugees fled violence in their country of origin only to find it in a different form elsewhere.

[translation] ... a woman coming for her registration number who does not have her husband will first be sexually exploited by the interpreter or the local authority so that she can now get access ... to that number. ...there were also clear violations of human rights, especially those of refugees. (Pier)

[translation] I come from a family of 12, but when we got to the camp, there were only four of us. And we went perhaps 2-3 years without hearing from anyone. (Ursule)

In addition, 22% of our survey participants came through transit countries instead of UNHCR refugee camps. That did not make their journey any easier. Many of our participants fled war in their country of origin only to find it in those transit countries. [translation] “So back there, I wasn’t in a refugee camp because there weren’t any in Yaoundé. So, you rent a house in the neighbourhood. Everyone does what they need to do to survive.” (Irène) Some of these participants transited through the United States and then crossed the Canadian border to claim refugee protection here.

The fourth variable in looking at the journey of refugees prior to their arrival in Canada has to do with the representations and perceptions they have of Canada, and Winnipeg in particular, where, we must remember, none of them chose or planned to come. In fact, many of them only learned that they would be settling in Winnipeg the day before they arrived, if not the very same day. What, if anything, do they know of Canada? Do they know anyone in Winnipeg? It appears that participants in general had only a rudimentary knowledge of Canada prior to their arrival. For many, being in Canada came as a “surprise” (Fernand). Fourteen of the participants admitted that they knew nothing at all about Canada. Needless to say, this relative unfamiliarity with Canada and Winnipeg influenced their settlement and integration. It is very difficult to settle and integrate in a country and a city we know nothing about and where we know no one: [translation] “It was the first time I had heard the name

‘Winnipeg.’ We had heard of Canada, we had heard of Toronto and Montreal, but Winnipeg...what’s that?’ (Ursula).

The last prism through which we wish to address the trajectory of refugees is their sponsorship. It should be noted that 83% of the participants were sponsored: 46% were sponsored by the government and 37% by agencies, individuals and private groups. The remaining 17% of our interviewees were not sponsored. It is important to focus our attention on this variable, as it influences the refugee’s integration experience, as we will see later. We should also note that the refugees participating in our study did not bring up problems related to the type of sponsorship per se; however, as we will see, some of the problems raised are more persistent in one sponsorship category than the other.

### **1.2.2 Problems and difficulties on arrival**

We will close this section on the journey of refugees before they actually enter Canada and highlight some of the problems and difficulties they encountered upon their arrival. Most of the interviewees experienced—unsurprisingly—a climate shock regardless of what time of year they arrived. Obviously those arriving in the fall or winter were so shocked by Winnipeg’s bone-chilling temperatures that some would have refused to come here had they known about the weather that awaited them. For others, weather would be their first [translation] “challenge” (William) to settlement in Canada: [translation] “When we arrived, I was stressed right at the airport. Because it was cold. ...there was fog. Everything was white. ...I just told my children that if I knew the country was like that, I would not have been able to come. I was stressed right there.” (Élodie) But there is more to climate shock than just the cold, there is the shortness of the days as well: [translation] “I would not say that it was the climate because we had the good fortune to come in the summertime...it was something like ten o’clock at night and it was still light outside; afterwards when winter set in...we said no, no, no.” (Laurence)

In short, the trajectory of refugees from the time they left their country of origin and the moment they arrived in Canada is a difficult journey during which they have had to face challenges and hardship. This experience, as we will see in the next section, has an impact on the refugee settlement and integration process in Winnipeg. Some of the problems encountered on arrival in Canada persist, as we will see in the following sections.

### **1.3 Appraisal of government policies and programs in light of settlement experiences**

The settlement experience of French-speaking refugees cannot be understood without at least a passing consideration of the policies and programs supporting the agencies providing these services. Canadian immigration policies, and more specifically refugee policies, are in fact among the most generous in the world. It is often said that more than 60% of refugee claims are accepted by Canadian authorities, compared to less than 30% in other countries.

All three levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) have policies and programs for receiving, settling and integrating newcomers. These programs in Manitoba are distinctive in that they must meet a fundamental requirement: the preservation and promotion of the minority Francophone community. To that end, the three levels of government, as well as community agencies, work hand in hand to ensure these programs are successful. Manitoba

appears to be a destination of choice for refugees, as it appears to be the only place in Canada, or even in the world, where 30% of immigrants are refugees. It is therefore worthwhile to hear what the study participants had to say about these policies and programs.

Their settlement experiences are diverse. The programs refugees use illustrate this diversity as far as the strengths and weaknesses of programs are concerned.

### **1.3.1 Government programs: Strengths**

The interviews with newcomers and practitioners enabled us to identify a number of strengths and weaknesses of the various programs. In terms of strengths, for example, seven participants said they were pleased with programs such as orientation, financial assistance and medical services. This is what one of the participants we called Kevin said about orientation:

[translation] I think those who come with the government are in a good position where that is concerned. Because the community that starts with them first, like the AF, tries to orient them and give them tips that can encourage them to go into the community. But for us who are, privately [sponsored] for example, I will be with my sister, for example. She will take me to the areas [she] knows. It won't be the community.

They recognize that there are services that help them acquire basic knowledge essential for everyday life (how to take the bus, look for housing, arrange for phone service, shop, etc.) but they point out that the GARs among them have a leg up. One participant that we called Marthe said this:

[translation] Because for the ones sponsored by the government, I learned that community homes like Accueil francophone provide a lot of help with orientation and how to get settled. They really support them throughout the whole time. But for us, the government is distant. It's just the person who came with you.

All study participants acknowledged and appreciated the financial, medical and social assistance provided by the government. However, they said that it is unfortunate that the financial assistance abruptly stops after one year. Yet even so, they remain deeply grateful to the government, especially since most come from countries where social assistance is unheard of. Another participant, Robert, said: [translation] "The government has been sending me money every month thus far; that is great and I am very pleased with that." In the group interviews that we conducted, here is what one participant had to say that summed up the general opinion of all the participants: [translation] "We have financial, medical and social assistance. We were still supported by the government. But a year later, it's just the province that is starting to support us. Now, I would say that this is the government's logical continuation...we continue to be supported, and truly, I think that's pretty good" (Gaston).

### **1.3.2 Government programs: Weaknesses**

The weaknesses of the programs were strongly emphasized by 10 participants. In fact, some participants talked about these government programs' lack of direction. They add that GARs are left on their own once the twelve-month period has passed. Suddenly, they have to fend for themselves. A participant that we called Quentin gave an excellent summary of the opinion shared by all:

[translation] Those who are privately sponsored, I think they have more advantages than those sponsored by the government...I see that they are oriented, they are shown everything. So they share all the problems they encounter with them. They share everything with them. ... It is their partner who shows them what they are going to do.

Financial resources seem insufficient, given the magnitude of the problems. There is therefore some discrimination, a certain inequality, with regard to access to services (rent, various allowances). One of the participants said the following:

[translation] I was paying more than the ones who were sponsored ... I am supported by the government, meaning the government gives you money, but it doesn't do the math, it gives you a certain amount, these are your needs, but you have to pay your rent but why is that? So I was paying at least \$200 more than the others. (Laurence)

In addition, the participants found that certain government measures undermine the value they place on searching for work. To be sure, the ones in the labour force found these measures to be a disincentive to working. One participant, Robert, says: [translation] "Work is a good thing, but you find a job paying \$1500, for example, if you make 1500, the province takes away \$1500. You are left with your \$1500. You see what I mean. With \$1500, the house and who knows what else, there's nothing left."

Unequal access to services and citizenship also appears to be a bone of contention in the integration process. Access to services and citizenship is shaped by which category of immigrant the refugee is in. One of the participants (Valérie) shed some light on the issue:

[translation] When it comes to immigration, we are not all equal. Because, for example, when a black man comes here from the Congo, here meaning Winnipeg specifically.... To become a citizen, he must spend five years in Canada. But when a Syrian comes here, he is offered many services straight away and becomes a citizen in a few short years, without living here for the full five.... They are helped to find work straight away.

One other complaint was the lack of a job search service. Participants would have preferred to have support when searching for employment until they find it. Here are Kevin's thoughts:

If you were sponsored by a community or by some friend, by religion, it can be different because they know. They can find job. Because if someone is friend with someone to bring here, he knows if the guy could come, he can find job for him. So we will come with the government, they don't care. After one year, they don't care. Nobody comes. Like if I am here I know that oh if I sponsor someone, I have to look for a job for them.

Participants compared government sponsorship with private sponsorship and reported that they have financial independence with the first. They say that everything is fine, at least for a year, under government sponsorship. But they point out that, after one year, refugees are left on their own and have to fend for themselves. One of the participants, Gisèle, said:

[translation] There is a very big difference because the ones who are sponsored by the government, they are supported by the government right when they arrive, they are given everything they need, and those of us who are sponsored by a private individual,

we are dependent on the individual. After all, the individual does not have enough money to meet all your needs.

One participant, Laurence, added:

[translation] As soon as you arrive with the federal government, you are given money to start over, so you have to buy things for the household. That isn't the case for the sponsored ones. They come with the person who sponsored them there for a year, so he must immediately—, maybe he arrives today and then tomorrow he has to start working, but that's not the case for us. We were lucky, we had time to rest a while, see things how things go and make decisions; I had time to make decisions.

The security aspect also favours GARs. In terms of looking for housing and the administrative procedures, participants generally share the idea that the GARs among them are better off, at least the first year. One participant, Yvonne, confirms this: [translation] “All I know, when you come through the government, the roof over your head is secure; your papers are secure. You have security; you know that as long as you are sponsored by the government, it will see to it that you are taken care of here.”

The study shows that program and service recipients are by turns satisfied and unsatisfied. First, they are satisfied because these programs are in place and they benefit from them. They have access to various resettlement programs (RAP, IFHP, housing assistance program, financial assistance program, etc.) However, they are frustrated because not everyone has equal access to these different programs. In fact, GARs seem to have more rights than refugees sponsored privately (by individuals, groups, or religious communities). Furthermore, educational reintegration programs, at least in the French-speaking world, do not seem to take into account the different levels of orientation for individuals.

## **1.4 Integration of refugees in Francophone communities**

In our study of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg and St. Boniface, we have chosen the term integration to be the result of an active process in which at least two interdependent dimensions interact, namely the economic dimension and the social and cultural dimension. In this sense, integration requires the involvement of all parties involved, including the refugees themselves. In this section, we present the socio-cultural dimension of integration (1.4.1) that makes it easier for local communities to adapt to the presence of refugees and also facilitates the lives of refugees among the host population. The economic dimension of integration (1.4.2) shows how integrated refugees are in the job market and, consequently, the extent to which they participate in the host country's economy.

### **1.4.1 The socio-cultural integration of French-speaking refugees**

The concept of integrating a newcomer into his or her host community can be summed up by the interactions between them, whereby a sense of belonging and identification with community values is formed. In other words, refugees can be considered integrated if they share the values and norms of the community, and especially if they feel accepted in their new environment.

#### **1.4.1.1 Role of the host community**

To understand the role of the community, we asked participants whether they thought that they were integrated into the host community. Approximately 50% of participants said that they feel integrated into their host community. They said that they in fact have been well received by the community and have been included in many community activities. Stéphanie conveyed this sentiment well:

[translation] It was very easy for me to feel comfortable. All the people that I approached were nice to me, the people whom I pass in the street, they smiled, or if I couldn't see a smile, there would at least be a hint of a smile. Some gave a wide smile, others seemed to smile automatically, but I did not sense any hostility. So, I feel right at home here.

To the same question, Gisèle answered: [translation] “Oh, yes. I am integrated, because if we were brought directly to an environment where people spoke only English it would be hard, but we were brought to an environment where people speak French. They look English, but you can still talk to them in French. So it's good from that point of view.”

Others describe integration as a difficult process. Indeed, many recounted the financial difficulties they had for a certain period after they arrived. This was usually due to the fact that they had not yet found a job and were not able to make ends meet on the allowance they received from the government. From this allowance, refugees must pay rent, buy food and also think about reimbursing the amount paid by the federal government for their airfare. In this regard, PAR3 told us, [translation] “After a while, they will send you letters about starting to pay back the money. And I'm not working, I have no idea, what can I do?”

The obstacle to Fernand's integration is language, pure and simple. He says: [translation] “I do not socialize with people because I do not speak English. That's my problem. I speak French and I cannot interact with someone who speaks English. That cannot work; that's why. If I spoke English, I would have friends, but since I do not speak English I am alone.” In other words, as we will see in the section on challenges, refugees' lack of knowledge of English is a barrier to their socio-economic integration.

Ultimately, the role of the host community is to develop and provide services to facilitate refugee integration. As we will see, numerous services related to health care, settlement assistance, education, social services have been created to facilitate refugees' integration in the community.

#### **1.4.1.2 Role of religious communities**

Approximately one quarter of study participants stressed the prominent role played by religious institutions. According to some participants, religious groups are central to their integration into the host community. The church is a meeting and gathering place for newcomers and members of ethnocultural associations that are already well-established in Francophone communities. Networks of acquaintances, friends and multi ethnic community members through the church provide material and psychological support to refugees. PAR2 told us: [translation] “I go to church and that's where we sometimes meet many other people from my community or other communities who speak French. Going to church helped me a

lot at first because I could meet other people, and also starting classes here at the university.” Claude was in agreement: [translation] “I’ve integrated, so between the church and the committee, I have friends, a lot of friends. It’s thanks to the friends I had, going from there to here, so even for getting around here, I didn’t have to go out. I have friends who were going to buy things for me, do my shopping and then give them to me.”

It should be noted that the church, as an institution, provides material resources and services to refugees. The church’s concrete actions play a key role in the social integration of newcomers. To that effect, one participant, Marthe, told us: [translation] “the church puts on activities...we play sports every Friday.” Alfred, meanwhile, said that his integration went more smoothly, because [translation] “the church did a lot of work with us; they visited us three to four times per week. I really have to thank them for that.”

The church is a meeting and gathering place for newcomers and members of ethnocultural associations that are already well-established in Francophone communities. The church has also proved to be a meeting place for refugees.

#### **1.4.1.3 Role of communities and ethnocultural associations**

Some participants told us they were integrated into their ethnic communities of origin through their ethnocultural associations. They also emphasized how important these associations were to their integration into the host community. Joceline said that participating in the activities of her association helps her a lot because [translation] “I don’t feel alone, I feel at home: because we speak the same languages, I feel at home with the others.” Berthe answered by telling us: [translation] “Yes, I am integrated into the community here. Because the Congolese community knows me, knows that I’m here. Sometimes, when they hold meetings, they ask me to come; it does me good to mingle with the others there.” Laurence told us about the crucial role some members of his community had in his integration:

[translation] When I arrived, the phone would ring, people would say, “Oh, do you know the so and so family? They came from Burundi—do you know them? Indeed we do!” So they were quick to come pick me up and take me to the people that I already knew from back home. Truly, they gave us a lot of support because we didn’t have a car, no means of transportation; how were we going to get around during the winter, get our groceries, I don’t know. In any case, they were there for us whenever we needed to go someplace.

Some participants lamented the fact that there was no ethnocultural community from their country of origin. Norbert told us: [translation] “There is no one here from Chad. There are no Chadians and I know only two Chadians. One who came here about 10 years ago. The other, 7 years ago.” On the other hand, others have voluntarily chosen not to integrate into their ethnocultural community. Alfred says that he has not received help from his community: [translation] “No, no, no. I’m sorry. The community just wants something from you.” And others have chosen to distance themselves from their community of origin in order to learn more about their host community: [translation] “I don’t want this community to be my be all and end all. We get together, we become acquainted, but I prefer to have a larger social circle.” (William). Ultimately, the statements above show us how important community networks are for the integration of refugees.

### 1.4.2 The socio-cultural integration of French-speaking refugees

This subsection deals with the concept of employment as a factor in the integration of newcomers. The vast majority of participants in our survey (42.5%) stated that they are unemployed. We asked them if their job search was satisfactory. Gisèle told us: [translation] “I can say that it hasn’t been so far. Because I haven’t worked at all since I’ve been here, but I’m trying to find a job and I haven’t found one yet.” Quentin echoed those sentiments, saying: [translation] “I can’t find a job except in construction maybe. But for work and my skills, it is a bit difficult. Because I’m told no, IT is a bit, it’s a bit advanced here.” The unemployed participants pointed out that it is sometimes very difficult to find a job due in part to poor English and a lack of work experience in certain professional fields. Employment, as we know, is an important factor in the integration of refugees, because it allows them to have a good quality of life and ultimately to develop a true sense of belonging to the host community.

Our data also reveals that eleven participants (27.5%) state that they have a job and two others say they work for themselves: [translation] “I own my business; I’m good at filming and I know how to edit video [so] I said to myself ‘OK, I’m going to create that type of company.’ I’ve done a lot of weddings, social documentaries, fiction films, in any case to really penetrate the community in the literal sense of the word.” (Théodore). Two participants (5%) preferred to go back to school, either on the advice of others or of their own volition. Laurence told us: [translation] “I’ve been told, you need training...you cannot start a business here like we would at home.” As for Gisèle, she said: [translation] “I am in school, and when I’m finished, there might be something in store for me here, maybe I will find a good job so I can support myself.”

However, despite the important role employment plays in the successful settlement of refugees, it should be pointed out that the overwhelming majority of participants highlighted the importance of education in the integration process. In fact, 72.5% of the interviewees told us that they want to go back to school, regardless of whether they were employed or unemployed. On this subject, William told us: [translation] “I haven’t started looking for a job yet, because I was advised that as soon as my English improves, I should go to university here to study.” As for Yvonne, she would like to study early childhood education: [translation] “I would like to continue studying child care. To open a daycare.”

The fact is that, although approximately half of the participants feel integrated, and despite the important role of religious institutions and ethnocultural communities, participants nonetheless said that they face many social, economic and cultural challenges.

### 1.5 Challenges to the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees

Settlement of French-speaking refugees in a minority setting in Winnipeg is not without its challenges. This section of the report summarizes some of the statements made about these challenges as they were perceived by the refugees interviewed for this study. There are 4 parts. The first describes the challenges refugees in Winnipeg face when settling and resettling. The second presents education-related challenges. The third deals with the recognition of credentials and the fourth presents challenges related to official languages.

### 1.5.1 Settlement challenges

Factors such as age, employment, and financial management are very important in the refugee settlement process. This part discusses age-related challenges. It relates the meaning that these refugees give to their settlement and resettlement, to finding employment, and to their relationship to money to meet their many needs related to the management of their income.

#### Refugee age

The age issue is an important factor in the process of immigrant settlement and integration. Refugees of all ages face the same challenge when it comes to finding a job so that they can look after themselves as quickly as possible. Seniors, who usually accompany their families, find themselves in a situation where they are often forced to stay at home, since they are past working age. As this respondent attested: [translation] “Seniors have a hard time finding work and living in our society” (Irène). Since they cannot work, they are often confined to their homes. Depending on the type of dwelling (house, apartment or condo), they may feel isolated and bored. This respondent explained: [translation] “There is no courtyard here, you are in the house, you are shut in, you might go out to go grocery shopping or visit someone. You can’t do activities; how can you teach others? That’s the problem” (Élodie).

However, despite a lack of fluency in English that complicates the plight of these seniors, some attempt to cope with this challenge by trying to combat this isolation. The best way that they have found is to draw on the help and support of some agencies that mentor newly arrived immigrants and refugees. One respondent stated:

[translation] The problem is that you must not stay at home. Because when you stay at home, you start to brood. That’s why we have to create a group here...a seniors group. When you come [to the group], you talk and talk, you laugh, you go home, you can rest easy. Because if you only stayed at home, you could die. (Élodie)

The age of immigrants is therefore a key challenge in the integration process. At a certain age, learning something new is more difficult, especially if the immigrant finds him or herself in a completely different context and culture and if, on top of that, he or she does not speak the language fluently: [translation] “You see, learning a language when you are a senior is not easy” (Élodie).

#### Settlement and resettlement

As soon as they arrive, most refugees are welcomed by agencies mandated to assist with their reception. These agencies help them in their temporary settlement or resettlement in Winnipeg, while they learn to look after themselves in the city. [translation] “I would still stay that the people at AF helped me get on my feet when I arrived. To help me manage. Since I live alone, my husband is not here. I don’t have a job; I must live within my means. (Gertrude)

Successful settlement starts with adequate and safe housing for the family. This housing can be a house or an apartment and the cost of the housing unit may vary according to the size of the family. Large apartments for large families will be more expensive. [translation] “But someone got a house for me that costs \$885. I have to pay for that house; I pay \$80 for electricity.” (Gertrude)

## Discrimination

Whether during one-on-one interviews or in group discussions, participants reported enduring situations that they said were discriminatory. Experiencing discrimination, racial discrimination in particular, makes it more difficult for any newcomer to settle and integrate. In this sense, discrimination is certainly a challenge to the settlement of newcomers. We therefore believe that practitioners must take this into account.

From the interviews, it was revealed that discrimination can be experienced directly or indirectly. Direct discrimination is part of the everyday lives of refugees. They encounter discrimination in different places, for example on public transportation, in the workplace and in the neighbourhood. It can take many forms: discrimination based on the colour of skin (black/white) or based on origin (First Nations versus newcomers). For example, Élodie says: [translation] “Sometimes there will be a white man sitting in the bus. You go to sit next to him; he gets up because you are black. He gets up, even if there are no other seats, he would rather stand ... There are people who do not like us, because we are black...” Élodie experienced similar discrimination in a café. After sitting at a table where a white man was already sitting, he said, according to Élodie: [translation] “fuck, you couldn’t find a seat elsewhere; did you have to sit here?” In the same vein, Daniel reports that during a flight: [translation] “A white woman didn’t want me to sit next to her. She started staring at me. She made it clear that she cannot sit next to me.” Direct discrimination can also take place in the neighborhood. Stéphanie explained: [translation] “Yes, there is racism among the people in the neighborhood.” Participants also reported origin-based discrimination, meaning discrimination between newcomers and First Nations residents and between older and newer residents. For example, Élodie says that an aboriginal woman asked her [translation] “what do you want in our homeland, what are you looking for here, couldn’t you stay home?”

Indirect discrimination, in contrast, refers to discrimination perceived by participants. This is systemic discrimination. Its sources are language, the job market and the migration system itself. Stéphanie told us that she did volunteer work in French at the Taché Seniors’ Centre. She laments the fact that this Francophone institution hires employees [translation] “who don’t speak one word of French” and gives them the chance to learn French. Stéphanie wonders why the reverse is not true, namely why the Centre does not hire Francophones and give them the chance to learn English: [translation] “This is so discriminatory! From a Francophone centre to boot! On this point, I don’t agree with the Manitoban government.” (Stéphanie)

Valérie felt discriminated against in the workplace. She felt that it was [translation] “like inequality and domination.” Furthermore, other participants addressed the discrimination issue in the process of integration itself. Participants said that they feel that refugees do not receive equal treatment. For example, Syrian refugees in particular are seen as benefiting from preferential treatment due to the speed at which their claims are said to be processed. This creates a sense of frustration and gives some newcomers the impression that there is a two-tier system in which some refugee claims are processed faster than others.

[translation] You tell people that you are helping them. When they get here, you start to pay for visas and then of course it could be understood, but when we arrived at the same

time as the Syrians. Syrians do not pay for their visas; that's discrimination right there. (Quentin)

In the face of repeated acts of direct or indirect discrimination, many participants came to view it as normal and eventually resigned themselves to it. As reflected by Élodie:

[translation] And afterwards, we say among ourselves "that's the way life is." We are in their country and if someone is going to be like that, you don't put up a fuss. You mustn't react. That's right. Can we solve anything? Others have already been brainwashed. That the black man is not a human being. You can't stop them from thinking that. Not everyone is like that, there are those who like us and those who don't. Who are really, really, really racist. But there are others who even if they don't like you, they still pretend they do. And in the end, you get used to it.

## **Employment**

Once settled, the first challenge is finding a job to deal with other basic needs. However, finding a job is not an easy thing for immigrants, even though some of them may get lucky as soon as they arrive. Clarence said: [translation] "Two weeks after coming to Winnipeg, I started working. It's the same job that I have now." This testimony demonstrates that, with some luck, professional experience can help a refugee work and make a career in Manitoba's job market. In reality, respondents mentioned the challenges of finding a job in Winnipeg. The majority of these immigrants spend a great deal of time looking for work. After several unsuccessful attempts, the discouragement is palpable, as shown by the language they use: [translation] "I can't get a job; I have given out a lot of resumes, but no one has called me." (Irène)

The problem is not only how difficult it is to find a job, it is also what kind of job it is and the number of hours spent working that creates challenges. In addition, it can sometimes be part-time work, often poorly paid: [translation] "it is not even 10% of what he was doing. And, all he has is four hours a week, or even two hours a week. So it depends." (Rose) For this respondent, these part-time jobs reflect a lack of recognition of credentials and a way for employers to get around committing to offering a permanent job. [translation] "But if you're given two hours, or four hours a week, it's just to say, ok. We can't say no, but we can't abandon you, but hey, just stay there." (Rose) Some respondents say that it is often difficult to do the work of their jobs. Such statements often come from seniors for whom this difficulty can be even more distressing, because their health may depend on it.

[translation] I worked in a hotel for just three months; it was hard. The work was really difficult: just housekeeping and making the beds. It was hard for me. I didn't even have the energy to help the children with their homework. I came home very tired. I started at 6 a.m. and worked until 6:30 p.m. It was hard for me and then I quit. (Berthe)

[translation] Cleaning is not something that I can do. Because I have a bad hip. Even at home, my hip will start to bother me when I just pick up the broom to sweep. I have already had an x-ray at least three times. They found nothing. (Élodie)

However, beyond the difficulties of part-time work, it is job stability that interests our respondents the most. Having a stable and permanent job is a sign of integration. [translation]

“I’m not stable yet! You need to find work to be stable. Here, you can say you are stable when you get a paycheque. He earns a salary to support himself.” (Valérie)

Respondents also recognize the deficit of job offers in French, especially in St. Boniface, and the situation frustrates them because it decreases their chances of being integrated into the Francophone minority. They are so aware of it that they make it clear to those taking classes at USB that they are less likely to be hired when they graduate. [translation] “We had to go to St. Boniface to further our studies; we are told that of course you can study there. But when you graduate you will not be hired. ... For example, we are being told us that if you study in French, you will not be hired because the language here is English. We speak French, but the language here is English.” (Quentin)

Indeed, becoming proficient in English, which is essential if they are to integrate into the Winnipeg job market, represents a difficulty for these Francophone refugees. It is also one of the factors that accentuate unemployment in this Francophone immigrant community in Winnipeg. Many of them are forced to go back to school to overcome this challenge. Others use their social networks in the community to get a job, as demonstrated by these two respondents:

[translation] To find that work, there were connections. Someone connected to me told me: “They are looking for workers there. So, if you’re interested, you can apply there.” I applied and that’s when I was lucky enough to be hired. (Valérie)

If you have community, you get a job. If you have friends, you get a job. But if you don’t know anyone, to get a job, only God can provide. (Kevin)

In response to the persistence of the problem, some refugees use strategies involving immigration services to obtain information on how to find work. [translation] “Afterward, I first went to the Immigration Centre because I was looking for a part time job. I went to the Immigration Centre and explained to them, no, I have to look...” (Fernand) Others receive invaluable help from certain religious organizations that have been very helpful to immigrants in their integration process, as this respondent explained: [translation] “The Mennonites paid for a year and a half, because I did not find a job. But the contract was for a year. When the year ends and you don’t have a job, they said that they would continue to pay until you find one.” (Claude)

This part demonstrates several employment challenges. In their search for work, some have had a stroke of luck, while others have been able to build on their professional experiences. However, the nature, temporary nature or precariousness of certain jobs, discourage most of these refugees. To this must be added the deficit of employment in French and most job seekers’ lack of fluency in English. To conclude this segment on employment, respondents believe everyone should have a chance to work and contribute to Winnipeg’s development. They are aware of their contribution:

[translation] We too need to help the government and we can help the government...by working because when we work, people know that we are independent people; other newcomers arrive and the government continues to help them but we are here, we are not finding work. (Élodie)

## Financial management

The financial challenge refers to how refugees relate to money. Participants pointed out their lack of financial means for basics such as paying rent, bills, food and paying off debts. Respondents said that based on their net worth, they have difficulty paying rent, which can often be quite high, and meeting other needs:

[translation] Out of the \$500, I pay rent, the phone bill, and we pay the airfare. That is before food. With this \$500, paying for clothes for example, how do we pay for that? And how much is left? That's the difficulty we are running into here. That's the difficulty. (Daniel)

[translation] I need to buy shoes; I need to buy clothes. Sometimes I'll look down and see I have \$10 left. I say, oh my god [sic]. With the people there from social, you can't even afford to send \$1 to Africa, can you? (Berthe)

For families with young children, child care costs on top of other expenses makes it almost impossible to save money, let alone send any to the family back home. Many of these families receive assistance at the beginning which, in the long run, may stop or not suffice if no one in the family finds work. Most of those who find work receive minimum wage, which furthermore is taxable. When the family is large, they live in cramped, ill-suited housing. Without job stability, debts pile up, and there is a danger of overusing credit cards, say the respondents. [translation] "First and foremost, they should give us a lot of information about those Visa cards given to refugees. Visas that are called MasterCard. That could steer us wrong." (Robert)

To cut costs, some respondents have been able to develop strategies; one of them explained: [translation] "I try to turn off the heat a bit, I sleep in a house like a cold room. I start to shiver because of the cold and I even use two or three blankets knowing that if I turn the heat off, I won't pay as much." (Gertrude) Other respondents have a less troubled relationship with money and spending. The respondents who received assistance and support from the government or religious organizations are very grateful for the support they received, which covered most of their needs and facilitated their settlement:

[translation] The rent for the house I live in is \$1,350, not counting water, electricity and whatever else, and while the government gives, us, my group, me, my wife and two children under age 18 \$575, so it is made up by my children, all they get for rent is paid to us to bring the amount up to 1350 and enable us to pay for water and electricity. (Henri)

[translation] The Mennonite Church played a vital role. When I arrived, they paid for 12 months, not just for the house, but all the bills as well. And in addition to paying these bills, they made it possible for me to eat and sleep very well, and I can tour the city. (Théodore)

### 1.5.2 Education challenges

In the previous section, we covered the need for secure and regular employment in the integration process. This type of job is often dependent on the person's education and work experience. Francophone refugees received in Winnipeg are of all ages and enrolling in school has its challenges. This makes education a big challenge for refugee integration.

For younger refugees, the level of education plays an important role in the integration process. When they arrive in the host community, they are often oriented according to their ability and not according to the level of education they had in their country of origin. This can be a lesser evil insofar as children adapt more quickly. Sometimes, this is necessary so that they can upgrade their level of education and to ensure that they succeed in school.

On the other hand, the study findings show that this is more of an issue for seniors than it is for young people. According to this respondent: "The big challenge is education. You are out of school for several years. You arrive here and people have attained a certain level of education and expect you to be at the same level. It takes courage to tell them that you know nothing at all." (Ursule) It is not easy to go back to school. Some of these refugees, especially seniors, have been out of school for a number of years when they arrive in Canada. Going back to school is absolutely necessary for them to integrate successfully, with the difficulties in terms of adaptation and blows to pride that this entails. For example:

[translation] In Canada, when we arrived, the big problem was that you get to school, you're 10 years old, you're in Grade 5 and you're lost; math, physics, you're absolutely lost, it's all Greek to you. Sometimes, at this age you are too proud, it's hard to ask questions because people understand that's the problem. (Élodie)

Regardless of age, the education system is different, and has evolved to the point that some are in contact with information technology for the first time. [translation] "The first time I ever laid hands on a computer in my life was in 2005" (Élodie). Refugees are going back to school under very specific conditions where they face realities that are too much for them: [translation] "you are not able to learn because you are not able to understand a system" (Élodie). Others, to circumvent the system and turn it to their advantage, enroll in subjects such as French or mathematics where they believe they have a better chance of succeeding.

Training is a very important part of refugee integration. Refugees need university or vocational training that meets the current demands of the job market, and this training must often be supplemented by language courses, especially in English. The misalignment between the Canadian education system and the one in most refugees' countries of origin may explain some of the difficulties respondents encounter. The end result is that many drop out in the first few years.

### 1.5.3 Challenges related to the recognition of credentials and acquired knowledge

Interviewees often face two challenges when it comes to having their credentials recognized: when they search for a job and when they go back to school at either the secondary or university level. For people who earned a diploma in their country, the greatest difficulty is having their credentials recognized so that they can find a position in line with their education. Granted, they have built up a certain experience in their field, but in a different

context. Whereas here in Canada, most professions are regulated by professional bodies or colleges. To be able to practise these professions, it is necessary to be a member of the college of that their particular profession and prove they have relevant experience. On this point, respondents are more than aware of their chances from the outset: [translation] “When all you have is a diploma from your home country, and someone else has a Canadian diploma, he or she has a leg up. The person with the Canadian diploma has more of a chance, 95% more chance than me” (Marthe).

Respondents think that it would be better for employers to take the diplomas of their home countries into consideration, even with a condition attached, so that they do not have to start from scratch once they arrive. However, the diploma recognition process eludes many refugee immigrants, especially ones new to the country. There appears to be lack of information regarding diploma recognition: [translation] “If I need to make up some courses, I’d be more than happy to; I don’t mind learning something new, especially since it might not be so new.” (Henri)

Some respondents are aware that getting a good job [translation] “means having [work] experience in Canada” (Robert). Others often encounter stumbling blocks in their job search.

[translation] But unfortunately, my seniority was not recognized, nor were my documents, because I studied early childhood for one year ago. Back home, we just do one year and [then] you have a diploma to work with children. But they didn’t recognize it. They just hired me to work as what they call an aid.” (Rose)

Some understand that the best way to integrate is to have their credentials validated by going back to school, as this respondent explained: [translation] “I came to Louis-Riel to get my diploma, because when I came here, I was told that if you don’t have a Canadian diploma, the universities won’t accept you” (Claude). Others demonstrate their skills and abilities directly on the job once they are lucky enough to find one. [translation] “[My diploma] was recognized because I acquired experience after I found a job. I show my experience on my résumé. Yes. So that’s what gives me a way to find other work” (Valérie).

#### **1.5.4 Challenges related to official languages (English and French)**

It seems clear that respondents are well aware that understanding English is essential to becoming part of Winnipeg society:

[translation] Because I saw that everything here is in English; a lot of things are in English. Even if you go to the hospital, you encounter a lot of things that are in English; they use English at the bank. When you go shopping, it’s in English. I said that I need to focus, I will focus on English because here English is the language of the majority. That’s why I continue to study English. (Odile)

Respondents use a number of strategies to develop their English. Some of them will socialize with people with whom they can speak English. [translation] “I am looking for where I can have conversations in English over the long term” (Gertrude). Others give up going to places where they cannot practice their English, even going to a new place of worship. [translation] “I need to improve English, to know the language better. But I don’t like churches where we only pray in French or in other languages.” (Carmen.) Some of our respondents were fairly

confident that they could at least get by in English, because they had learned the basics of the language. But only if the conversation is slow: [translation] “A person might speak super fast. It leads to the ‘you know’s.’ You know, ‘Sir, excuse me,’ can you speak a bit more slowly? But he can understand, he can speak, he can write, he just needs speed” (Carmen).

We have noticed that young people are managing better and faster than parents or other adults. It is easier for them to integrate into other English-only communities. However, they face many challenges when it comes to health or education. In terms of health, the lack of French-speaking and even bilingual health professionals means that most health services in Winnipeg are offered in English. Families need a family doctor, and it is not easy for families to find one. This respondent stated that [translation] “... for 8 years [my] father was looking for a family doctor who speaks French. He never found one.” (Odile). In families, this situation means that the youngest children who are able to learn English a little faster than their parents are pressed into service as interpreters when they are needed: [translation] “And it was something where we children had to integrate to some extent because we had to translate ... for them, and it’s something that I was pleased to translate but that’s it” (Carmen). [translation] “For health care, I have a family doctor, who speaks English. But because my English is poor, we call the interpreter.” (Odile)

With regard to education, there are a number of French-language secondary schools in Winnipeg, but there is only one French-language university. Courses are given in English only for certain specialized fields, making it less likely that Francophone immigrants will go back to school.

[translation] “The boy wanted to learn mechanics, but mechanics here in Winnipeg is offered only in English. And when he went there to study mechanics in English, he said that it’s very difficult. And he told me that he wants to go to Ottawa to study mechanics in French. (Odile)

For other programs, such as nursing or social work requiring interaction with clients, proficiency in English is necessary and English Benchmark Level Seven is often required. In addition, the question of language proficiency is a problem for some immigrants who do not speak either official language: [translation] “When I arrived here, I was told that we will speak French and English only. I said how come? Because over there at home, we speak only Swahili” (Odile). This is less of a problem for the ones who passed through transit camps where they could develop their English to a certain extent: [translation] “In Uganda, we spoke English. Uganda is English only. When we got there, we couldn’t find a French school. I took him to the private English school there” (Berthe). That is something to go on, even if they still have some difficulties with phrasing and intonation because of local variations. The little that they have learned allows them to at least get by to access services themselves and to make themselves better understood without having to rely on an interpreter. [translation] “...the first thing I’m going to say is ‘My English is not good... I’m sorry.’ So, [they answer] No, don’t worry, you speak very good things like that, but I’m always groping for words” (Laurence).

The challenge of communicating in English is amplified for senior immigrants. Learning a new language at their age is not easy: [translation] “Because I started to learn English at the age of 58. It’s not easy.” (Irène). Some develop strategies to cope relatively well:

[translation] When we got here, even when I was just going grocery shopping, it's like I'm deaf and mute. And when I go to buy something, sometimes I get out all my money. I give it to the cashier who takes what she needs and says, this is your change. So that's how I went grocery shopping." (Élodie)

English is a major challenge because these refugees have studied in French-speaking countries where everything is in French. Respondents recognize that not being able to speak English in Winnipeg holds them back from finding work, going to school, and meeting basic needs.

As for French, even though most respondents live in St. Boniface, one of Winnipeg's Francophone neighborhoods, their narrative reveals that they have difficulty meeting Francophones and finding services where they can speak in French.

[translation] "It's hard to find French-speaking people, even the services here...even though they say it's French, it wasn't really French, it was always in English and so something was missing, and say I was a little comfortable speaking when I was learning English, but people like my father, St. Boniface was like the place where we hoped to find things like...they had to come here to say things like shopping, buying la nourriture." (Carmen)

In these supposedly Francophone neighborhoods, Francophone refugees are hopeful of meeting people who speak French. These respondents find that French, far from being a handicap for them, is instead an advantage because the country is already bilingual. They know that Canada is a country with two official languages. They even think themselves lucky given the bewilderment of other refugees coming from non-French speaking countries. Those who are learning or deepening their knowledge of French find that there are many similarities between French and English words. For them, it is just a language they were not speaking or studying either. When studying the language, they are confronted with the Manitoban accent, which can slow language acquisition: [translation] "I couldn't understand a thing. The Franco-Manitoban accent was very difficult for me. The teachers spoke quickly." (Ursula)

They run the risk that they themselves may lose their French in Winnipeg, where English is predominant, if they do not make the effort to speak French at home with their children. The realities of immigration in Francophone minority communities make refugee integration difficult. English, being the dominant language, is proving to be an essential requirement to these refugees' integration, because they must be able to communicate their needs.

Integration involves obtaining a regular or even permanent job. A number of participants noted that English is the language of work, even when services are designated bilingual. They are aware that bilingualism means speaking in English first and in French if necessary. Work is an essential factor in the integration process. However, the predominance of English along with the lack of recognition of prior learning or credentials prevents respondents from finding a good job, receiving a good education, reaching their potential in the community and feeling like they belong. In addition, most of them have limited access to decent and safe housing because of insufficient purchasing power.

## 1.6 Services received by French-speaking refugees

Our study shows that the correspondence between the services provided by agencies and services received by the refugees is not a perfect one. This discrepancy is reason enough for us to turn our attention to the services the participants in our survey actually received. The services received that were mentioned in the interviews can be divided into six categories: education (1.6.1), housing (1.6.2), information and orientation (1.6.3), health (1.6.4), financial and food assistance (1.6.5), and social and cultural activities (1.6.6).

### 1.6.1 Education

For the most part, education services mean official languages classes and refresher courses for refugees who need to catch up with their schooling. Education services refugees received are the English courses offered by Start Manitoba. The second education services refugees receive are refresher courses in French.

[translation] I took French lessons for a year and a half. ... I learned a lot because I got even better in the language. Because it was very hard to speak French again. I improved, in a year and a half I saw that ... I can carry a conversation with another person. (Odile)

Finally, refugees who have not completed high school receive refresher courses offered by the DSFM, in particular evening classes at Collège Louis Riel, in partnership with other agencies serving newcomers such as AF, USB, and SFM.

### 1.6.2 Housing

There are essentially two types of housing services refugees received. First, refugees receive temporary accommodation when they arrive. Then, they are offered counselling services to help them find permanent housing after the temporary housing.

[translation] We were given a good welcome by AF. They took us in. We were housed for at least 21 days. Because I had a large family, they had to look for a big house with five to six rooms so that we could stay together. Basically, we were given a good welcome. (Robert)

The situation of PSRs is different from that of GARs because privately sponsored refugees do not have to worry about finding housing in their first year in Canada. The sponsor not only finds them a housing unit, but pays for it as well.

[translation] Through the church, when we got here, I saw that the house was fully equipped; it had everything. And every month, they give us money: to pay for the airfare, food; they put us up for a year. (Odile)

### 1.6.3 Information and orientation

There are two main aspects to the services received in this category. The first aspect concerns how to get along day to day in the host city, like shopping, using electronic money, where to find services (food, health care, transportation, legal):

[translation] So, when we arrived, we had to continue with WP, because there were integration programs. ... That's where we took an English course. ... It was a six-week program. We learned how to live in [Canadian] society, how to shop, how to manage

money. ... And we were shown how to pay for groceries, how to pay for everything, where you can get things for less. Yes, the AF helped us a lot. (Daniel)

The second aspect of the information and orientation services received focus on the job market, information on jobs, writing a resumé, and job searching.

[translation] They [information and orientation service providers] gave classes on how to write a resumé, how to apply for a job, what to add to a resumé. They showed me how to write resumé, how to look for work, where to look for work, and with whom. (Robert)

#### **1.6.4 Health**

This category of services received by French-speaking refugees is the most used. As we have already mentioned, refugees do not receive health services from immigration agencies directly, but these agencies help them in their search for a family doctor, a public health nurse and available health clinics (localization).

[translation] AF has made many services available to us. Health care services, for example. In the first week of our arrival, we went to see a family doctor. We had someone who supported us for an entire year. We received care and all that. At times, I was sick, and I was treated. (William)

#### **1.6.5 Financial and food assistance**

Lastly, most of our participants received financial assistance from public sources (government) or private sources (churches).

[translation] “... I get help from Revenue Canada, because when you have your minimum monthly income ... you can ask for help with day care.” (Rose)

French-speaking refugees receive financial assistance, whether it be from the government or from sponsors such as a church, and also receive food assistance. Most PSRs confirmed that they have access to food when they arrive and even for some time afterwards. Churches are often said to be good providers of such services. Publicly sponsored interviewees also confirmed that they have received or still are receiving food assistance from refugee agencies such as the AF.

#### **1.6.6 Social and cultural activities**

Refugee participants stressed some of the social and cultural activities they have enjoyed since arriving in Manitoba. These activities range from participation in the Festival du Voyageur, dance classes, and summer camps for youth, to cultural and exploratory trips to rural municipalities.

[translation] And even where we lived at IRCOM, there were different activities during the summer, even during the entire time we lived there...for homework after school, there were different activities there to keep children busy. (Gisèle)

[translation] I had been here for two weeks when AF found the Métis community for me. So I was active in that for the whole year. ...the Manitoba Metis Federation, which asked the AF to bring together the Metis and African children for a summer camp program. It was good to get the children together on weekends. I liked that. (Ursule)

## 1.7 Evaluation by French-speaking refugees of services received

Refugees commented on the quality and availability of the services they received from different agencies. Although our interviewees gave the names of the agencies providing these services, we believe that it is more consistent with the objectives of the study to present their evaluation of these services received without naming the agencies that provided them.

More than half of the refugees interviewed said that they were happy with the services they received from various agencies in terms of reception, information and orientation, especially when these services were offered in French. This same proportion of refugees values transitional housing services, assistance to find housing and financial support to pay rent, depending on the length of time and the agencies providing these types of services. Secondly, job search services and integration assistance were also positively evaluated by refugees.

However, nearly one in three refugees interviewed was critical in their evaluation of the services they received. The number one service criticized is education. Interviewees complained that refresher classes were too mixed in terms of grade level, age, learners' expectations, and so on. Refugees said that this imbalance disrupts their scholastic progress and makes them less motivated to go back to school. The orientation services were then criticized as not being long enough. Also, some refugees called for a more detailed and personalized orientation over the course of the year, for example.

Refugees not only gave positive or negative evaluations of the services they have received, but also made some suggestions to improve, or even develop and/or expand the pool of recipients of agency services. They propose that more services be offered to youth and that the base of recipients of programs for seniors be developed. They want improved job search services and more jobs created for Francophones. Finally, they ask for more instruction on how to manage their money.

[translation] ... AF should not only focus on finding jobs for young people ... finding jobs is good but they should also try to explore what they (want), what do they want to do with their life? ... I do not know where, somewhere, but create jobs and then, jobs where you speak French. (Carmen)

[translation] ...they should show people two or three houses and then people can tell them how much rent is. They can calculate their budget. ... You can learn how to save money, because there are many people who cannot save money. (Fernand)

[translation] ... There must be more work for immigrants, find work, since immigrants leaving their country don't have money or anything else. Yes, if they receive \$500 each month, what does that mean? Here in Canada, \$500 is not to be sneezed at. (Daniel)

## Chapter 2 Research findings: What practitioners have to say

### 2.1 Profile of agencies working with refugees

As part of our study, we interviewed 17 practitioners working for or representing 15 agencies working directly or indirectly with refugees. Most of these agencies are Francophone, but we have seen fit to include four Anglophone agencies, three of which provide front-line services to newcomers (WP, IRCOM and MIA) and one practitioner that works with refugees indirectly, i.e. working with agencies offering front-line services to newcomers (IPW). Inclusion of these four agencies meets one of the requirements of the IRCC request for proposals which is to elucidate the role played by the Anglophone majority community in the process of settling and integrating French-speaking refugees, as well as to determine whether there is a relationship between the Anglophone and Francophone communities supporting these refugees.

All 11 Francophone agencies belong to the RIF. Founded in 2011, the RIF is a group of Francophone agencies that jointly develop appropriate strategies to promote Francophone immigration (RIF, 2017.) There are 17 of these agencies, and our selection focused on those that work directly with refugees and that provide settlement and integration services corresponding to the services included in IRCC's remit, namely accommodation and housing, help with settlement, education, employment and integration. A document describing each participating agency is appended to this report (Appendix E).

The participating agencies were analyzed using a few factors. The first factor is with respect to the funding of these agencies. Representatives from seven agencies said that they were funded by the federal government. Representatives from five agencies pointed out that they receive funding from diverse sources that may include private donors and partnerships with other agencies. It is worth mentioning that in Winnipeg, partnerships and ties are common among agencies working with newcomers. These ties came through during the interviews and are essential to understanding the dynamics of settlement and integration services.

The second factor is the services themselves. Services fall into two categories: direct and indirect. The first type is front-line services, in which the agencies are in direct contact with refugees. The main direct services offered are with respect to health, education, early childhood, housing and employment assistance. The second type of services offered by the agencies involved in our study are with respect to the coordination of front-line services. They work not with newcomers, but with agencies by organizing round tables and workshops to guide and coach those working with refugees.

The third factor is the size of agencies. They are distinguished by the use of employees and the mobilization to varying degrees of volunteers depending on events and activities. It should be noted that agencies in direct contact with refugees provide ongoing services through permanent human resources ranging from 20 to 70 employees. Agencies providing one-time support usually employ fewer permanent staff but rely on volunteering. Lastly, agencies rely primarily on volunteers to support refugees. This includes those agencies for which offering services to refugees is just one part of what they do.

The fourth factor concerns the location and language of work of the agencies. All are located downtown and, more specifically, the Francophone organizations are all located in the St. Boniface ward. As for the language of work, note that beyond the Francophone/Anglophone agency divide, all agencies have human resources who can serve refugees in English and French. Four agencies are able to provide services in the native language (other than English or French) of refugees. This can be crucial in the early days of the resettlement process because, although refugees may have chosen French as an official language, their knowledge may be rudimentary: they may associate French with the trauma they went through during their migration.

The fifth factor concerns the age of the organizations (year of creation), which can be an indicator of expertise and maturity in the services provided to refugees. Nine of the organizations were founded before 2000, while six were founded after. Without commenting on the link between the quality of services and the number of years active, we will mention that the Canadian government and Canadian civil society, as part of its formal humanitarian commitments, developed the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the settlement and integration of refugees early on in the 1970s. The relative age of the agencies participating in our study is clear from their organizational structure. Most of the agencies interviewed have hierarchical structures that have been established according to the services offered. It therefore seemed important to us when conducting the interviews to interview a first-level manager—for example, an administrator or a director—and in other cases, knowing the functional diversity of the services offered, we added decision makers or second-level managers—for example, coordinators, advisors or team leaders.

## **2.2 Challenges for agencies serving refugees**

A number of agencies are active in receiving and assisting refugees in and around Winnipeg. They help them to put down roots in the city or, increasingly, in rural areas. Like refugees, these agencies face a number of challenges that may prevent them from properly carrying out their mission to help their clientele integrate successfully. They frequently mentioned challenges related to language and culture as well as insufficient infrastructure, funding and housing for refugees.

With respect to infrastructure, our respondents say they are confronting a lack of physical space where they can comfortably carry out their activities. Agencies have buildings where they can house their offices. The issue is their ability to accommodate staff and their refugee clientele. [translation] “Obviously, [there are issues] from a logistical point of view, and then the buildings themselves. We are scattered among three offices. So, we do not have enough space. So, that in itself is a big challenge that needs to be met. To bring the team together.” (I2O1)

A welcoming place would not only allow them to work efficiently, but also—and most importantly—to receive help from volunteers who agree to come from time to time to supervise the children, while the parents take care of regularizing their situation. Again, in connection with infrastructure, these agencies need to be equipped with means of transportation so that they can travel to resolve one-time and urgent problems.

In addition, finding housing for refugees is another challenge raised by the agencies. It is not always easy to find housing, especially since the number of refugees arriving is on the increase. They also need to be provided them with a minimum to start with:

[translation] There can be days when we need to give out five mattresses. Then maybe fifteen families are looking for mattresses, it's a real challenge, for sofas too: each person needs a sofa to sit on and then a mattress to sleep on. (I06)

Agency funding is another major challenge. Without substantial financial support, it is difficult to help refugees integrate. The respondents acknowledge that the authorities are assisting refugees, but their assistance plan does not take into account the evolution in the number of immigrants nor the additional expenses for each refugee and the care of his or her family in terms of education and health. Agencies often draw on their limited funds to make ends meet. [translation] "Our budget is tight so we offer...our budget has stayed the same in the last 10 years but the program has evolved without the budget that comes with it. We are limited to once a week in the city and once a month to every four places in rural areas." (I103)

Mastering the language of communication is a major challenge with refugees. It is a challenge for agencies to assist refugees, especially those with who speak neither official language. The new waves of refugees come for the most part from Arab countries: [translation] "Most of them, especially those from Syria, might speak only Arabic. So their challenge will be [learning] French and English. Ours will be to provide them with services in one of Canada's official languages when they speak only Arabic." (I203) These refugees speak their languages and agency staff do not understand them, which slows down the work they are mandated to do. Some of these refugees can get by in French, but they often do not indicate this when filling out the forms. The risk is that Francophone refugees are referred to other Anglophone structures before being transferred to Francophone agencies, which can cause delays in the processing of their files.

[translation] I meet families who never told this to anyone. They crossed the border, they've been everywhere, they've been to WP. They never said "I speak French fluently; I am a French speaker." They didn't realize that it was important. So, sometimes these people learn a year or two later that there are French schools, but no one told them about them because they didn't seem interested. (I203)

Language challenges are very important, because integration is difficult without meaningful communication between refugees and members of the host society. In fact, the agencies have done such good work in this area, so that refugees can be better understood and have access to the appropriate documentation, that the authorities have agreed to help by making it easier to get translations: [translation] "You cannot just take a document in English and then read it out in French. Translation takes time. So, in the last two years we have managed to get the government to start translating." (I203)

Being able to translate communications and documents is a big step towards refugee integration, according to our agency respondents. The government's help for translation does a world of good.

Agencies had the idea of casting their gaze outside Winnipeg to find solutions to the challenges of refugee integration. Exploring the rural environment is a great addition. This is a very important aspect that allows agencies to expand their work of managing refugees. By helping refugees, by finding them housing and the necessary, safe household furnishings, agencies in turn agree to help relocate refugees to rural areas where there is often work but a shortage of labour: [translation] “We sometimes have the challenge of available employment. We want to draw people outside the city, so it’s a matter of transportation, the logistics to get there” (I1O3).

This means that the agencies do a good job of coaching refugees. However, agencies perceive shortcomings in infrastructure and financial resources, which hampers their ability to provide services to refugees. But still another challenge is related to understanding a difference culture:

[translation] One of the first challenges is related to understanding people because these are people who have sometimes come from far away, who have experienced many challenges leaving them with after-effects and trauma; then it can happen that people are really not open enough to the new things that they have to learn, in which case you have to repeat again and again; you have to stress a certain number of things. (I2O1)

## **2.3 Services provided by agencies**

Agencies offer different types of services to refugees in Winnipeg. We interviewed practitioners from nearly all agencies working with Francophone refugees. We also interviewed four representatives of Anglophone agencies, knowing that French-speaking refugees are benefiting and have benefited from the services offered by these agencies. In this regard, it should be noted that three of the Anglophone agencies we talked to play a support role for agencies providing front-line services to refugees (IPW), a housing support role (WP), and an employment, housing and integration service role (IRCOM). The fourth agency, which does not have government assistance, offers diversified refugee services (MIA).

Interviews with practitioners from Francophone and Anglophone agencies enabled us to identify the main services offered by these agencies. We categorized them into seven types of services: reception, information and orientation (2.3.1); education and training (2.3.2); job search (2.3.3); health care (2.3.4); housing (2.3.5); social and cultural services (2.3.6); and lastly, personalized services (2.3.7).

### **2.3.1 Reception, information and orientation**

Nearly all practitioners confirmed that they provide reception, information and orientation services for newcomers. These services relate to life in Canada, laws and rights, the job market, and existing services and consist of [translation] “orientation about life in Canada, its laws, education system, housing, the rights and responsibilities of tenants” (I2O1) or “basic orientations [which] covers health, legal, banking system, education, and little bit of information about the society and how it’s structured, and the of course [sic] the medical system” (IO7).

These information services are of the utmost importance because they are the first ones newcomers receive and it is from this information that they can often obtain other services

later in their settlement and integration process. Indeed, I1O1 notes that the agency [translation] “starts by welcoming [refugees] at the airport and then ... [helps] with administrative procedures, transitional housing, permanent housing, and integration into daily life.” This type of service [translation] “allows them to gradually integrate the new environment chosen for them” (I2O1). Winnipeg has a climate all its own, which is why I1O2 [translation] “offers a workshop on winter.” This type of service also entails, according to IO12, [translation] “that we bring them to different communities to see what is happening outside” Winnipeg.

Generally, these information services are delivered in two formats. On the one hand, they can be delivered in the form of a series of orientation sessions and/or collective workshops that refugees must attend to learn necessary information about laws and regulations, the education system, housing and the rights and responsibilities of tenants, etc. It is with this in mind that I1O2 offers [translation] “workshops on intercultural understanding.” On the other hand, the information services can be personalized to meet the individual’s needs. For example, as well as providing information relevant to the daily lives of newcomers, the CDEM also organizes individual information sessions of a more economical nature: information on rural areas, business opportunities, training cycles, etc.

Let us lastly point out that there are different types of information services:

We provide information and orientation. We provide referral services. We also provide them orientation and information about housing – temporary and permanent housing. ... things that we take for granted, for example, how to use the bank machine, how to withdraw money. How to do smart shopping, how to get around in the neighbourhood, how to take the bus. ... how to do cleaning. How to use the appliances in the apartment. Hygiene. Safety ... For example, budgeting, setting up an RESP account, smart shopping, using ATM, including currency, how to use the debit card, how to write a cheque we take these things for granted. For us, they’re simple, easy things. But for newcomer refugees, they make a big difference. Life skill trainers also provide training information too, because for some of the refugees, for example, who come from Africa or Asia, the weather is something that really needs to be taken seriously. We also provide information regarding emergency services – safety measures for the child, fire, food, and winter safety. (IO13)

### **2.3.2 Education and training**

For this type of service, we will distinguish between basic education offered to families and young people in terms of literacy and Francization (literacy and numeracy instruction), refresher courses for young adults who have not completed high school and computer literacy courses (Word, Excel, email, etc.), and then professional training, both to develop skills for wage-paid work and skills for entrepreneurship for a smooth transition to self-employment.

[translation] We have several entrepreneurial training sessions including a program, Business Start, that is much in demand. Business Start is a three-day training course to teach people aspects of starting a business, such as licences, permits, as well as financial projections, marketing strategies and advertising. ... We have other sessions on

importing and exporting, taxes, social media, how to find your niche, and time management. (I1O3)

It should also be noted that for this type of service, Francophone agencies work in close collaboration, particularly those that are part of the RIF, for which education and training are strategic priorities. The activities and services related to basic education and professional training are organized for the most part by DSFM in partnership with several other stakeholders. Job-related professional training activities and services are primarily offered by agencies such as Pluri-elles and AF, while entrepreneurship training is a core part of the services provided by the CDEM and most recently the WTC in Winnipeg.

[translation] We started a new basic literacy and numeracy program this year, and at the same time [our clients] were also enrolled in physical education, music, nutrition, all the courses they could manage with limited numeracy and literacy. Meanwhile, we have a partnership with the CDEM, to get these young people started, especially if they are 16 and over, acquiring work experience, so that in the following two years, they can enter the job market. (IO4)

[translation] We have family literacy programs for refugees. (IO10)

Anglophone organizations are also involved, as this quote attests:

We have a life skills training department. This department assists the refugees in providing knowledge of life in Canada and connecting them to community. And that's part of the services the life skill training program supports our clients in acquiring practical life skills and Canadian practices. (IO13)

### 2.3.3 Job search

This type of service is offered by several agencies, both Francophone and Anglophone. It is worth mentioning that some agencies offer only office space and IT tools (computers, Internet access, etc.) for job searches, while others offer advice, training cycles and workshops on job search techniques (resumé writing, interview techniques, how to apply for jobs, etc.). Leading Francophone agencies offering the second type of services related to job search are the CDEM, which manages government employment assistance programs (Premier Choix, which is a federal program to assist job seekers in finding salaried work; Start Business, which is a provincial self-employment assistance program) and Pluri-elles which offers training cycles ranging from how to write a resumé to various job search techniques and help for job seekers.

[translation] We have a program giving young people aged 15 to 30 access to training and placements with employers. It is a four-week program and the afterward there is a five-week paid placement. After that, the employer takes over ... We even have a program to foster self-employment, for people who are unemployed and want to start a business. (I1O3)

[translation] We help people write resumés and prepare their job search. We also have a liaison officer who is in contact with employers and clients. We hold workshops, we create portfolios, and so on ... to put employers and newcomers in touch. Another service that is also offered in the community, to companies, is the initial screening for a job offer. We receive the offer, we look in our database, we sort [the applications] and

then at that point it's easier because we tell our clients [refugees] to send your resumé, say that you are recommended by (name of agency). (IO10)

On the Anglophone side, it is clear that IRCOM and WP are the key agencies providing support to newcomers in their search for salaried employment and self-employment: “We offer workshops as well, periodic workshops on things like starting your own business, or job search in Canada for the adults. For the youth, we actually have a very specific, provincially funded program called the Youth Employment Program.” (IO8)

### 2.3.4 Health care

Health care is another important part of integration. It is a matter of concern for all those who move from one country to another, and even more so when it comes to refugees. It should be noted that immigrant populations in general and refugees in particular come from different cultures where access to health services is uncertain and so they do not instinctively seek them out. They may therefore be somewhat shy and show reluctance to readily open up to strangers (in the context of care for example) or simply not be able to explain what is troubling them due to an insufficient command of French or English. The populations we interviewed do in fact exhibit these characteristics.

Despite the fact that the care offered to refugees is free of charge, some are unwilling to seek medical attention or be hospitalized when they are sick, simply because of language or cultural barriers. Because of a lack of resources, it is not always possible to have interpreters for those who do not speak English or French, or simply to have professionals who are of the same sex (a female doctor, for example) to meet a patient who would be unwilling to be examined by a man. With respect to chronic diseases, for example, there is a lack of specialists in certain diseases (tropical diseases) afflicting some refugees.

The services offered in this area are not direct. In fact, the practitioners we interviewed indicated that their agencies do not offer health services per se, but rather refer their clients to health services, particularly in French.

Some agencies have developed projects for new mothers and babies in collaboration with health care professionals such as public health nurses, social workers, dieticians, etc.

[translation] It can be through nutrition, it may have to do with breastfeeding, it may have to do with Vitamin D or depression. There are all kinds of different topics that we will deal with, and the dietitian, the nurse and myself, we take turns presenting them. You come to my program with your newborn and then I see that you are very sad, there are many things going on in your home life. I can refer you to the public health nurse; she can see if there is something going on that you need more support with. ... With the help of the dietitian and the nurse, we can offer support once a week. (IO11)

[translation] We did a project where the public health nurse is supposed to inform people about services in French at the first new mother and baby visit. (IO5)

We refer clients to health care services for immediate medical needs. [...] depending on the health and the medical needs of the family, sometimes we refer our clients to Mount

Carmel Clinic, or Aurora Family Therapy Centre, or SMD – that's Societies for Manitobans with Disabilities. (IO13)

### 2.3.5 Housing

Housing is a key variable in the refugee resettlement process. In fact, through housing we see clear differences between the types of sponsorship received. When they arrive, those who have been sponsored by the government receive temporary short-term (no longer than two weeks) accommodation, usually in the form of a room paid for by Anglophone (WP) and Francophone (Abri Marguerite via the AF) agencies. Afterward, they are responsible, with the help of the agency, for finding permanent housing they pay for themselves. As for refugees sponsored privately, including by a church, they have more comfortable lodgings (in a house) for a longer period (at least one year) at the sponsor's expense. This comparison shows us that GARs and PSRs are not on an equal footing in their settlement process. PSRs have a head start because they do not have to worry about housing for a year. They can direct their energy to other aspects of their integration process.

[translation] While they are in transitional housing, someone will be working to find their first home. One of the prerequisites is that the neighborhood is safe and that the house is in good condition meaning no mould, no repairs needed, and hygienic. (I2O1)

We go to the organisation that serve [sic] this client with housing and tell them what the shortcomings are in matter of housing and we will identify problems: there's a problem with rent, there's a problem with lack of affordable housing, and find places and connect individual with apartment, assist them to transfer from temporary to permanent residence. (IO7)

we serve both our tenants – we have about 300 individuals in this building and about 250 in the new building. People actually live where we work. We work where they live. (IO8)

We provide temporary accommodation based on availability ... we partner with many agencies that provide similar services. Service provider organizations that primary [sic] provide services to newcomer refugee families. Once they come here, we open a file with them, we assign them a settlement counsellor, and then we provide settlement services because they are eligible to receive the IRCC-funded settlement services. (IO13)

### 2.3.6 Social and cultural services

Practitioners interviewed also mentioned social and cultural services. These services provide an opportunity for refugees to get together and have fun by taking part in recreational activities.

[translation] We are also organizing a big gathering that will take place in a few weeks' time. It's like a concert for children where parents can come with their children. There are one-off activities, and we also have workshops every second week; we have a movie night pyjama party one Friday a month. We plan activities and then we advertise them throughout the community. (IO5)

We have these amazing soccer teams, we have basketball, track and field, and we do hockey a little bit. Not a team, per se, but we have a hockey program. So lots and lots of activities day in and day out here. (IO8)

### 2.3.7 Personalized services

This section does not relate to a specific area or type of services. Rather, it is the way in which services can be offered. It should be noted that most practitioners we interviewed emphasized that most of the services offered by agencies are personalized. There is an explanation for this. Note that although the French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg are predominantly Congolese, they have very different needs. This diversity is due to the diversity of journeys (chronologically and geographically) and the diversity of their socio-demographic profile (age, sex, level of education, family situation, etc.). This explains why their needs are varied. This variety and heterogeneity call for personalized services. However, we have noted a considerable gap between the personalized services agencies offer refugees and what refugees are asking for. In other words, we cannot assume that the needs of refugees are being met because personalized services are predominant. Moreover, the personalized services offered are often limited to meetings with administrators that rarely go beyond paperwork.

[translation] Work placement initiatives are individualized. With employers as well, who we have retained thanks to the experience and results we have racked up to date. Especially thanks to the success we've had with previous placements. So it really allows us to meet the particular needs of each person. (I1O3)

I think with adults we do those basic, basic supports around drop-in services and helping with filling out application forms or uh, updating resumé's, even using our computers if, if there's a need. (IO8)

[translation] Obviously, there are special needs, based on client intake. We identify the special needs or let's say needs specific to each client. (I1O1)

[translation] Often, there are people who are a bit shy to speak in public. So we meet privately or individually to really understand what that person is thinking and then see what his or her needs are to be able to help him or her. These are collective training sessions but also we have not yet mentioned the work placement initiatives, and all that is individualized. With employers as well, who we have retained thanks to the experience and results we have racked up to date. Especially thanks to the success we've had with previous placements. So it really allows us to meet the particular needs of each person. (I1O3)

[translation] It's personalized depending on the family, how many people there are, how many children are in the family. The needs of a family with an only child are not the same as those of a family of 10 children. I would say that it is personalized. (IO6)

When a refugee needs specific computer training, we will do it with him to help him get a job. So we have done that with some individuals. Let's say someone was going to enter a profession where Excel is needed, he or she would be trained in Excel. (IO10)

## 2.4 Evaluation of services by practitioners

We asked agency practitioners to describe the categories of recipients of their services, the conditions under which they provide their services to the recipients, and also whether they evaluate and follow up their services. Clearly, all the agency practitioners we interviewed identified their clients as being the most vulnerable among newcomers economically, financially, socially and psychologically.

As for the conditions under which services are provided, our interviews with Francophone agency practitioners confirm that their services are almost exclusively aimed at French-speaking newcomers and their services are offered in French, while Anglophone agency practitioners confirmed that their services are open to all requesting them, but that they provide services only in English. All practitioners from the agencies we interviewed indicated that services are provided based on the recipient's status in Canada.

[translation] The service we have for refugees, it's just that when they come here as refugees, there is a period of time during which they are waiting for housing. And during that period, we cannot really help them. We wait until their housing is approved and that's when they become our clients. As long as you are still a permanent resident, as long as you have not yet acquired Canadian citizenship, you can still access our services. So, people are coming to us who have been here for six years, but because they have not yet acquired citizenship, they can still take advantage of our services. (I2O3)

As for the evaluations and follow-up of the services provided by the agencies, the practitioners we interviewed confirmed that they follow up with recipients and even told us about proposals for improving service to refugees that emerge from their follow-up.

[translation] Regardless of the program, there is always follow-up, there are evaluations when someone leaves, a follow-up is always done. We are rigorously evaluated; that's why we have statistics. (IO10)

Some practitioners went so far as to put forward various ways of improving their services to refugees. These proposals are more of a material, organizational, social and cultural nature.

[translation] We would like to offer our clients more affordable housing in the medium term. So, for example, people arriving here, we would give them affordable housing for a year. We should look for someone to conduct a strategic study for the Francophone community and determine what is needed to bring the community to life and make it effective. At this stage, I think integration, if there is something that should be done, I think we need the participation of the community, even where settlement is concerned. You have to engage an entire community; it's a big job. And it's not just the job of agencies. Who will get members of the community to accept immigrants or refugees? It's everyone's job. (I1O1)

[translation] More child care available for moms who want to get into the labour force or go to school or retrain. (I2O1)

[translation] We will maintain the employability assistance program for young newcomers and expand it to rural areas, and we want to focus on educating employers

regarding hiring newcomers and identifying micro-sites for jobs and business opportunities in our communities. (I1O3)

[translation] It just so happens that we are in the process of developing partnerships with our colleagues and partners to see if we can do more coaching, just so that we can tailor certain services to these young people. It's always a double-edged sword, because on one side, they do have that need. (IO4)

[translation] Perhaps we will need more training on recognizing the mental health needs of refugees. To understand what it is like living in a war zone, what kind of impact that has...we certainly do not want to do counselling, but we would still like to be able to refer others to counselling services. (IO5)

Kind of like after-school programs, or kind of youth- youth focused programs. We'd like to have a kind of mental health services at WP. (IO13)

[translation] And then maybe we would like to do more follow-up with the people who went through our program because except for young people up to age 30, the people over age 30, it's just a short meeting or we will do it at another time. (I2O3)

## **2.5 What do agencies think about different programs?**

The agencies running the various programs we looked at (AF, CDEM, Flavie-Laurent, Plurielles, MIA, etc.) which, in one way or another, are involved in the process of receiving and integrating refugees and immigrants in general appreciate the financial support they receive from the governments for their work. They point out, however, that the needs are huge and that funding generally falls short of meeting the real needs of the people they are mandated to help.

## Chapter 3 Analysis, discussion and recommendations

This chapter aims to analyze, in light of the findings of the first two chapters, the issue of settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg. Our analysis is structured around five variables that are at the heart of the settlement and integration process. For each of these variables, we identified shortcomings, issues and recommendations based on findings from the interviews (Chapter 1 and 2).

### 3.1 Housing

The first step in integrating into any community is having a roof over your head. Housing is therefore a priority for the refugee, whether he or she is alone or with his or her family. Our sample is not immune to this reality. Nearly all the French-speaking refugees interviewed said that housing was a real battle, whether due to inadequate supply, cost, or finding units large enough for those with big families.

#### 3.1.1 Shortcomings

The housing shortcomings identified in the refugee and practitioner interviews are as follows: the first shortcoming is transitional housing, i.e. the housing occupied by GARs upon their arrival before they obtain permanent, sustainable housing. To start, this housing is insufficient infrastructurally. There is a lack of space, which means that refugees and their families stay there only for a very short time. This puts pressure on them to find permanent housing, since they do not have time to do a proper search. Also, this transitional housing (rooms) does not meet the needs of refugees who often have several children. The second housing shortcoming relates to services provided by agencies to find permanent housing. These services are insufficient insofar that there is no real service that collaborates with other resources to not only find and identify available housing units, but also to inspect these units to ensure that they are suitable from a health and functional point of view, and to act as intermediaries between refugee tenants and landlords. The third shortcoming relates to the availability of housing, its cost and the type of housing. It is true that in Winnipeg, and in St. Boniface in particular, the occupancy rate is very high. This scarcity drives up the cost of housing. On top of that, the few units available are rarely suited to the family profile of French-speaking refugees. For example, our participants tell us that rent for a two-bedroom unit starts at \$1,400 per month. This amount takes up almost the entire amount of income assistance a family receives from the federal government, which means that the family will depend on family allowances, which are not being put to the use for which they were intended, and food banks. Refugees are therefore torn between their need for food and their need for shelter. The fourth and final shortcoming is the location of housing. The relatively few affordable housing units available to refugees are generally far from the settlement and integration services offered by agencies (Francophone education, health care, help with job searching, etc.) and the jobs themselves. As a result, refugees are less mobile due to the costs of transportation and the lack of private transportation. They are spatially marginalized by being relatively far from public services and areas of interest.

#### 3.1.2 Issues

It is clear that major social issues are raised by these shortcomings. Given that housing consumes family income assistance and family allowances, refugee families find themselves in twofold poverty: family poverty and child poverty. This twofold poverty is an affront to the

dignity of refugees and compromises their integration into their new society. Child poverty caused by the high cost of housing is of particular concern as it jeopardizes the future of the next generation. Society as a whole loses. Housing shortcomings also raise an issue linked to poverty, namely health and well-being. First, GARs need to find permanent housing fairly quickly, since transitional housing is short term, which puts intense stress on them that further complicates their integration process. This is not a concern for privately sponsored refugees, since permanent housing has already been found for them prior to their arrival in Canada. Second, poor (unsanitary) quality housing can have adverse effects on the health and well-being of refugees.

### **3.1.3 Recommendations**

1. Increase the number of transitional housing units (such as Abri Marguerite) so that everyone can avail of them for a longer period of time and therefore have enough time to look for adequate and affordable permanent housing.
2. The federal government could learn from the best practices of private sponsorship (paid housing for one year and longer) until the refugee can find decent housing.
3. Invest more in social housing. If they have a roof over their heads, refugees will put their energy elsewhere and they will be able to integrate more quickly and become active agents of society and get off welfare. In the medium and long term, they will start paying tax and start generating income for the government.
4. Create a housing assistance program. This program will not only make the search for housing more efficient (database containing information on units on offer, buildings and landlords), but also put refugees in touch with coordinators who will support them in their search for housing and act as intermediaries between the refugees and the landlord/sellers.
5. Decentralize housing. The government could find housing not far from where the jobs are, particularly in rural areas where there are jobs. The housing assistance program must have a “mobility incentive” component within the province to bring the potential workers (refugees) where businesses need them.

## **3.2 Employment and training**

Job market integration / access to employment is an important aspect of the overall integration of any newcomer. Through our survey, we noted that the job market integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg is problematic. Our study shows that they suffer from a higher unemployment rate than Manitobans. This finding is resonated in recent studies (Hari et al., 2013, Francis, 2010, Sherrell, 2010, Hiebert et al., 2009.) To better understand this integration variable, we identify the shortcomings related to employment and training and the issues raised by these shortcomings, and then set out some recommendations we believe are appropriate.

### **3.2.1 Shortcomings**

The shortcomings in employment and training are related to the issue of unemployment. One set of shortcomings is linked to the individual and the second set is institutional (supply and demand in the job market). Individual shortcomings are related to the language proficiency issue. On the one hand, few speak English which from the outset considerably compromises

their insertion into the job market in a setting like Winnipeg where French is a minority language. In spite of many efforts in past years to have French recognized in Winnipeg, it is still not a language of work in the same way English is. On the other hand, French-speaking refugees, who have chosen the official language of French to settle in Canada, often have an incomplete knowledge of French for several reasons. First, the long wait times between obtaining refugee status and when they actually enter into Canada can cause them to lose their fluency in French. Second, refugees may spend these long wait times in English-speaking camps or transit countries, which may further impair their ability to speak French. Third, as we have seen in Chapter 3, refugees may associate French with traumatic events, so they may therefore they want to dissociate themselves from anything that could remind them of those painful moments, including French. Individual shortcomings are also due to a refugee's limited network and the lack of recognition of diplomas and experience acquired in their country of origin. These shortcomings are also due to the fact that the vast majority of French-speaking refugees have dependents such as a spouse, children and others. This reduces their mobility by curtailing their ability to get around to look for and obtain a job. It should also be taken into account, in the portrait of these individual shortcomings, that the French-speaking refugees interviewed in our study are often, but certainly not exclusively, low-skilled workers. Having lived in instability for relatively long periods (refugee camps or transitional periods), some refugees did not have the opportunity to get any training. The long wait times refugees endure between obtaining refugee status and actually entering Canada makes matters worse. More generally, recent studies show that these wait times in the refugee status determination process and the ensuing uncertainty create a sense of insecurity among refugees that hinders their subsequent economic integration. Lastly, individual shortcomings also stem from a series of psychological factors related to the fact that none of the French-speaking refugees chose to settle in Winnipeg. Many refugees were destabilized when they arrived to the city. Some experienced culture and climate shocks that eroded morale—already severely tested by their recent past—and undermined their willingness or motivation to enter the job market.

Institutional or systematic shortcomings essentially boil down to job market supply and demand. They result from the nature and structure of the Manitoba economy itself. First, the subjects of our survey are hit harder by unemployment than the rest of the population, regardless of economic conditions. It should also be noted that while all refugees are hit by unemployment, women are doubly so. Then, the employment suffered by refugees is a result of the nature and structure of the Manitoba economy itself, which is based on SMEs that place high demands on job applicants. This economy requires a skilled workforce, unlike one based on large corporations. In short, the needs of businesses and the profile of refugees do not match. Also noteworthy is the geographic division of labour in the structure of Manitoba's economy itself: there is a significant gap between employment areas in rural communities and where refugees live, namely in urban settings; refugees want to be in the city since most settlement and integration services are located there. This geographical gap often condemns refugees to unemployment. The last institutional shortcoming is employment assistance services. Our study shows that many of the employment assistance services available to refugees do not take into account the realities refugees face. It appears that the range of employment assistance services is designed and created for a Canadian reality. They assume that those using these services are computer wizards or even digital technology natives, that they know where to look for jobs, and that they know how to write a covering letter and resumé according to Canadian standards. In other words, employment assistance services are

not tailored to the needs of the newcomers they should help. They assume that recipients are self-reliant, while newly arrived refugees are anything but. This creates a perverse effect: instead of helping refugees find a job, it drives them away from the job market. They are intimidated by the arduous process; they need to take computer courses to use employment assistance services. Lastly, it should be noted that while employment assistance services are not in line with the needs of newcomers, we do not even have an adaptability and employability program for French-speaking newcomers. The lack of such programs is a major institutional shortcoming in the area of employment and training.

### 3.2.2 Issues

The shortcomings we have identified raise important issues for integration in general and economic integration in particular. The first issue is poverty. When newcomers do not enter the job market, the first and most important consequence is poverty. This poverty is not only experienced in the short term but it is also likely to be passed on in the medium and long term, i.e. to subsequent generations. Poor parents who depend on last-resort social assistance, whether with income assistance provided by the federal government for up to a year or with the welfare provided by the province thereafter, will just be living hand to mouth with their families, seeing as the vast majority of our survey participants settled in Canada with their families: 17% of our interviewees had 1 or 2 children, 42% had 3 to 6 children, and 15% had 7 to 12. This subsistence living will have ramifications on the behaviour of children in schools and lead to them dropping out. The school behaviour of children will also have ramifications on school as a whole: it can potentially jeopardize a school's success by sparking a race to the bottom. In this way, the poverty of newcomers imperils the very viability of educational institutions, which represents a major risk and challenge. The poverty in which newcomers are relegated may, in the long term, place them in a precarious situation at retirement. The issue of poverty shows that the Canadian government brings in newcomers, refugees included, but it does not provide the necessary resources to make sure they are integrated. So much so that even some of the participants in our study said they left mediocrity in their home country only to find it in another form in Canada.

Marginalization or social exclusion is another important issue arising from poverty that is related to the shortcomings presented above. Poverty driven by lack of access to the job market or from professional down-grading/deskilling leads to social problems such as delinquency, homelessness and crime. The marginalization of refugees that is caused when they do not integrate into the job market risks creating recruitment pools for different movements espousing extremist and radicalizing ideologies. This is a considerable social issue.

The shortcomings we that have identified in relation to education and training raise an issue that we might call psychological. Refugees lose social and professional status when their qualifications are downgraded as a result of not integrating into the job market or holding down precarious jobs. This loss of status has significant psychological implications, including for self-esteem, and depression may ensue. These individual psychological effects may affect the refugee's family members and circle of friends.

One last issue raised by the shortcomings identified above could be described as social or civic. Without economic integration, refugees are citizens on paper only; they are technically

citizens, but second class ones. If Canada wants to make these newcomers full-fledged citizens who will be fully involved in the society of tomorrow, it needs to ensure that newcomers fully integrate into the job market. In other words, we would go so far as to say that it is only when they integrate into the job market that they can become a resource—and not a burden—to Canadian society, that they can be agents for social change, in short, full-fledged citizens. The future of Canadian society, but also the dignity of these newcomers, is at stake.

### **3.2.3 Recommendations**

Taking into account the shortcomings identified above and the issues raised by them, we recommend:

1. That training centres be set up so that refugees can be trained to work in SMEs. These centres should be mobile to better support refugees. They should offer short, practical training courses near workplaces. Finally, these centres should be flexible so that they can provide customized services to refugees.
2. That current employment assistance services be replaced by job market support services. Setting up such services requires an employment officer, meaning a mentor who takes responsibility for refugees willing to work as soon as they arrive in Canada until they enter the job market. The mentor will be responsible for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the training and employment of his or her protégés. The mentor will guide them toward the necessary training and adaptation, and ensure they enter the job market, by forging links with businesses and mobilizing government bridge-to-work and wage subsidy programs. It should be noted that this recommendation was made by many of the refugee participants.
3. That employment and training services offered to newcomers be decentralized. More of these services need to be located in rural areas to bring the labour supply closer to the demand. In the same vein, there is a need for programs that promote Manitoban inter-regional mobility to newcomers.

## **3.3 Education**

Our study reveals that education is important for young refugees and their parents alike (see section 1.4.2). Through education, young refugees can learn and upgrade to better find their way when integrating into their new society. But education is also a regulating element where it comes to the mindset and frustration of families regarding the slow pace of their integration. The parents interviewed were optimistic about their children's future. They say that while it is true that they take a dim view of their lack of integration, they are pleased to see how easily their children fit in the education system. Many parents told us that they made sacrifices, that is, they gave up trying to integrate themselves in the hope that their children would be integrated.

### **3.3.1 Shortcomings**

There are three of them and they are interrelated. The first one (education-related services) that emerged from the interviews with the refugees lies in the misalignment between the education they need and the education they receive. Many of the refugees in fact pointed out that the courses they were given did not meet their needs. In our view, this misalignment

reveals that courses given to refugees do not take into account their specific and diverse circumstances. For example, many refugees have a hard time balancing work and class attendance, particularly because of scheduling conflicts, lack of time or fatigue. This is all truer for single mothers. In fact, many refugees feel torn between, on the one hand, the financial need to earn a living and, on the other hand, the need to educate themselves to better integrate into their new country both socially and economically.

A second shortcoming is the heterogeneity of the refresher classes taken by many French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg. These refresher courses are very important since these refugees have gone through periods of varying lengths during which they received little to no education. It is precisely because their trajectories between their countries of origin and their actual arrival in Winnipeg differ that French-speaking refugees cannot be lumped together in the same classes with little regard to differences of age, level of education, and country of origin. Such mixed classes do not take into account the diversity of newcomers generally, let alone that of French-speaking refugees, and do not create a favourable learning environment for them to upgrade.

A third shortcoming that emerges from the findings obtained in Chapter 1 relates more specifically to the methods of teaching French-speaking refugees. Refresher courses are often given by non-certified teachers, which compromises the quality of teaching provided. Similarly, the refugees interviewed say they find the venues—traditional high school classrooms—where the refresher courses are held to be uncomfortable, even intimidating. Some of them have indeed stressed that they feel ill at ease in these types of venues. Lastly, many participants feel that class times are too inflexible.

### **3.3.2 Issues**

These shortcomings raise important issues with respect to the settlement and integration of French-speaking refugees in Winnipeg. They play a part in discouraging many refugees from taking classes. Their discouragement can cause them to drop out. As a result, they will not succeed in refreshing their basic education, including their language skills. This poses a major social challenge: not only does the government get a “low return on its investment” in courses offered to newcomers, but with each drop out Winnipeg society has one less member able to contribute to its development and vitality. This means that shortcomings in educational services offered to French-speaking refugees undermine and compromise the very project of their integration into Winnipeg society. Instead of becoming a resource for society, they become a burden.

### **3.3.3 Recommendations**

Considering the shortcomings identified above and the issues raised by them, we recommend:

1. A reorganization of the logistics of teaching provided to French-speaking refugees to better meet their needs while allowing them to integrate into society: more appropriate venues, more flexible schedules, and certified teachers or, better still, specialists in adult education (andragogy.)
2. Review the instructional content so that it is more relevant to the specific and diverse needs of French-speaking refugees. This does not mean replacing the traditional

content taught now, but looking to see whether it would be appropriate to integrate more job-oriented qualifying training, taking into account of course age, and the educational level and country of origin of refugees. In so doing, classes will be more homogeneous and the learning environment more conducive to the acquisition of knowledge, whether basic or practical.

3. Create financial incentives to make it easier for French-speaking refugees to better balance work and education. These incentives would compensate for the income foregone when going back to school. This recommendation was formulated by many of the practitioners interviewed.

### 3.4 Language proficiency

Proficiency in Canada's official languages is a major challenge for most Francophone refugees, as noted above (1.5.4). Language proficiency is key to integration. The refugee (or any immigrant for that matter) who arrives in Canada must have some ability to understand, speak and write one of the country's official languages, English or French. In the population sample of this study, 56% speak French and one language other than English, 25% speak French, English and another language, and 19% speak neither French nor English. In addition, the vast majority of recent refugees come from Arab countries (Syria) or cannot hold a ten-minute conversation in French or English. A director (I1O3) at one of the agencies explained: [translation] "Becoming proficient in the language is a major challenge for refugees. Assisting refugees, especially those with who speak neither official language, is a major challenge.

Also, refugees arriving here face a major communication hurdle. Even if they are Francophones, they quickly realize that the variety of French spoken here is very different from the one they speak. They cannot communicate. In addition, they also realize that while French is one of Canada's official languages, English is predominant. They must quickly learn English to survive.

With the foregoing in mind, we can measure the extent of the problem newcomers face due to their lack of knowledge of Canada's official languages, and outline potential solutions. For people who do not speak either English or French (19% in our sample), what is needed for them to quickly become functional in one of these two languages so they may embark on the long journey of integration? Do the various agencies have the sufficient resources? We can use these questions to address the shortcomings that were most often raised by study participants (refugees).

#### 3.4.1 Shortcomings

When it comes to fluency in French or English, the shortcomings are obvious. Language becomes for them a barrier to communication and social integration.

[translation] Most of them, especially those from Syria, might speak only Arabic. So their challenge will be [learning] French and English. Ours will be to provide them with services in one of Canada's official languages when they speak only Arabic. (I2O3)

Reception infrastructure is not always well equipped to receive people who speak neither English nor French, especially in large numbers, given the limited resources for hiring interpreters/translators of the different languages of newcomers. In such a context, refugees

tend to form “ethnic ghettos”: people who speak Arabic band together, as do the speakers of, say, Swahili. This can mean less opportunities to speak French or English, thus delaying their proficiency of one of the languages essential to integration. School-aged children are the first victims, since parents cannot help them with their homework. They are doubly victimized because, in addition to being forced to leave their country, most often in very difficult conditions, they fall behind in school; these delays can be made up if resources are brought to bear.

### 3.4.2 Issues

At the agency and community level, lack of fluency in one of the official languages becomes an integration policy issue. Language courses have been set up for these newcomers to enable them to prepare for their integration into the host community and the job market. Participants have mixed feelings about these courses. Their effectiveness has been called into question because after several months (sometimes years), newcomers are still not functional in English or French. On-the-job learning (in the workplace) seems more effective. On the other hand, newcomers very quickly realize that fluency in English is essential for them to integrate into Winnipeg. Even though Canada is bilingual, Canadians are not, at least not the majority of them. In the words of one refugee interviewed as part of this study:

[translation] Because here I saw that everything is in English; a lot of things are in English. Even if you go to the hospital, you encounter a lot of things that are in English; they use English at the bank. When you go shopping, it’s in English. I said that I need to focus, I will focus on English because that is the language of the majority. That’s why I continue to study English. (Odile)

Proficiency in French becomes a major issue for the Francophone community, given the attraction to English that holds newcomers sway. Francophone newcomers and those who want to learn French must receive unfailing support from the Francophone community so that they do not turn to the majority Anglophone community and its many advantages, especially since many of them express a strong desire to preserve French and pass it on to their children to safeguard what remains of their linguistic heritage. It is also important to note that, among refugees in particular, there are people who have been abused and traumatized in a certain linguistic area and who are desperate to move away from the language they attribute to the oppressor.

### 3.4.3 Recommendations

Some recommendations arising from this study are essential to support the programs and activities aimed at bolstering command of official languages, particularly French.

1. The structure of language courses could be reviewed; they could be organized cooperatively to allow newcomers to have a direct contact with the workplace and the language used there.
2. Language class could be better funded so that people are not waiting for months to enroll in a class. Thought could be given to organizing these courses even before the refugees arrive in Canada.

3. Translation services in community agencies involved with refugees could be supported.
4. French-speaking families could be twinned with English-speaking families for more opportunities for language practice and to accelerate language acquisition.
5. Activities could be organized to make French attractive.
6. Language instructors could be made aware of the problems experienced by refugees and provide psychological support as soon as they arrive on Canadian soil.

### **3.5 Health**

Refugees have been wounded both in their flesh and in their spirit. The respondents interviewed for this project emphasized that many refugees need mental health counselling because of the torture they suffered, their experiences fleeing, family separation, their experiences while their refugee claim was being processed, and their time spent in refugee camps or in transit countries.

#### **3.5.1 Shortcomings**

The first shortcoming identified by the refugees themselves is the lack of resources to help them make a smooth transition between their old life and life in Canada. In the health care system, for example, refugees are unable to obtain health care in their native language or in French because they do not live in a French-speaking area. Not being able to see a specialist for a number of months for those suffering from chronic illness, receiving medication only after the doctor has been able to determine the source of the pain, even if it takes weeks or even months, are irritants to people who are used to receiving different treatment, such as being given sedatives while they wait for exam results. Giving information to patients that would have allayed their anxieties during the long waiting period to meet a doctor or specialist is also a shortcoming that can easily be eliminated.

#### **3.5.2 Issues**

Refugees are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. This vulnerability is due to the trauma they went through before they arrived on Canadian soil. Mindful of this, the various levels of government are trying to support them with certain programs that enable them to receive health care upon their arrival (see the section on government programs, health services in French).

The overriding issue here is the health of Canadians. Canada wants to have an immigrant population, refugees and non-refugees, in good health. Governments (federal and provincial) therefore offer refugees the opportunity to be treated when they are ill through various programs and insurance.

A second issue is intercultural communication. As we already noted above (2.3.4) immigrant populations in general and refugees in particular come from different cultures where access to health services is uncertain, and they do not instinctively seek them out. They may therefore be somewhat shy and show reluctance to open up to strangers (in the context of care for example) or simply not be able to explain what is troubling them due to an insufficient command of French or English.

At the individual level, the refugee needs to know what services are available and make the most of them so that his or her integration will be smooth and successful. The onus is on the community to help the refugees integrate.

### 3.5.3 Recommendations

1. The federal, provincial and municipal governments could increase resources to provide better care for refugees as soon as they arrive in Canada, whether this be treatment for the chronic tropical diseases they are often afflicted with, or psychological/psychiatric care, etc.
2. Organizations providing front-line services could be allowed to direct refugees to health professionals as soon as they arrive in Canada (consultations with professionals such as therapists, family doctors and social workers) to limit the damage caused by the trauma they went through in their long march to freedom.
3. Health for refugees could be approached from a holistic perspective; that is, by looking at all of the principal determinants of health—employability, environment, mental health—physical health being only the tip of the iceberg.

## 3.6 The role of community networks and the social inclusion of refugees

### 3.6.1 Shortcomings

Although the refugees spoke only highly of the different networks (community, religious and others) that guided them from the moment they arrived in Canada, the fact remains that some shortcomings persist in those networks. This is not so much a shortcoming as a risk. The various networks can in fact make it easier to integrate into the Manitoba community, or make it much harder. There are examples of refugees who have been welcomed into a community network and who remained cloistered there for years. A second risk is lengthy dependency on the network, making it more difficult to reach one's full potential. Women and children are more vulnerable to this.

### 3.6.2 Issues

Participants emphasized that integration factors—ethnocultural associations, places of worship, community resources, employment, government resources—are systemically intertwined. In other words, successful integration is contingent on a set of service networks, community groups, ethnic groups, and friends that complement one another. Many authors have emphasized the multi-dimensional character of the integration process. Fester, McKittrick and Amyot (2010: 6) write “Successful immigrant and refugee integration includes creating a sense of belonging and strength in the community and larger population, secure employment, sufficient foundational language and life skill adeptness, suitable housing, confidence in the ability to access necessary government services, education and health care.” However, the economic dimension, that is, access to employment seems to have been given top priority in the literature, and by the immigrants themselves, as a primary factor of integration (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2011).

In our study, despite the importance of the economic factor, participants nevertheless emphasized the vital role of community networks in the integration process. Many studies highlight the contribution of social factors nowadays to the successful integration of refugees in Canada. Lamba and Krahn (2003: 335) expressed this idea clearly: “these many formal and

informal social networks are extremely valuable, providing much-needed support and assistance when refugees are faced with financial, employment, personal, or health problems.” Lastly, education also seems to figure prominently in this process, seeing as nearly three-quarters of the respondents interviewed think they will go back to school to acquire other credentials, thereby making it easier for them to find employment. This emphasis on education can be explained by the fact that education provides access to skilled jobs that are generally better paid. Furthermore, education is a means by which refugees can work in their area of expertise after taking refresher courses or supplementing the credentials acquired in their country of origin. Ultimately, access to employment means refugees can aspire to a good standard of living, comparable to that of most Canadians.

### **3.6.2 Recommendation**

1. Some social organizations involved in the social integration of refugees in the host community could receive public funding or be better funded.

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## Appendix B: Interview Templates for Group Interviews

### Individual data sheet - Socio-demographic information

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Country of origin.....
4. Date of entry into Canada .....
5. Date refugee status obtained.....
6. Current home address (address, postal code) .....
  - a) Have you changed your address since your arrival?  
Yes No
  - b) Former address, postal code .....
  - c) Do you: Own or Rent
  - d) Do you live in social housing? Yes No
7. Marital status Married Single Widowed
8. How many children do you have?.....
9. Dependents other than your children Yes No
10. Mother tongue.....
11. Language spoken at home French English Other .....
12. Language spoken at work French English both languages
13. Work situation employed unemployed self-employed
14. Field of activity .....
15. If employee full-time part-time on contract on call
16. Level of education?.....
  - a. Is your diploma recognized in Canada? Yes No
  - b. Credentials recognized in Canada? Yes No
  - c. Back to school Yes No
  - d. Professional/technical training Yes No

## Template for one-on-one interviews with refugees

Main questions (Areas) — Secondary questions (Complementary questions) — Clarifying questions

### 1. Trajectory

- 1.1 What was your migratory trajectory (between your country and Winnipeg)?  
What were the circumstances that led to your arrival in Canada and/or Winnipeg?
  - a) Are you a government-assisted refugee or sponsored by a private organization?
  - b) Was it your choice to come to Winnipeg?
    - Can you tell me more?
    - Do you have any specific examples?
- 1.2 What were the main problems you faced when you arrived?
  - a) Do you still face the same problems?
  - b) How did you overcome them?
- 1.3 Do the problems differ according to the type of sponsorship (public or private)?

### 2. Roles of communities

- 2.1 Do you think that you have integrated into your host society?
  - a) What relationships do you maintain with the rest of the community?
  - b) How did the new community help you?
  - c) What contribution did you make to the community?
  - d) What helped your integration?
  - e) Otherwise, what would have been necessary for your integration?
    - Can you tell me a little more?
    - Can you tell me more about that?
- 2.2 Did the welcome you received meet your expectations?
- 2.3 Is there a community of compatriots/co-religionists in Winnipeg that has helped you in your settlement and integration?

### 3. Services received and available resources

- 3.1 Which agency or agencies supported you in your settlement and integration process?
  - a) Francophone or Anglophone?
  - b) Are you still in contact with the agency?
    - Can you tell me more?
- 3.1 What types of service(s) did you receive from the host community in terms of health care, education/ training/ recognition, housing and job search?
  - a) Francophone or Anglophone?
  - b) Are there best practices (positive) that you would like to highlight?
  - c) Are there any practices that have not been particularly helpful to your integration?
  - d) What suggestions would you like to make to agencies offering services in French to immigrants?
  - e) Did you use other services?
    - Why or why not?
    - Can you tell me more?

3.2 Do the service offerings meet your needs?

3.4 Are there agencies working with newcomers that are more dynamic than others?

#### **4. Challenges and languages**

4.1 What are the challenges that you had to face when you settled here?

a) How did you face them (alone, with family, with the community, agencies)?

– Can you tell me a little more?

– Can you tell me more about that?

4.2 If you have children, do they go to a French-language school?

a) Special support from the DSFM?

b) Difficulties in integrating?

4.3 Do your origin and refugee status pose a problem for your integration?

a) For you? your family? (employment, studies, etc.)

4.4 Have your experience and credentials been recognized?

4.5 Do you speak English? Did you take classes? Is being a French-speaking refugee a barrier to integration in Winnipeg?

#### **5. Government policies and programs**

5.1 Describe your experience settling in and integrating into Canada as a refugee.

a) Strengths and weaknesses?

– Can you tell me a little more?

## Template for one-on-one interviews with agency directors

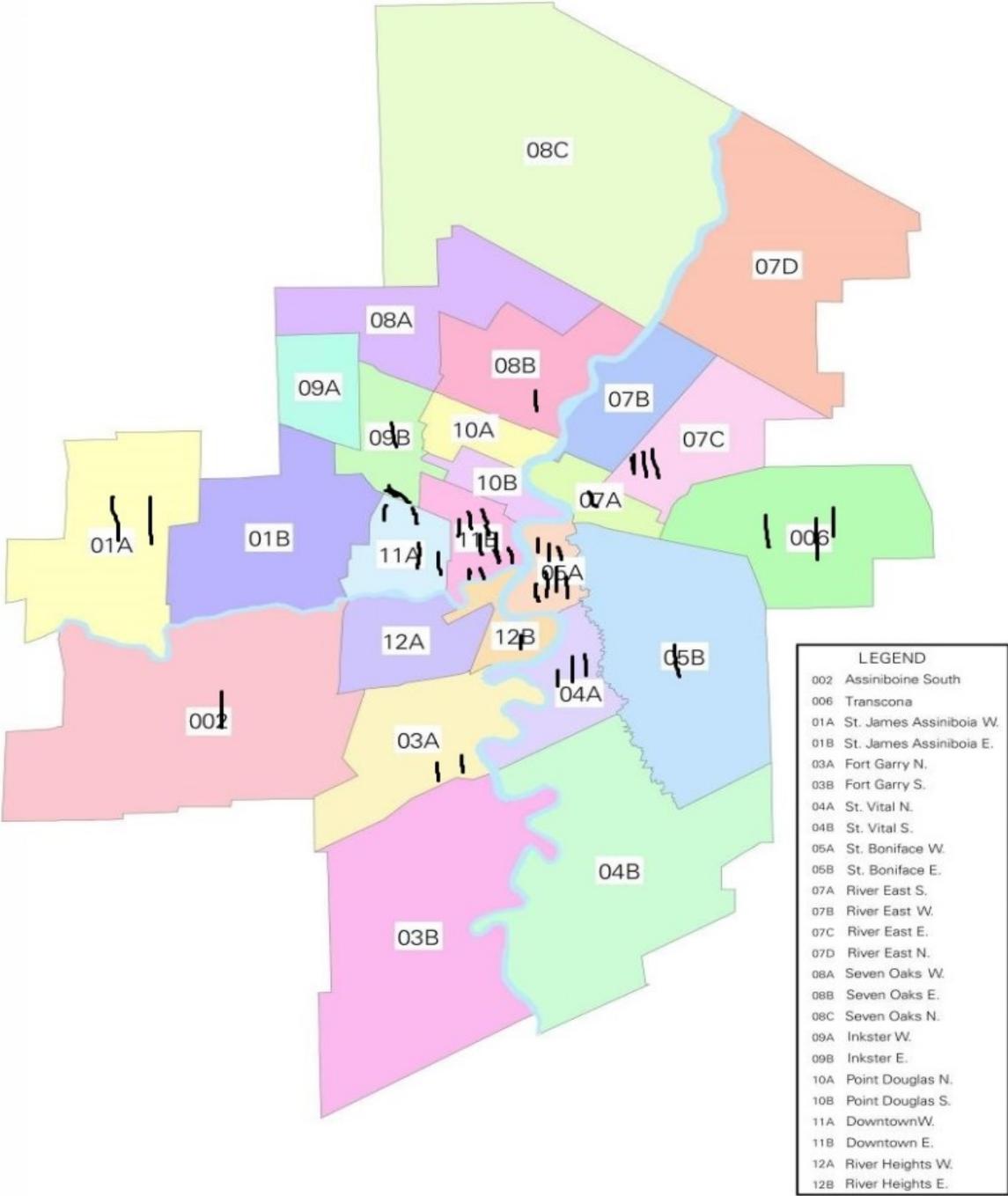
1. What is your name?
2. Which agency are you with and where is it located?
3. What is the mandate of your agency?
  - year created?
  - number of staff members?
  - volunteers?
4. What is your title within the agency?
  - since when?
5. Is the agency part of a network?
  - does it receive grants?
6. What kind of services do you offer to refugees?
  - can you specify them?
  - hours and days service offered?
  - how do you recruit your recipients?
7. How many refugees have used your services?
  - country of origin?
  - language?
8. Are your services personalized or collective?
  - language?
9. Is there a time limit on access to your services?
10. Do you follow up with recipients? - how so?
11. Do you work in co-operation with other agencies?
  - which agencies?
  - what form does the co-operation take?
12. What challenges do you face as an agency in supporting refugees?
  - material, human, logistical difficulties?
13. Are there any services you would like to offer in addition to what you already do?
  - what you would propose to improve your services?
14. What do you see as the main challenges that refugees face?
  - material, psychological challenges?
15. In your experience, what is needed to improve French-language services?
  - economic resources, political will, etc.?
16. Do you have anything to add that has not been discussed already?

## Appendix C: Facilitator guide for interviews with focus groups

Main questions — Secondary questions (Complementary questions) — Clarifying questions

1. Trajectory: Can you tell us about your immigration path?
  - 1.1 What were the circumstances that led to your arrival in Canada and/or Winnipeg?
  - 1.2 Was it your choice to come to Winnipeg?
    - Can you tell us more?
2. Roles of communities: What type of material (furniture, clothing, food), spiritual and psychological support did you receive from the Anglophone or Francophone community?
  - 2.1 What relationships do you maintain with the rest of the community?
  - 2.2 How did the new community help you?
  - 2.3 What contribution did you make to the community?
  - 2.4 What helped or hindered your integration?
    - Can you tell us more?
3. Services received and available resources: What resources and services did you receive from the host community in terms of health care, education/training/recognition, housing and job search, when you arrived and when you settled in Winnipeg?
  - 3.1 Which Francophone agencies did you contact after you arrived?
  - 3.2 Do the services meet the needs?
    - Can you tell us more?
4. Challenges and languages: What challenges did you face (regarding origin, status, language and recognition)?
  - 4.1 Does your refugee status present a barrier to integration?
  - 4.2 Is the French language a barrier to integration?
  - 4.3 Has the recognition of your credentials been a barrier to integration?
    - Can you tell us more?
5. Government programs: Have you benefited from a government integration program?
  - 5.1 Comment on your overall settlement and integration experience in Winnipeg.
  - 5.2 What recommendations would you make to improve services to and support for refugees?
    - Can you tell us more?

# Appendix D: Distribution of survey participants within the City of Winnipeg



## Appendix E: Description of the agencies participating in our survey

Agency name	Title of the practitioner interviewed	Year established	Location
<b>Accueil Francophone</b>	1. RAP (Resettlement Assistance Program) Housing Coordinator. 2. Consultation Network Coordinator 3. Executive Assistant and Communications Officer	2003	428 Des Meurons Street, Winnipeg
<b>Université de Saint-Boniface</b>	Coordinator of the International Office within Student Services at the Université de Saint-Boniface	2008	200 Cathedral Avenue, Winnipeg
<b>CDEM</b>	Business Advisor, supporting businesses	1996	200–614 Des Meurons Street, Winnipeg
<b>DSFM</b>	Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (Franco-Manitoban School Division) Student Services Director		1263 Dawson Rd, Lorette, MB
<b>Fédération des parents du Manitoba</b>	Executive Director of the Fédération des parents du Manitoba	1976	177 Eugenie Street, Winnipeg
<b>Flavie-Laurent Centre</b>	Volunteer Coordinator	2005	450 Provencher Boulevard, Winnipeg
<b>Immigration Partnership Winnipeg</b>	Representative	2014	432 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg
<b>IRCOM</b>	One of two site directors.	1984	95 Ellen Street and 215 Isabel Street, Winnipeg
<b>Manitoba Islamic Association</b>	Chair of the Refugee Support Committee	1969	2445 Waverley Street, Winnipeg
<b>Pluri-elles</b>	Executive Director	1982	420 Des Meurons Street, Winnipeg
<b>Premier Choix</b>	Team Leader, head of the programs Destination emploi, Services adaptés, Emploi pour tous	for approximately ten years	420 Des Meurons Street, Winnipeg
<b>Program Bébés, parents et gazouillements [babies, parents and babbles]</b>	Bébés, parents et gazouillements Coordinator	2005	209 Kenny Street, Winnipeg
<b>Société franco-manitobaine</b>	Community Network Director	1993	147 Provencher Boulevard
<b>Welcome Place</b>	Senior Manager of the Life Skills Training Department, the In Canada Protection Services Department, and the Sponsorship Services Department		521 Bannatyne Avenue, Winnipeg