

Vancouver Island Refugee Response Team



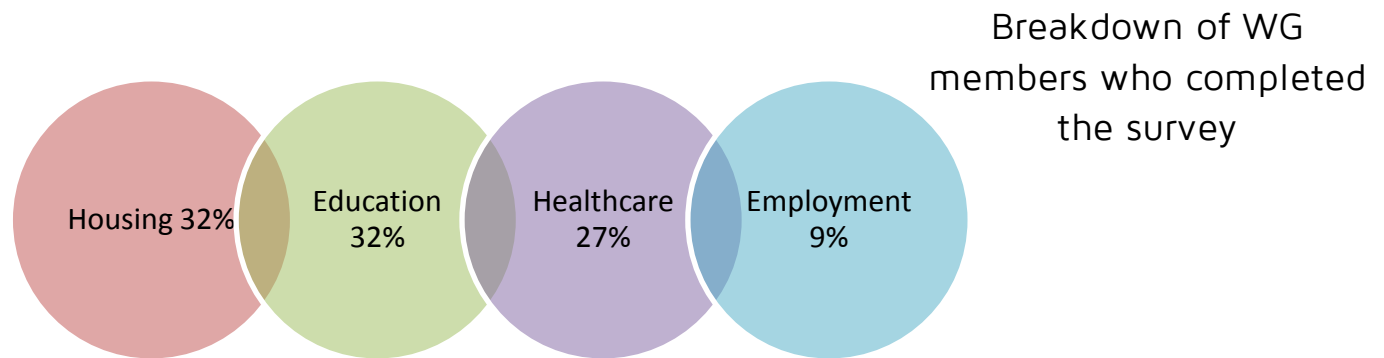
November 16, 2016,

Abstract: The Vancouver Island Refugee Response Team (VIRRT) is a government mandated and sponsored initiative wherein organizations, both NGO and GOs, collaborate together to make effective the resources needed for Syrian newcomers and their integration on and across Vancouver Island. This survey was conducted in accordance with the milestones needed to accomplish efficacy among each sector: housing, employment, health and education. The aim was to acquire a better perception of each stakeholder, to evaluate effective and/or ineffective practices, and to gain a better measurement of how to achieve the milestones and fill in the exposed gaps. Over 25% of those given the survey responded, with the majority of the respondents from the education and housing sector. In this discourse analysis, results showed that the majority of participants are content with the process, the coordination of the RRT and the collaboration of participants. While there is room to improve execution of decisions and increase resource distribution, this survey will enable the RRT to re-examine practices and enable the best decisions going forward.

Methodology: A qualitative survey, including two quantitative questions, was sent out to all members involved with the RRT, a total of 79 participants. Of the 79 surveyed, 22 responded. Both the Executive Director and the Coordinator of the RRT formulated the questions based upon the proposed milestone achievements as determined in the original action plan. The survey was posted through an online platform called SurveyMonkey©. The interactive survey was sent to participants via e-mail. Responses were collected through the online platform.

By Andrea Westfall, Co-Coordinator

Mid-Term Evaluation Survey Results

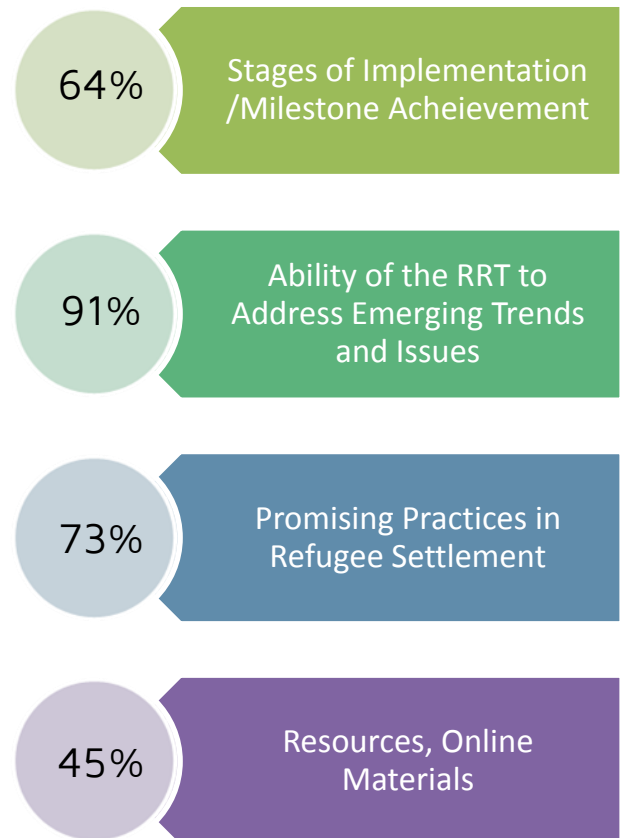


Q1: Do you think the activities in which the group is engaged are relevant to address the needs of Syrian Refugees? Please explain.

- ✓ Yes. Group composition & breadth of topics seems very comprehensive. The attitude & intentions come across as acting to address the diverse needs for all age groups
- ✓ It is important that strategies for utilizing existing systems and networks be explored to assist this group. The RRT-Employment does this well.
- ✓ Yes, it high-lights what has been done and what still needs to be addressed. It has become a 'think tank' but big problems, at the federal level, remain with specialized service delivery
- ✓ Yes, some of the activities are related.
- ✓ Yes
- ✓ I think so
- ✓ Somewhat, I appreciate the sharing of knowledge re: resources, wish for more 'action plan/items'
- ✓ Absolutely. Medical health and mental health issues are both well-represented.
- ✓ More tangible strategies and initiatives implemented would be good.
- ✓ Yes, it is bringing stakeholders together to share information and brain storm further ideas to help the Syrian refugees find housing.

Q2: Please indicate which of the following VIRRT areas have been addressed and/or should be further addressed. If you wish, please add any comments.

- ✓ Financial & budgeting education & training, ESL for jobs in trade, employment & apprentice job opportunities.
- ✓ Still no central way to address housing availability online.
- ✓ I think we need to be somewhat more realistic about what can be provided within the existing infrastructure. There needs to be a stronger working relationship between the working elements of the planning group.
- ✓ Still some concerns about the speed with which the processes can be effectively altered to address the emerging needs of the refugees. The plans may have been good, but the implementation has had challenges. Change is so slow and tied up in bureaucracy.



Q3: What could the Coordinator do to improve the effectiveness of the program facilitation, meetings, and/or resources?

- ✓ Already doing a great job.
- ✓ Keep networking to reach out to include more sectors.
- ✓ There should be another person recording as oppose to having someone chair and record at the same time. Most of the meetings have steered away from the agenda and hard to keep track and stick to the agenda items/tasks at hand.
- ✓ So far things have been facilitated very well. But we are all still working within our individual organizations doing that which we are best able to do. If we were able to meet almost in a case conference type situation, we could

possibly achieve a bit more for particular families and avoid overlap and lots of phoning around.

- ✓ Perhaps updates from the other working groups circulated as information to each other?
- ✓ Nothing that I can see. She does a good job.
- ✓ Identify challenge, explore possible solutions, implement action plan to address challenge using group members, stakeholders.

Q4: An inclusive meeting refers to a sense of cooperation and acceptance that is fostered in the group of stakeholders.

Please provide any suggestions for how the working group environment can be improved.

- ✓ Already seems reflective of described intent
- ✓ The meetings to date have been inclusive. Whether all parties want to be significant contributors to the process is largely a determinant of their ability. So far the groups who have remained active are strong contributors and sharers.
- ✓ It is a very large group and I appreciate that we are broken down into smaller groups. I think a set of measurable outcomes to remind us all each time the RRT group meets would help with keeping groups focused.
- ✓ I think all issues are well received and discussed at the table.
- ✓ Not sure.
- ✓ It would be helpful to bring some private landlords to the table. We are already discussing options of how to gain their interest.

Q5: What lessons can we learn from the way in which the project is unfolding?

- ✓ That the economic sectors require further in-reach and assistance in creating HR pathways to the newcomer workforce.
- ✓ There seems to be a lot of duplication of activities happening in throughout the community. There is also a lot of meeting fatigue.
- ✓ I think we may have underestimated the impact having the refugees in our community would have. In public health for example these are going to be long term relationships with many new issues unfolding as refugees become more established and imbedded in their communities. We have to stay the course and not lose sight of continuing support now that the refugees have been here for a number of months. New issues and mental health issues have emerged - in other communities problems with youth have emerged - we want to keep our finger on the pulse of the community. This may mean

establishing relationships with the organizations they tend to frequent (Mosque?).

- ✓ When working with such a large group, I think less is more in term of deliverables.
- ✓ That changes that are needed as issues emerge need to happen more quickly in order to truly meet the needs of the refugees.
- ✓ Not sure.
- ✓ The more stakeholders brought to the table the more options and practices available.

Q6: What unexpected results can you identify in your working group?

- ✓ The contributions of North Island have been very refreshing and have added significant advancements.
- ✓ We were able to diagnose and refer for treatment very ill children who had not been properly treated for their health issues. we hope that ongoing medical and health related care will give these children the best possible start in their new homes.
- ✓ Not sure yet.
- ✓ Meeting with Murray Rankin. An opportunity to try to address the need for change.

Q7: What do you see as an emerging priority once this one-year project is completed?

- ✓ Women's employment.
- ✓ A more coordinated effort needs to be made with all players with up to date and succinct information.
- ✓ Continuing with a focus on children and youth in the school systems, maintaining health and wellness and inclusiveness for this group.
- ✓ Ensure refugees are not left 'stranded' if they are transitioning from private sponsorship programs, as well, ensure there are enough resources in the community at present to support the number of refugees before agreeing to bringing more, i.e. housing is critical especially given our extremely tight rental market.
- ✓ Access to mental health resources and services as people begin to settle in, reflect on what has happened to them and continue with their integration into their new home.
- ✓ Continued support for the families. One year is not enough to settle the refugee families into an independent life.

Q8: What has been the highlight of the VIRRT from your personal perspective?

- ✓ Meeting & working with everyone.
- ✓ Enjoying clear and open communication with great sector reps.
- ✓ networking
- ✓ This is a very engaged group but unfortunately I have not been able to attend many meetings, so am not able to answer a lot of the questions. I hope to start attending more meetings in the future.
- ✓ Engaging a variety of community members has been a highlight but as we move forward to be cognizant of the engagement of community members and the relevance of who should be sitting at the table would be helpful.
- ✓ Excellent cooperative effort from everyone involved.
- ✓ It has been a richly rewarding experience for myself personally and my team. We did not foresee having this experience, but it has been very worthwhile from a personal and professional perspective.
- ✓ Meeting others, so many knowledgeable, thoughtful people working in this field.
- ✓ An opportunity to help a group of people who have suffered so much find a new home - safety, health, building a future.
- ✓ The willingness of the organizations to cooperate for the best outcome for the families.