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## **Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Kevin Sorenson**



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

• (1545)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting number 87 of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

We welcome all of you here today. We remind you that we are televised. If you have a cellphone or any type of mechanical device, we would encourage you to please shut it off or put it on silent mode so we'll have less interruption.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108, we are looking at report 3, “Settlement Services for Syrian Refugees—Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada”, of the fall 2017 reports of the Auditor General of Canada, referred to the committee on Tuesday, November 21, 2017.

We're very pleased to have with us today, from the Office of the Auditor General, Nancy Cheng, assistant auditor general; as well as Nicholas Swales, principal.

From the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, we're happy to have the deputy minister, Marta Morgan; David Manicom, assistant deputy minister, settlement and integration; and Ümit Kiziltan, director general, research and evaluation.

We welcome you here today.

We will begin with Ms. Cheng.

**Ms. Nancy Cheng (Assistant Auditor General, Office of the Auditor General):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We thank you for this opportunity to present the results of our audit of settlement services for Syrian refugees. As you mentioned, joining me at the table is Nicholas Swales. He is the principal responsible for this audit.

In 2015, the Government of Canada committed to help bring approximately 47,000 Syrian refugees to Canada over two years. As of April 30, 2017, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada reported that almost 45,000 Syrian refugees had arrived in Canada since November 2015. This number is three times higher than the average number of refugees who have been admitted to Canada every year since 1995.

[Translation]

This audit looked at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's \$257-million initiative to help Syrian refugees settle in

Canada. The audit focused on whether Syrian refugees received selected settlement services funded by the Department that were needed to help them integrate into Canada. It also examined whether the department measured the outcomes of its efforts to settle Syrian refugees.

This audit is important because the Syrian refugee initiative will succeed in the long term only if the people it brought to Canada integrate into Canadian society.

[English]

In the area of delivering settlement services, we found that most Syrian refugees received needs analysis, language assessments, and language training during their first year in Canada. More than 80% had their needs assessed, and 75% of those who received language assessments attended language classes.

We also found that the department identified the settlement services that Syrian refugees needed, and allocated funding to the organizations that offered these services. The department increased funding for services when it determined that refugees arriving under the initiative needed more settlement services than expected.

However, the department did not allocate all of the additional funds early enough in 2017 to meet the needs of the service providers. The purpose of these funds was to sustain additional settlement services established in 2016. When they did not receive funding, some service providers cut settlement services for at least three months.

[Translation]

In the area of managing information for decision-making, we found Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not have sufficient information to efficiently manage language training waitlists for Syrian refugees. It also lacked information to ensure the consistent delivery of services to Syrian refugees in all regions. Although the Department expected the Syrian refugees to receive a standard and consistent level of service across the country, many of the contribution agreements we examined contained no service expectations.

These findings matter because many of the Syrian refugees who arrived in Canada needed extensive settlement services. It was therefore important for the government to have accurate and timely information about the demand for language training, and for it to set clear expectations for the services it funded to ensure that those services would meet the needs of clients.

•(1550)

[English]

Finally, in the area of measuring outcome, we found that although the department had developed a strategy for measuring the integration of Syrian refugees into Canada, it did not collect information from the provinces for some important indicators, such as access to health care providers and school attendance.

The department is responsible for promoting the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada. To assess whether the Syrian refugees are successfully integrating into Canadian society, the department needs to know that they have access to provincial services.

[Translation]

We are pleased to report that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has agreed with our recommendations.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening remarks. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Cheng.

Now we'll move to Ms. Morgan, please.

**Ms. Marta Morgan (Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** Mr. Chair, thank you for inviting me to address this committee today on the issue of settlement services for Syrian refugees.

Since November 2015, Canada has welcomed more than 50,000 Syrian refugees. As the Auditor General's report highlights, in order to ensure that these newcomers can integrate into their new communities and ultimately succeed in Canada, it is crucial that they have access to the supports they need. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada thanks the Auditor General for his recommendations, which we accept.

The findings of this audit also confirm the results of our own early evaluation and research findings, which overall indicate that Syrians are integrating well and at the same rate as other refugee groups.

[Translation]

As you know, Mr. Chair, through our settlement program, IRCC funds various pre-and post-arrival supports for immigrants and refugees. These services help newcomers to fully participate in the economic, social, civic and cultural life of our country.

Some services are also provided specifically for refugees through the resettlement assistance program, such as meeting the refugee at the airport or port of entry; temporary accommodation; help in finding permanent accommodation; basic household items; and some health supports.

[English]

Once refugees and immigrants have arrived, they have access to a number of in-Canada settlement supports that are financed by the department and provided by local service provider organizations. These include language assessments and training; support to build

networks in communities, including with other newcomers and community members, public institutions, employers, and community organizations; one-on-one and group mentoring with established immigrants or other Canadians; child and youth leadership and peer support projects; and information, orientation, and help in finding and retaining employment. Other supports, such as child care, transportation assistance, crisis counselling, and provisions for disabilities, are also offered to help newcomers access these various settlement services.

The department is pleased that the Auditor General found that Syrian refugees received a wide variety of these settlement services in their first year in Canada. It's also worth noting that Syrian refugees received settlement services at a higher rate than other refugees who arrived during the same period. Almost 90% of Syrian refugees received needs assessments, and 88% had language assessments. This compares to 80% of non-Syrian refugees who accessed needs assessments, and 78% who accessed language assessments during the same period.

As the committee is aware, the work of the Auditor General resulted in four recommendations for IRCC. These relate to the timely transfer of funding to service providers, service expectations in contribution agreements, the management of language training wait-lists, and updates to our performance measurement strategy. Let me go through these one by one.

First, to support the settlement needs of newcomers outside of Quebec, IRCC is investing approximately \$762 million in total in 2018-19. This includes more than \$58 million in supplementary funding for the Syrian refugee effort. This represents a 4% increase over 2017-18, and a full 29% increase over the past three years. This includes \$25 million for pre-arrival services to ensure that newcomers arrive prepared to settle in their new community, as well as \$32 million devoted to service delivery improvement, innovation, and experimentation to continue to find better ways to deliver our services.

To fund the delivery of settlement services across the country outside of Quebec, the department manages more than 700 contribution agreements with more than 500 service provider organizations.

•(1555)

[Translation]

IRCC remains committed to delivering services in a timely manner.

The department will review its practices to see where it can make further improvements to its planning and approval processes, particularly for urgent and unexpected program needs such as the Syrian refugee initiative.

This includes looking at the department's business processes to more effectively manage grants and contributions. The review will also examine the ways we engage and work collaboratively with all stakeholders, as well as provincial and territorial governments, in the delivery of the settlement program.

[English]

With respect to the audit's recommendation on language training access, first I wish to note that all refugees have priority access to language services, and this includes an initial assessment.

In 2016-17, IRCC invested more than \$27 million to increase language training services for newcomers, including Syrians, at literacy and basic skill levels. Since then, more than 7,000 new language training seats have been added across Canada to meet the needs of Syrian refugees. In addition, more childminding spaces and transportation subsidies have been added to facilitate access to language classes for these clients.

Additionally, to ensure that services kept pace with the arrival of Syrian refugees, service provider organizations that serve a high volume of refugee clients received additional funding to help meet increasing demands.

With respect to outcomes measurement to ensure the integration of Syrian refugees across Canada, IRCC developed a strategy that included a rapid impact evaluation of their early outcomes. As the Auditor General noted, this strategy has not yet been fully implemented, especially with respect to measuring health and education indicators.

IRCC acknowledges that it takes time for all newcomers to integrate in Canada and this is particularly true for refugees, given their unique challenges. In addition to our own efforts to monitor and track the progress of Syrian refugees, research is under way in partnership with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Overall, IRCC is pleased with the progress that the recently arrived Syrian refugees have made to date in their settlement journey. Our evaluation of their early outcomes suggests that this group is already on the right path towards full integration. We look forward to the continuation of such a trend, as we continue to closely monitor their progress and make service delivery and program adjustments as needed.

We expect that Syrian refugees will ultimately succeed in Canada, just as other refugee groups have in the past, needless to say, with the participation of the whole community.

As you know, Mr. Chair, the success of this resettlement initiative was made possible due to the extraordinary support and co-operation of organizations, businesses, governments, and communities, and the compassionate consideration of Canadians. Collectively, they assisted with the arrival of these refugees by helping them get settled and established in their new communities, and in multiple other ways to help them start their integration journey.

• (1600)

[Translation]

The department has taken—and will continue to take—action to ensure that all newcomers, including refugees, are able to access the settlement services they need. But, if we want to ensure these refugees can further integrate and succeed in Canada, continued support from these various players will also be necessary.

My officials and I would be happy to respond to any questions the committee may have.

Thanks very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll move to the first round of questioning, which is a seven-minute round. We'll go to Mrs. Mendès for seven minutes, please.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

It's very good to see you back there.

[Translation]

Thank you all for being here.

[English]

I was looking forward to this study. First, you deserve congratulations, as you undertook a huge challenge in accepting the government's mandate to increase the number of refugees we were going to welcome in Canada. You delivered on it, in a quite exemplary way, and that is something that Canada can be proud of. However, nothing is perfect in this life, so the Auditor General had some issues to point to.

If you could just contextualize this for us, how many settlement organizations in Canada were involved in the whole process of resettlement, specifically for the Syrian refugees?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** We have ongoing arrangements with about 500 settlement organizations across the country. Of those 500, 129 were involved in the Syrian refugee resettlement.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Of those 129, how many were impacted by the delays in funding when they proved to need more funding for the services?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** What happened with the delays in funding was that the second full year of funding was to be extended at the same time as we were renewing all of our agreements with the 500 service provider organizations across the country that provide services to all immigrants and refugees.

We offered to the service provider organizations to front-load their base funding because that was all being negotiated for April 2017 for three-year agreements that we normally use with them. We offered to front-load that, and 88% of the organizations that were involved in the provision of services specifically to Syrian refugees were able to take advantage of that. They agreed to do that in order not to have any service interruptions.

As the Auditor General's report noted, for one reason or another 12% were not able to take advantage of that, or didn't feel comfortable taking advantage of that, and 88% of the organizations that were involved took advantage of our offer to front-load funding and thereby avoid service delivery interruptions.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Madam Cheng, do you know why they wouldn't be able to take the offer by the department to front-load the funding? Were there reasons?

• (1605)

**Ms. Nancy Cheng:** Do you want to...?

**Mr. David Manicom (Assistant Deputy Minister, Settlement and Integration, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** To my knowledge, it varied from organization to organization. For some organizations, their board had different standards of how much they wished to risk-manage their money. They have different financial arrangements. For some of them, the Syrian refugee work is almost all of their operation, and for others it's a small portion. These were individual decisions by each organization.

Because each organization was directed to prioritize refugees in their programming, no refugees were actually adversely affected, to our knowledge.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** It still confuses me. I worked in the settlement organization milieu for 15 years, and I find it difficult to understand why an organization would not want to front-load the subsidies. I don't quite understand. You know that you have the clients; you have the people who need the services, yet you would risk interrupting the services rather than accepting the front-loading. I'm not getting it.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** It's difficult for us to speak on behalf of the organizations, but I guess what I would say is that the large organizations that deliver the bulk of the services for the most part were able to front-load. As David noted, we didn't really see any impact on the refugee services.

We fund 500 organizations across the country. They are very diverse. It's a very diverse group of organizations. Some are larger. Some are smaller. Some deliver only one kind of settlement program, and others deliver a broad mix and might have more flexibility in terms of their funding models.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Ms. Cheng or Mr. Swales, do you have something to add to this?

**Ms. Nancy Cheng:** I might ask Mr. Swales to provide some more details.

We finished our audit in June 2017. At the time, what we saw was that, of the 129 organizations, 16 were not prepared to actually do the front-end loading. In essence, some of them actually laid off some of their settlement services, so they did not continue with some of their settlement programs and services. Training programs were cut as a result of some of that.

That's the information that we had at the time of the audit, and it's possible that the department has some additional information beyond the date of the audit, but I'll see if Mr. Swales has anything he wants to add.

**Mr. Nicholas Swales (Principal, Office of the Auditor General):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would add that front-loading represented, potentially at least, a risk for the service providers, because essentially what they were being asked to do was to spend against their agreement at a rate that would not allow them to make it through the whole year if they did not get supplemental funding. The risk to them was whether they were going to get the supplemental funding later on, when the agreements started to be renegotiated. That was the risk they were all facing by front-loading, and some said they were not prepared to accept that risk.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Okay, didn't we just say that you had negotiated the agreements with them and that they would be getting the three-year agreements signed, or they had been signed?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** To re-emphasize, this was an extraordinary circumstance for the department and for the service provider organizations. We were in the process of renegotiating three-year funding agreements. These are significant agreements that are only renegotiated. In this case, the previous agreements had been extended for a year, so they had been ongoing for four years. We were doing a major renegotiation, plus extending this smaller amount of funding targeted directly at Syrians.

It was an extraordinary situation for the department, and for the service provider organizations as well. They needed to take decisions that suited each one of them within the boundaries of its own risk tolerance and its own management structures, depending on its own programs and what else was going on with it.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now move to our second questioner, on the opposition side. Mr. Nuttall, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the representatives from Immigration, as well as the Auditor General, for their presentations prior to our opportunity to ask questions.

To Immigration, I can certainly accept that there are going to be gaps and cracks, with the size of the program that was being instituted and the speed with which it needed to be done. I think that everybody around this table would recognize the incredible work that was done to meet a timeline and a goal that were thrust upon you in a very short time period.

I'd like to go to the report itself. On page 10, some bar graphs show the assessments and training, the services being provided, and the difference between government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees. The three sections are needs assessment, language assessment, and language training. Needs assessment is 91% government versus 75% private, language assessment is 85% to 76%, and the actual language training is 82% to 63%.

My question to the immigration officials is, when you're looking at those numbers, are some of the privately sponsored individuals provided services outside of what you would characterize as taking part in your programming or that of organizations you work with?

• (1610)

**Mr. David Manicom:** Mr. Kiziltan may have more to add, but this differential access to services is consistent with the general difference we see between government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees. No one is obliged to take our services. We offer them. Privately sponsored refugees, generally speaking—

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Sorry, to be clear, these aren't services overall. These are services provided by your service providers.

**Mr. David Manicom:** Yes.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Okay. It says, "Percentage of refugees who received services between November 2015 and March 2017". When I first read this, I didn't understand that it may exclude people because they are receiving services elsewhere. An audit of this would be the service providers versus....

I'll give you an example. In my riding, a group waited six months. Three different families were trying to come here. The group finally ended up with a Syrian family. As soon as that Syrian family got here, the whole community rallied around them, and they had all the services. It was beautiful to see. I think we all have those experiences. However, they're not on this graph. Is that correct?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** It would depend on whether the services they were linked up with by the families that sponsored them were services that were funded by IRCC through our service provider organizations, but it's hard for us to tell for any individual family. We are the major service provider of language training services, for example, for immigrants and refugees across the country through our service provider organizations.

The other thing we find is that privately sponsored refugees tend to come with better language skills and language ability in English, for example. That's one of the reasons why, overall, as a pattern, we see that they tend to avail themselves less of the services we provide.

Yes, those are the only services that are referenced here in this report.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Would you do an audit, or would you have any information to do a follow-up with the privately sponsored families to ask if they get language services, or do you just not collect that information?

**Mr. David Manicom:** Privately sponsored refugees do access our language services, and those are captured here. If privately sponsored refugees receive, for example, informal language assistance from a sponsor, that would not be captured here. People who access our funded services, however they get to them—through a private sponsor linking them or through the government directly—are captured here. However, this does not capture, for example, a volunteer assisting a refugee with informal language training or assisting in other ways. That would not be captured here.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Nor would it be if the family or somebody else paid somebody to teach, outside of the service providers you have. My point is that it really highlights the opportunity for gaps in the system if we don't actually know the real information at the back end. You know what your service providers are telling you, but you don't know the actual information on the ground.

I'll move to a second question.

In the internal audit, have there been any evaluations or comparisons with other countries in terms of how the resettlement services we are providing, the percentages, etc., align with other countries, which, most of the time, have been taking in many more refugees than Canada has?

**The Chair:** Mr. Manicom, go ahead.

**Mr. David Manicom:** It's a very broad question, sir. As far as resettling refugees goes, there is only one country in the world that resettles more refugees than Canada does, and that's the United States. That is perhaps changing. I believe that what international studies there are show that resettled refugees in Canada integrate better with regard to employment, with low use of social assistance, and particularly with the educational outcomes of their children, compared to those in other countries. It's a very broad question.

I don't know if Mr. Kiziltan has anything to add.

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan (Director General, Research and Evaluation, Department of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'll comment just very quickly on the second question. Our services, in terms of both outreach to the resettled refugees and the quality of the services, based on OECD assessments, are always superior to those of the rest of the OECD countries overall, including those for asylum claimants who receive services from Germany or other countries where they access similar services to those we offer here to resettled refugees.

The other thing to register, related to the previous question but also to this one, is that when we did our rapid impact evaluation in August or September 2016, and we asked privately sponsored refugees and government-assisted refugees about language classes, we saw that about 40% of privately sponsored refugees, when asked why they were not taking language classes, would say that they didn't need to improve their English or French. These are very representative survey statistics. As Deputy Morgan stated, their levels are high. Another 40% would say, "I'm working". About 50% were already working around August or September 2016, among the privately sponsored refugees. There were various reasons why they were behaving that way.

●(1615)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, sir.

We'll now move to Mr. Christopherson for seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

As these things go, it's a pretty good audit. You know I'm a hard marker, and I tried to get something a little less than "pretty good". However, all things considered, I think it is.

I have a couple of thoughts. First of all, this file had the benefit of being an absolute top priority for the new government, so it was getting a lot of attention. However, having been involved in the transition from one government to another, you don't have any systems in place. There are no mechanisms for any kind of routine or "We'll pick it up at this point with these people."

The absence of that meant that an awful lot had to fall to the staff, to the public service, and I want to compliment them. You rose to the occasion. You were there to meet the need of an incoming government, regardless of the party, and you assisted them with a critically important, difficult, stressful file without a lot of political guidance.

I want to compliment you, Deputy, and all of your people, because you served us well. You did a good job. You really did.

I also want to give a shout-out to my former colleague Mr. McCallum, because my instincts tell me that along the way some pretty sophisticated political judgment needed to be made, again, without the usual processes and second and third looks, so compliments there.

I'm also mindful of Bob Rae, who liked to say, when he became premier, that becoming premier and learning how to do the job was like learning how to play the violin in public. He is a funny guy, and again, compliments there.

At the risk of being completely uncharacteristic, I want to add more compliments. I don't normally comment. They're supposed to do their job, and if they don't, I come down on them. However, this is really good. It's a great action plan. It looks like you went a step beyond, and I'm impressed. Usually at this point I say, "Having said that" and turn the artillery to something, but really I don't have much artillery.

I have a few questions, though.

**The Chair:** Who has kidnapped David Christopherson?

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I went one step too far and now you know it's not really me. Or is it?

I have a simple question. On page 12 of the report, at paragraph 3.63, the Auditor General says, "We found that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada did not establish service expectations". I must be missing something, because I can't imagine that you'd be giving people money without telling them what you expect for it.

Can somebody help me here, please?

**The Chair:** Ms. Morgan, go ahead.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Mr. Chair, first of all, I would like to thank the member for his appreciation. I was not the deputy minister at the time of the Syrian refugee initiative when most of the heavy lifting was done, and I wish that Anita Biguzs were here today to hear this. I'm sure she would really appreciate it.

However, David is with me, and he was one of the lead ADMs on the initiative, as was Dawn Edlund, our associate assistant deputy minister of operations. We do appreciate it. It really was a big lift for the department, and one of those seminal lifetime events, I think, for everyone who was involved with it.

We are committed to implementing the action plan that has been set out and has been provided to the committee. It was very helpful for us in terms of providing us with insights into what we can do better.

On the issue of service expectations, we certainly do have descriptions of the services that we expect will be provided, and we have now put in place service expectations for language training that are quite detailed. I think one of the challenges for a national program that is this broad and diverse is having a consistent set of expectations across all the various organizations that deliver the programs in various circumstances.

One of the commitments we've made in the action plan is to clarify our service expectations in other areas of programming that we currently undertake, such as welcome and orientation, and to roll that out over the next six to 12 months as we update our contribution agreements.

• (1620)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That's a good answer.

Moving on, page 15 has the outcomes monitoring framework. One of the things I've learned from my many years at this table—and it applies to a lot of things in life—is that the more work you do ahead of time, the better the result is. You do as much of that thinking as you can ahead of time. I thought you did a really good job of going through this and attempting to get it right, but you didn't quite. When I read it through, my thinking was that you clearly did what should be done. You pulled all these people together and said, "We need to get a handle on being able to measure how this is unfolding in the short, medium, and long term. What are some of our gauges going to be, and how are we going to do that?" You did that through periods one through three, but clearly that wasn't enough. You still didn't catch it all.

I'd like you, Madam Morgan, followed by Madam Cheng, to give us your thoughts on how you can improve this for next time. Clearly, you did the right thing; it just wasn't as thorough as it could have been. Is there something that could systemically be put in place? Was there a department missing? Was there some obvious reason? When you're doing something this comprehensive at the beginning, and you're doing it right, what can you do to improve it so you get it to be as thorough as possible?

**The Chair:** Ms. Morgan, go ahead.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** One of the things we are really excited about is the potential for data linkage. One of the reasons we have such excellent data on the economic outcomes of immigrants of various sorts who come to Canada, including refugees, is that Mr. Kiziltan and his staff have worked very closely with Statistics Canada to enable us to link immigration and tax files anonymously in order to do that kind of evaluation and outcomes monitoring. This year, we are putting in place similar agreements with Ontario and British Columbia on the health side, as well as with New Brunswick and Manitoba, which will enable us to link up our immigration data with health data and get that kind of information.



My own view is that part of the secret sauce here is having those linkages and those datasets available already, so that they're there. Then, when you have new initiatives like this, you can test against existing benchmarks. It takes a while for departments to develop really good data that's reliable and that's linked up, particularly when working across governments.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan.

We'll now move to Mr. Lefebvre.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lefebvre, you have the floor for seven minutes.

[*English*]

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Christopherson and Madam Mendès expressed a lot of our admiration for the work you've done during this whole challenging and impressive process. I won't be as partisan as Mr. Christopherson was, but there are a lot of good things in this report from the Auditor General, and, as Mr. Christopherson also mentioned, there are a few things we should learn from.

I want to ask you guys a few more questions on the practical side. In my riding of Sudbury, we were also very fortunate to be able to host and to have private sponsors. We were not selected to have government-sponsored refugees. One of the questions a lot of my volunteers in the area would always ask was whether the government-sponsored refugees in larger centres were getting better services than privately sponsored refugees in other centres across Canada, such as the more rural areas.

What is your perception as to the delivery of services for privately sponsored refugees compared to government-sponsored refugees? I'd like to hear from you.

•(1625)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lefebvre.

Mr. Manicom, go ahead.

**Mr. David Manicom:** In Canada, we have rightly taken a very broad-based community approach to settlement services. We have 700 service providers, which means we have service provision of various sorts not only in the metropolitan areas, but also in smaller communities. It is certainly more challenging in rural communities and very small towns to provide the full range of services that refugees in particular may need. That's why we don't generally resettle government-sponsored refugees in small communities.

We have 27 or 28 localities across Canada where we resettle government-assisted refugees, because we feel they can access—either through us or through the provinces—mental health supports, anti-family violence counselling, employment bridging, language training, and so forth, whatever they may need. Privately sponsored refugees go where the private sponsors live, and they have access to the community support and knowledge that their private sponsors bring to them, which overall produces even better settlement outcomes.

As for government-funded settlement services, it would be incorrect to say that they are as complete and as comprehensive in every small part of Canada. We are continuing to extend our reach

through online-based language training and through rural strategies to link service providers in a region to each other, but it would be accurate to say that we still have work to do in that regard.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** That leads me to my next question. How do we collect the data in these outlying areas when they are privately sponsored refugees? Obviously, if they're government-sponsored, it's easier to follow and monitor. If they are privately sponsored, how do we collect the data, and how reliable is it?

**Mr. David Manicom:** How we collect data for those who access our services is relatively straightforward. We have an electronic system into which we require our service providers to enter data directly, as part of the contribution agreements. The harder part is measuring those who are not our clients.

Going forward, the gold standard on outcomes measurement will be our ability to have true comparators between the outcomes that we pay for and how those who aren't accessing our services are doing, and therefore identify gaps in services.

Information sharing agreements with the provinces will also help us with the information coming back to us. How many new arrivals are there actually living in town X or Y in a given province? Medical service data from the provinces is the best way to know exactly how many new arrivals who aren't coming to see us there are, and where.

That is a promising way in the future, but it is a gap for us, absolutely.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I have to say that the relationship between the provinces and the federal government on this is certainly something we should be repeating at other levels of government. With regard to the exchange of information, there is a lot of potential there to ensure better services across the board, across Canada.

How much time do I have, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have two minutes.

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre:** I'll tell you an anecdote as to the amazing integration that we see with Syrian refugees. I had the honour of being at the airport when one of the families arrived, and I met the family. About a year later, I was at a Subway, and one of the Syrian refugees who had arrived that day was working at the Subway. I talked to him, and we took pictures. He was so happy to see me because I had been there the first day to welcome him. Here he was, speaking perfect English, and when I met him he did not speak a word of English. This was a year later.

It goes to show that with the proper services, when the refugees are properly provided with good services, anything is possible. It was a very inspiring day.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Lefebvre.

We'll now move to Monsieur Généreux.

Monsieur Généreux, in the second round you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, everyone, for being here this morning.

Mr. Manicom, I have a slight problem with what you said a few minutes ago about rural areas. You said that there is still work to be done; that is what I understood from your conclusion. You say that the services are not always provided. I am from La Pocatière, a town of approximately 4,200 people, and we have access to all the public services you have mentioned.

I find it regrettable that, when floods of immigrants arrive, as they did in 2015, there seems to be no system to establish priorities and to allow those immigrants to be brought to the regions. The population of the Bas-Saint-Laurent is aging more than most in Canada, as Rémi Massé, my colleague on this committee and also the member of Parliament for that region, can attest. It is important to invite immigrants arriving in the country to come and settle in rural areas too.

Do you have any strategies, or a plan, to improve this situation, which has occurred as the result of our country's great generosity?

• (1630)

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** During this initiative, we have seen a great deal of enthusiasm across the country for welcoming Syrian refugees, including in rural areas and small communities. We have created programs outside Quebec, because the Quebec government has his own programs and makes its own decisions as to where the immigrants go.

We established eight new organizations to welcome the refugees to smaller communities in Ontario, on the Prairies, and also in British Columbia to respond specifically to the enthusiasm shown by rural communities and to steer new immigrants to smaller communities.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I usually sit on the official languages committee. We invited the Minister and the assistant deputy minister, Stefanie Beck, to our meeting on May 14. My colleague Ms. Rempel asked how many people spoke English or French when they arrived in Canada and Mr. Lefebvre pointed out that he had just met someone who now speaks English very well. The minister then gave the figure of 5%. Are you able to tell us how many people that is? We have welcomed 50,000 Syrian refugees as of today, but, at the time of the meeting, it was between 25,000 and 30,000, and of that number, only 5% spoke English or French.

Are you able to provide the number of those refugees who now speak one of the two languages, particularly in official language minority communities? Are there Syrian refugees who did not speak French when they arrived and do so now?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** I will ask Mr. Kiziltan to answer that.

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** According to our survey, 40% of the Syrian refugees spoke English, around 1% spoke French, and almost 60% spoke neither of the two official languages. Of course, there are variations between—

[English]

the privately sponsored refugees and the government-assisted refugees.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Have there been any particular efforts to welcome Syrians, even though they may not speak French, into francophone minority communities across Canada?

**Mr. David Manicom:** I think you are asking me whether efforts have been made to welcome people into francophone communities.

The government did not establish welcome centres in small communities for sponsored refugees. Given the timelines, we were not able to establish new centres. Most of the Syrian refugees who speak French were welcomed by private sponsors in francophone communities.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

Do I have any time left?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have 10 seconds.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** I am not necessarily talking about small communities. In Manitoba, for example, there is a large francophone minority community that could have taken immigrants, and probably did so.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Généreux.

We'll now move to Mr. Massé.

• (1635)

[Translation]

Mr. Massé, the floor is yours for five minutes.

**Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to continue along the lines of the questions that our colleague Mr. Généreux was asking.

Before I begin, I must congratulate your respective teams. The commitment we made during the election campaign resulted in a considerable expenditure of energy and resources by the staff in your department. I speak for us all when I congratulate them and celebrate the remarkable work they have done.

As our colleague Mr. Généreux mentioned, making sure that Syrian refugees are integrated clearly means learning the language, either French or English. The report notes an exception in the case of the Government of Quebec, because it runs its own immigration program itself.

I would like to hear what you have to say about the mechanisms that the Government of Quebec has put in place in order to achieve some of the national objectives that have been set. I am curious to understand the mechanism established by the federal government and the Government of Quebec to that end.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** An agreement was reached between the federal government and the Government of Quebec to manage the contributions that the federal government provides to the Government of Quebec for integration services. Funds are actually transferred, and they are then managed by the Government of Quebec. They report on their programs and the results they achieve. We did not reach an agreement with that government that specifies standards or requirements along those lines. This mechanism is more in the form of a grant. The Government of Quebec is free to choose the services it provides and to establish its own priorities.

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** Now I would like to talk about learning one or other of the official languages. Although there may be no very precise criteria, do the dealings you have had with the Government of Quebec allow you to establish how many of the Syrian refugees the province has received have learned French? I would be curious to find that out.

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** First, the agreement between Canada and Quebec is regularly evaluated at a high level. Four years ago, we conducted such an evaluation and we will be starting another one shortly. The evaluation allows us to analyze how services compare, by which I mean the services we provide and the services provided in Quebec.

Second, we have no data on the number of refugees who have learned French, but there are working groups where all aspects of the matter are discussed.

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** Okay, thank you.

Deputy Minister, in your opening remarks, you mentioned that the department has invested more than \$27 million to increase the availability of language training. I would like to know more about that. Can you give us some details, specifically about the mechanisms established with that funding, with a view to increasing the availability of language training services?

The Office of the Auditor General also mentioned issues related to waiting lists. What specifically has been done with that amount of \$27 million to increase language services?

[English]

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Recently, we have added 2,500 new training seats for

[Translation]

language training, and we have established processes designed to help the refugees with their children, with their transportation, and so on, so that they are able to take advantage of the training.

We are also in the process of strengthening our practices for directing learners to other classes when some are full. That allows us to reduce wait-times. We have invested in informal learning to bring people in the community together with refugees or to establish conversation groups.

We are doing a lot to make sure that the refugees have access to those services.

• (1640)

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

[English]

**The Chair:** You're out of time, but I'll give you a supplementary. Did you have one quick question?

**Mr. Rémi Massé:** No, I'm fine. I could have gone for a couple more minutes.

**The Chair:** Now, we'll go back to Mr. Nuttall.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One of the things I heard on the ground was with regard to services related to employment. I know it's not directly covered here, but when you are looking at the basic needs and the service providers you have in the field—for instance, I know the YMCA is one of the organizations that works with you—is there an emphasis put on employment services as well?

**Mr. David Manicom:** Yes, absolutely. With a refugee population like the Syrians, we're always brokering a little the challenging decision point as to whether they should focus on language acquisition first, or focus on getting into the workplace. We increased our overall funding in the settlement program by quite a lot. Naturally, given the profile of this population, a lot of our emphasis was on initial official language acquisition, but we've developed a number of bridge to work programs. There is a very large and growing one in Ontario, for example.

A number of programs try to enable the newcomers to move from survival-level jobs into higher-level jobs. There is programming directly from our department, as well as links to programming of other government departments, such as ESDC. Specifically for the refugee population, we were focused on language acquisition first, and then programs to help them develop pathways into the workplace.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** I just wanted to touch on the province of Ontario. One of the pieces of information we were given was in regard to an agreement between the federal government and the Province of Ontario in 2010, which allowed a joint approach, sharing of information, etc., but it said that a similar approach had not been taken in other provinces. Is that being dealt with at this point?

I can read it out to you, if you like. It says:

In 2010, the federal government and the Province of Ontario had co-funded a system that gave the Department, the Province, and service providers real-time information on language training services. This information included how many seats were available in classes and which service providers had wait-lists.

However, the department “had not implemented a similar approach in other provinces before Syrian refugees started to arrive.”

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Yes, that is true.

One of the interesting things about the Government of Ontario is that the government itself invests significantly in settlement services and integration services for immigrants and refugees. We have a tailored approach depending on the province, in terms of how much we collaborate with it and what we need to do. That is the case in Ontario. We have a wait-list management system with them.

One thing we're looking at right now is whether it makes sense to have a more national approach, or perhaps a more tailored local approach, province by province, depending on who is offering what kinds of services.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Thank you.

I'll switch gears again. In terms of the future of Syrian refugees, from the department's perspective, what is the objective? The situation there, obviously, hasn't gotten much better on the ground yet, but hopefully one day it will.

Significant investments have already taken place. There continue to be significant investments to ensure integration and giving back to society. What's the objective overall? Will we be doing anything to ensure that these people, who obviously have received a huge amount of investment from the government, as well as from not-for-profits and Canadian citizens across the country, stay here?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** I think that the ultimate goal for the Syrian refugees is the same as it is for all refugees Canada welcomes every year, which is full integration into Canadian society for them and for their children. By our early indications, through our early impact assessments and the close working relationships we have with the organizations that are working with them, the Syrian refugees are on trend with other refugee populations that have come here in the past, in terms of their employment, earnings, and overall settlement journey, including their early attachment to Canada. Our objective would be to see that trend continue.

One thing we note is that the children of refugees in Canada do amazingly well. For example, we see that 30% of childhood refugees complete university, compared to 24% in the general population. We see high levels of educational attainment among refugees, high levels of attachment, and high levels of moving towards citizenship. That's where we would be aiming.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Nuttall.

We'll now move to Mr. Chen, please.

**Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to start by thanking the Office of the Auditor General for its work on this report, and the IRCC for its tremendous undertaking in settling the Syrian refugees. I know it has been a tremendous task to settle 45,000 Syrian refugees over the past two years.

Having read the report from the Auditor General and having heard the testimony here today at committee, I can see that the early outcomes have been very good. Despite some challenges that we have identified today with the flow of funding and the management of language training and wait-lists, this is largely a success story.

It also remains a story that is unfolding. I have had the pleasure to welcome, as some of my other colleagues have, a number of Syrian refugee families, and even helped to pack some welcome kits for them upon their arrival. What struck me the most is that some of these families include many children. Having an educational background, and having spent nine years as a school board trustee

in Toronto, I can tell you that educational outcomes are a crucial measurement of successful integration. We know that schools can play a very important role as the centres of community, not only for the children but for the families as well.

The data on how the children are doing should, in my mind, be readily available from the school boards, as well as through the coordination of ministries of education across the country. My question is, have we looked at that data in terms of the educational attainment of the Syrian refugee children? How does that information, or how can it, play a role in measuring the successful integration of the families? How do we plan to use that information to more effectively target resources and supports?

Given what we know about the importance of schools, particularly among immigrant families where there are large numbers of children, looking at their education is crucial to being able to measure the success of their integration.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** I will let Mr. Kiziltan speak to the issue of data on education and educational outcomes, but I would just note that we do have a program called settlement workers in schools. This program also received increased resources in the Syrian initiative, given the large numbers of children who were coming with the Syrian families and the need to provide additional integration supports for them in the schools.

One thing we do is communicate very regularly with our settlement provider organizations, and through them with the settlement workers in schools, etc. We do not necessarily have data in all cases yet, but we have very good feedback loops in terms of how the refugees are doing and what kinds of issues are emerging on the ground, whether it be in schools or in other areas.

I'll turn the question on the data over to my colleague.

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** From the very beginning, even before the first refugees arrived, the outcomes monitoring framework was set up. There was a ministerial meeting in Ottawa with all provinces, all ministers, and we tabled this joint framework. From that moment on, we knew that we needed provincial information, as is also mentioned in the report.

However, it takes time to build those information sharing agreements. This is all private, personal information. We are negotiating with all the provinces. With Ontario, we have made a lot of progress in terms of establishing this education-wise. As you already heard, we have health data linkages with two provinces already, British Columbia and Ontario. New Brunswick and Manitoba are going to come in very soon, before the end of March. These are all attempts to ensure that the relevant performance information from provinces is reaching us so that we can monitor health and education because they are closely linked.

Another initiative we have, as you heard, is with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Right away, from the very beginning of the movement, we initiated a huge, rapid research initiative. Over 27 projects were started, and the results are coming in. These are top academics across Canada looking at the Syrian refugee population specifically, and some of them have been zeroing in on youth, education, and schools, their integration and their challenges. The insight they are generating is essential for us to understand how trauma is affecting youth, and how mental health issues are impacting their education and integration.

These results are just beginning to come out right now, and we have a range of observations, including using more cultural brokering, if you will, so people can build bridges between refugee communities and other, already established communities. The research, more data through the information sharing agreements, and, of course, our other linked data such as income and looking at the families, will all complement our understanding of how the integration process is moving forward for young Syrians.

• (1650)

**Mr. Shaun Chen:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Do you want to follow up?

**Mr. Shaun Chen:** I just have a quick comment. I'm very happy to hear that. I know that settlement workers in schools is a great program. Having opened a centre myself a few years ago, I know that the IRCC also sets up newcomer centres, and one is in partnership with the Toronto District School Board. They are working together at the local level with municipal governments.

This is wonderful, and I'm happy to hear about the culture-relevant lens that you are applying to this, and understanding the background of some of the children. They are coming from a war-torn country where they have experienced violence, and it is important to have the perspective. Sometimes the services we have set up are just not enough. There needs to be something a bit more specialized to support their integration.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that summary, Mr. Chen.

We'll now move to Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I quite enjoyed it, Mr. Chen.

I'd like to afford Madam Cheng an opportunity to respond to the question I asked a couple of rounds ago of the two of you. The deputy had a chance. If you could, Nancy, would you be good enough to respond to the question about the outcomes monitoring framework and how they could do better?

**The Chair:** Ms. Cheng, go ahead.

**Ms. Nancy Cheng:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will take the opportunity to make a couple of contextual comments as well. I think it is important to note that this is a significant initiative, a major undertaking. In my opening statement, I said it is three times the normal volume since 1995. Being able to bring in the people under those circumstances is, I think, important to note.

The other important point I would like to make is in our conclusion. For every audit, the methodology requires that we make a conclusion, and the conclusion is that they have provided these selected programs. We didn't look at all services. The services we looked at were provided when they were needed. I think that's important to note. That's to the point that several members have spoken to.

What we've observed is really ways to see whether we can enhance things. Nothing is ever perfect. While we are doing well overall, there is a need to ask if there is room for improvement, and how that can be done so that we can further the programs in the future. A bit of it was about accountability, but I think a good part of it was looking forward, to see how this can benefit future refugee programs.

I have a couple of comments, if I may. First of all, just now, we talked a fair bit about working with service organizations and how, post-audit, there has been more information about how some of them weren't able to get the funding when the department was indeed in a position to give it to them.

It seems to me that it behooves us to help smaller organizations access that, because if they don't have the assurance that the funding is going to be there, it's very difficult for them to implement programs, especially when they are smaller organizations. There seems to be a bit more of a challenge for us, and it's a challenge that we need to rise to in order to help them get there, because ultimately, to do a lot of this work, we're relying on these 500 service organizations. That's the point I want to make.

To the point that was raised by the member about the outcome framework, it's absolutely essential that we have a framework like that. We're very happy that a framework has been laid out. They were looking at different steps, initially looking at some performance indicators for different periods, then having some rapid evaluation to see quickly on the ground whether things are going in the right direction, and doing some research. The overall framework is described in the report, and we're quite happy with that.

A member also pointed out that there was a lot of detail in the management action plan. We noted that too. We haven't audited the management action plan, but it looks quite comprehensive to us.

The important thing to do now is to make sure that all the steps in the management action plan get implemented. Especially for the outcome, knowing what's happening on the ground is quite significant in terms of knowing how to deploy resources if there are resources remaining to be deployed in this area. Also, in carrying out settlement services and programs in the future, it is important to understand whether there are things we can learn from this exercise. This is a big exercise, involving large numbers, and maybe there are more areas we can learn lessons from.

The linkages and the need to get information from the provinces are absolutely critical. Just now, members raised the question, "What's the ultimate purpose? What can we hope to accomplish?" We are a compassionate people. We are helping refugees and bringing them into the country, but we're also hoping they will contribute to the Canadian community.

There is a need for us to help them be capable so that they can contribute. The outcome discussion, in terms of education, is absolutely crucial, as is health care.

If people come from war-torn countries, there are mental health issues. Do we know whether they are supported? The indicators also speak to the fact that some of the children will have special needs. To what extent do we know about them, and to what extent are those needs being addressed? The broader Canadian population has learning deficiencies in our school system. How do we help our refugee population deal with that as well? The family members have a large population of school-age children, so we need to really look after them.

It's really trying to support the point that the management action plan is there. We have to make sure it gets implemented, and we need to get the information on how well they are ultimately integrating so that we can move forward.

•(1655)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you.

Can I squeeze in a quick question?

**The Chair:** Please be very quick.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** At the risk of this becoming a love-in, I want to move to another subject.

I want to come back to the funding thing because it seems to me, and I could be wrong—

**The Chair:** We're over our time, but go ahead. If we have time, we can come back to you.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Finish the question.

**The Chair:** With the patience of the rest, we will give Mr. Christopherson much extra time.

Go ahead.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair. I will try to be very brief.

I think in my community there might have been at least one group impacted by that funding. I could be wrong, but it seems to me that there was at least one.

Here is the question I have. You approach NGOs, for the most part, and you say to them, "We're pretty sure that this money is going to be here and we want you to upfront it." Now, clearly there was a gap of 12% at least, and that's where I want to focus, because for those 12% there was some harm done in some communities.

Here is what I don't get. If the government is saying to them, look, you're all but sure.... What percentage was the government telling these NGOs? Was it 98% guaranteed, in which case those who wouldn't take the risk look like they should be a little less cautious? However, if you said to them that there is a 70% to 80% chance they're going to get it, I can see board members, especially in this day and age, saying, "Wait a minute. Given the way politics goes in this country, I'm not going to justify our spending \$200,000 that we may end up not having."

How did that happen? How did we go so far?

I'll finish with this. I'm assuming that you couldn't give them a 100% commitment, because that would be a decision. It was something less than 100%, but how much? Where was the problem? Was it with these groups that should have taken signals that the money would be there? Was that the problem? Or did the government fail to signal sufficiently that it would not leave them high and dry, and they would be okay, like 99%?

Help me understand, please.

**The Chair:** Ms. Morgan or Mr. Manicom, go ahead.

**Mr. David Manicom:** I'll do my best. We're getting into fairly technical territory here.

At the time, we were renewing our entire settlement programs funding arrangements, not just for Syrian refugees but for everyone. Those agreements had already been renewed for an additional year because of the election cycle, so we were in that process. Our increased, but not infinite, number of staff were renewing 700 agreements.

Then we received information that we would have supplemental funding re-profiled for Syria. That required the amendment of many of those 700 agreements, which we were in the process of renewing. We had to make a management decision as to whether or not to continue down the path and get the 700 renewals done, or interrupt it in order to do the amendments at the same time.

We took the management decision to not put the 700 renewals at any risk and to make sure we got them all done, with money in the organizations for the start of the fiscal year on April 1.

That meant that we had to say to many organizations, "You will receive additional Syria money. It will not be in your bank account on April 1, and we cannot tell you definitively how much or exactly on what date you will have it."

This is my understanding. If we have to correct any details, we will correct them.

We made a management risk decision. Most organizations said, “We understand. We’re going to get an additional  $x$  hundred thousand dollars, and it will come during the fiscal year. We will do the programming. We will spend the money.” A small number decided not to, and they waited until we could do formal financial initiation.

• (1700)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** You explained it to me, but you still haven’t closed the gap.

**The Chair:** Ms. Morgan, go ahead.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** I would just add one thing, Mr. Chair, which is that this was an unprecedented situation for us, as well as for the service provider organizations. We were both taking management decisions—we on our side, and they on their side—in the middle of a confluence of events that brought a number of decisions together that we wouldn’t normally be making all at the same time.

On our own side, I think that each made reasonable decisions at the time. What it’s left us thinking about, in terms of the Auditor General’s report, is that in these kinds of circumstances, we need to make sure we’ve looked at the lessons learned from this so that if we are faced with these kinds of urgent, pressing, and unexpected priorities colliding with our routine but significant renegotiation of all of our agreements, we can figure out how we can do it better.

I do think that it was very unusual, so the organizations had to assess the risk for themselves. Even though we were very reassuring, they found themselves in different situations. The vast majority of them found it acceptable, so I would surmise from this that our communications were sufficiently reassuring.

**The Chair:** When you say, “Just trust me. I’m from government, and the money will be coming”, there are some who tend to be a little hesitant on occasion.

Thank you for your answer.

We’ll go to Mr. Généreux, please. Mr. Nuttall wanted to split the time.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Ms. Morgan, suppose I am a refugee and I arrived in the country two years ago. Am I eligible for any kind of language training?

[*English*]

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Yes, you have.

[*Translation*]

Yes.

You are eligible.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

I am assuming that the language training is at a basic level in the vast majority of cases. Is language training also offered at an advanced level?

**Mr. David Manicom:** We provide language training at several levels of knowledge, including an advanced level. Naturally, we give priority to the needs for basic training noted in the communities and those classes can have higher numbers. I should also point out that,

when newcomers obtain citizenship, they are no longer eligible for our programs.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Ms. Morgan, earlier you mentioned that 2,000 additional places were available in language classes. Did I understand that correctly?

[*English*]

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Yes, Mr. Chair. That was language training.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Are those places for new arrivals of Syrian refugees or for family members who have not yet been trained? You told me that everyone had been trained up to now. Who have those 2,000 places been reserved for?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** In the initiative to integrate the Syrians, we realized that we needed more places for training, given that the Syrian refugees had very limited knowledge of the official languages compared to other refugees and given their large numbers. So we added places to meet the total needs of all refugees and immigrants. It is important for all immigrants to have access to our services within a reasonable time. However, the refugees have priority because, in general, their language ability is at a lower level than the immigrants in the economic class, who have to pass language exams.

• (1705)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Do you know the percentages of the training provided in the two languages, French and English?

I assume that 95% of the training is done in English, but do you have statistics on the language training currently being provided for the Syrians?

**Mr. David Manicom:** I do not have the exact figures at the moment, but we can send them to the committee. About 95% or 96% of the Syrians receive training in English, because the majority of refugees who speak French settle in Quebec.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux:** Okay.

That is fine. Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Let me ask one question as a follow-up to that.

If refugees are coming, for example, to Montreal, are they encouraged to take the language training in either French or English?

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** It’s just in French.

**The Chair:** It’s specifically in French. I guess a lot of this is administered by the province, so it’s specific.

You said earlier that 40% of the refugees coming spoke English. If some of those refugees are going to a place like Montreal and say, “Wait a minute, my family is typically speaking English and can help me at home to speak English”, are they given that option?

[Translation]

**Mr. David Manicom:** That would be a question for the Government of Quebec. To my knowledge, the Government of Quebec also provides language training in English. Because of the agreement between the governments of Canada and Quebec on immigration, integration services are provided by the province.

Mr. Kiziltan, do you have any other comments to add?

[English]

**The Chair:** Of the 1% who do speak French, it would be common sense to get them into a French community, where they can take advantage of the French they know. Is that indeed the case, or do we have some speaking French who are in Toronto or Vancouver?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** When we decide to destine refugees, that's one of the things we take into account. Are the services available in the language they need? We would destine those who are French-speaking to areas with good French-speaking services and communities.

Similarly, we destine refugees, for example, to areas in which they may have family members. If we have government-assisted refugees who have family members in a particular urban area, we will destine them there. We try to take into account as much as possible those kinds of relationships, the services they might need, and the linguistic aspects.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Morgan.

Go ahead, Mr. Nuttall.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In terms of the indicators you've been using to date, how far out do you measure the success of refugees coming to Canada? Can I assume that it will be similar with the Syrian refugee program as it was with other programs before? For how long does that take place?

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** Telling the story of integration takes an intergenerational type of lens. Your question is valid. However, for instance, in terms of earnings, whether employment earnings or total income, we monitor and follow cohorts for decades. We have tax information for all cohorts since 1980, and we are able to see how earnings are changing over time, depending on financial crisis and whatnot. We monitor long-term and, as you also heard, multi-generationally. We look at the children of immigrants, whether they arrive as children or whether they are born here, and we monitor their earnings and their educational achievements and outcomes.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** When you're measuring this, do you go into any sort of gender-based analysis or any other subset?

• (1710)

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** Absolutely. We look at gender-based analysis, source country, and visible minorities. We are able to monitor.... For instance, the Canadian census 2016 has been linked to our landing data, which means that for the first time in Canadian history we are able to analyze census information by immigration category. We can look at them as GARs, PSRs, and other types of categories. We do source country, visible minority, religion, gender, any way that we can break down and look at those outcomes, at how they vary and what types of challenges are encountered by different subgroups.

Averages mask a lot of reality. We are able to do that analysis and feed that back into policy and programs for decisions.

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** When refugees come here, is there any documentation or any data related to their being the subject of hate crimes?

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** Post-arrival or before they...?

**Mr. Alexander Nuttall:** Post-arrival.

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** There are two sorts of data. There is the one that is not anecdotal scientific but based on research. When we look at research, and a number of academics are looking at it, especially qualitative research, we are encountering signs of visible minority refugees or immigrants facing some challenges in terms of translating their education to income. They have education comparable to someone Canadian-born, but they're having difficulties.

You must have heard about some research where an academic would send the same CV but with different names. The CV with a visible minority name wouldn't get the same number of callbacks as a Canadian with a regular name, which is more normally known and recognized. There are signs, and we do monitor these.

Again, as we investigate, we try to bring the insight and feed it back to our programming or policy colleagues so they can do course correction or use different ways of formulating interventions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Nuttall.

The floor is yours, Mr. Christopherson.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair.

Page six of the deputy's remarks talks about the increased supplementary money for Syrian refugees in the amount of \$58 million. Overall, there's \$762 million. I wasn't clear. Because there was so much attention paid to this file, and because you could get rapid results more quickly than normal, did you end up spending more money on the Syrian refugees, in terms of their settlement services, and therefore you needed to increase it across the board for everyone else, or was that part of a regular increase? I'm trying to identify what the driver was of the \$58 million.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** The driver of the \$58 million was the cost of settlement services per refugee. It wasn't that it cost more per Syrian. It was just that, with the significant influx of Syrian refugees, it was going to cost more overall. When we look at our settlement program overall, refugees are the most intensive users of our settlement services. On a per capita basis, those costs are higher for refugees than for other categories of immigrants.



**Mr. David Christopherson:** On the last page, you say, “As a result, most provinces and territories are experiencing an increase”. What is that reflective of? Everybody got an increase. I’m just trying to figure out why.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** It’s the combination of overall increasing levels of immigration as set out in the annual levels plan—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I’m sorry. Is this considered part of an annual increase that’s built into it anyway?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Exactly.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I see.

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** There’s an annual increase built in based on the number of immigrants coming into the country and the profile of those immigrants. If the mix changes and there are more refugees, it would be more expensive on a per person basis than if there were more economic immigrants.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That answers my question. Thank you.

**The Chair:** We’ll now move to Madam Mendès.

**Mrs. Alexandra Mendès:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have no questions, only observations. I also sit on the government operations committee, and this morning we had an outside consultant tell us that Canada is looked at as an example by many countries on many things, except procurement. We’re very bad at procurement, and are seen as really not an example to follow.

One thing we’re very good at, apparently, which many countries around the world look at us for, is our settlement services for immigrants and refugees. My job as an MP demands a lot of continued attention to the issues of immigration and refugees. Having worked in the field for over 15 years, I can absolutely attest to the excellent work you do.

I come from Quebec, so there’s a little difference there.

• (1715)

[Translation]

To answer your question, Mr. Généreux, language services for immigrants are always in French in Quebec. There are no free language services for learning English, or any other language. If people want to learn more English, they absolutely have to pay to do so. All the welcome and integration services are provided in French. I am not saying that is bad: it simply reflects the reality of Quebec. It is how the province does things.

Let me end by saying that welcoming, settling and integrating immigrants and refugees is a matter of nation building, if that is the correct expression to use.

[English]

Nation building is what immigration is all about, particularly in a country of such slow and limited demographic growth, so hats off to you and to your department for what you’re doing.

If we can help you with reports and recommendations, hoping to improve what can be improved, you can count on us.

Thank you again.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Mendès.

I hope you realize that we have to write a report on this study. There is thus one other little question we would like to ask with respect to a part we would like to have in our study. The Auditor General brought forward recommendation 3.91 on performance measurement. The Auditor General called on the department to update its performance measurement strategy.

Obviously this question is for you, Ms. Morgan. Does the department plan to develop new, more precise longer-term performance indicators, such as labour force status, children’s education—which Mr. Chen brought up—outcomes, etc.?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** Yes, Mr. Chair, we have updated our outcomes monitoring framework and our performance information profile for the Syrian refugee initiative. We are also putting into place a multipronged data strategy to further strengthen our capacity to monitor, analyze, and report. Part of that would be, for example, the agreements I referred to earlier on health data. We will be pursuing further reporting and release of statistical data, as well as reporting through our departmental results report.

**The Chair:** You have updated it. Is this something that is ongoing? Are you going to be continually looking at updating the performance measurements as you move forward, or do you think you’ve done the measures needed and it is completed?

**Ms. Marta Morgan:** This is something we will continue to look at over time. We’re constantly updating and improving our ability to track outcomes of immigrants and refugees, including Syrian refugees. I would not expect this to be a one-time thing, but we have an updated framework. We will be working with it, and we will continue to improve it as we go forward.

**The Chair:** Is that updated framework public?

**Mr. Ümit Kiziltan:** We haven’t published it, but there is no reason that it couldn’t be public.

**The Chair:** So it will be made public fairly soon.

The other question I have is more of a personal question. In my very rural Alberta riding, we have a number of immigration.... Especially around the Syrian refugees, a kind of umbrella organization came together in one of my communities, Camrose, a community of just under 20,000. They were initially disappointed that they were unable to access government-assisted refugees. They are 50 miles out of Edmonton, and they have a really strong record with refugee resettlement and working with refugees.

Today I heard some of the reasons why. Let me just make it very clear that some of these small groups and communities really take an interest in the process. It may not be a government program that's helping these refugees through; it can be community organizations or faith groups, such as mosques or churches, where everybody really gets engaged.

I would ask a couple of questions. Of the just under 45,000 Syrian refugees who came in during the timeline we're studying here, how many were government-assisted refugees, how many were privately sponsored, and how many may have been some blended form of visa office-referred refugees?

• (1720)

**Mr. David Manicom:** Yes, we have that data, if people have their pens ready: 21,726 government-assisted refugees, 13,942 privately sponsored refugees, and 3,958 what we call blended office-referred refugees. These are refugees referred to Canada by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, where the financial obligation is shared fifty-fifty between the government and a private sponsor.

**The Chair:** What are the typical characteristics of the refugees in these three categories? Are there different characteristics in government-assisted refugees, compared to privately sponsored refugee, for example a faith group that would bring in someone?

**Mr. David Manicom:** It's a bit risky to speak in general terms because the difference between the cohorts in the Syrian situation was more marked, more distinct, than might be the general case, and there are specific reasons for that. There is a large community of ethnic Syrians in Lebanon who have family or community ties with multiple generations of Syrian Canadians. This community tended to be more highly educated, middle-class. It was suffering just as much,

displaced by war, but it had education and some level of English and French skills.

The government-assisted refugees who were referred to Canada during that very compressed timeline when Canada was standing up this program tended to come from rural areas of southern Syria. They'd flowed into Jordan and Lebanon in large numbers, where we had set up our processing centres. They were highly vulnerable, and met the vulnerability criteria that we used with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. This population generally had very low levels of education and language skills, and was often from rural communities. In this movement the difference was quite stark. However, we're speaking in general terms. There were lots of privately sponsored who did not have English skills, and there were some government-assisted who did.

More generally in the programs, there is a tendency for private sponsorship groups to bring in people who are both refugees and relatives of someone already living in their communities. That socio-economic strata tends to have somewhat higher education and language skills. This is a tendency. It's not black or white.

**The Chair:** I want to thank you for appearing before our committee today, and for the work you do.

To our committee, we're going to suspend momentarily. We're going to ask all our guests to exit fairly promptly so we can have about two or three minutes of committee business. Seeing that our Thursday meeting has been cancelled, we have one letter that we want to take a very quick look at and see if we can circulate it.

We will suspend.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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