

**THE SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTED REFUGEES IN
HAMILTON, ONTARIO: A CRITIQUE OF CANADA'S REFUGEE AND HUMANITARIAN
RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM**

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Master of Arts
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Abstract

This paper critiques Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program through a study of the settlement experience of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in Hamilton, Ontario. The study is based on qualitative interviews conducted with GARs informants to understand their pre-migration experience and their settlement experience in Canada. The findings of the study were scrutinized against the settlement policy and principles that are set out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). The study revealed that Canada offers protection to refugees selected abroad, without considering their ability to integrate into Canadian society. However, the study also found that CIC's policy for the resettlement process of GARs in Canada is inadequate. This, together with the absence of clear legislation, contributes to the hardships that GARs face when they try to rebuild their lives in Canada. This paper suggests that CIC should develop inclusive policies to address the long term resettlement needs of GARs.

Keywords

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs); Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP); Humanitarian Resettlement; Immigration Policy; Settlement Experience

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Dedication

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Introduction - Objectives of the Study

Granting refuge to people who arrive at its borders seeking asylum has been a long standing Canadian tradition. From Loyalists to Doukhobors, from Tamils to Kosovars, many groups of people have sought and found refuge in Canada (Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998). However, sanctuary in Canada has not only been limited to those who arrive at its borders seeking asylum. Under its Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, the federal government of Canada, through the department of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), actively seeks refugees from overseas for resettlement in Canada. Further, private organizations and groups of five or more individual Canadians can also sponsor refugees under this program (CIC, 2004).

Each year, the federal government of Canada sponsors approximately 7500 individuals from overseas for resettlement in Canada (CIC, 2004). These individuals are known as the Government Assisted Refugees (GARs). The federal government provides GARs with settlement assistance through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Arguably, on a per capita basis, Canada's refugee resettlement program is the largest in the world (Orr, 2004). However, refugee resettlement in Canada is not compatible with the economic reasons why Canada seeks out new immigrants. As Dauvergne (2005) states that while economic immigrants are selected by nations because they have something of value to contribute to the society, refugees are admitted because they lack protection from another nation. Therefore, refugee settlement in Canada is guided by its humanitarian tradition and the commitments it has towards easing the refugee crisis in the world.

The objective of this Major Research Paper (MRP) is to critique Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program by taking a specific look at the settlement experience of a

group of GARs, who were resettled in Hamilton, Ontario. In this context, this MRP will examine if the program is guided by the principles of Canada's refugee policy, if the program achieves its objectives in practice, and in what way the GAR Program and the RAP contribute to Canada's humanitarian character and tradition. The settlement experience of GARs in Hamilton is analyzed through their pre-migration experiences, expectations about their new life in Canada, their attitudes towards Canada and Canadian society, their settlement needs, if those needs are fulfilled, the effectiveness of the settlement services that are available to them in Hamilton and the types of barriers they face when trying to integrate into Canadian society. Through its analysis, this MRP will try to answer the question of how effectively is Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program meeting its objectives and commitments towards GARs and their resettlement?

The Principles of Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program

In 2002, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) replaced the *Immigration Act* of 1976 (CIC, 2005). This new legislation outlines the objectives and applications of Canada's refugee policy. Subsections 2(a) and (b) of the IRPA state that two of those objectives are:

(a) to recognize that the refugee program is in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted;

(b) to fulfill Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees and affirm Canada's commitment to international efforts to provide assistance to those in need of resettlement.

According to CIC (2004), the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, with the IRPA as its legislative framework, is governed by four core principles that put more emphasis on refugee protection than their ability to adapt and settle in Canada. CIC (2004) claims that when refugees are selected for resettlement, under the first core principle of the program, the first priority is given for the need of protection rather than a person's ability to integrate into Canadian society. Under the IRPA, refugees are not required to demonstrate their ability to successfully settle in Canada (Orr, 2004). This is a markedly different policy than the one that was implemented under the *Immigration Act* of 1976 where refugees were screened to assess their ability to adapt to Canadian society and the labour markets (Knowles, 1997).

CIC (2004) states that rapid family reunification is another a core principle of the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. Therefore, priority is given to reunifying family members of refugees who are already in Canada. According to CIC, concurrent processing of refugee families (families who are related to each other) is also given priority under this program. Any non-accompanying family members are attempted to be reunited with

family within one year (CIC, 2004). This process differs largely from the situation of sponsored family class immigrants (not GARs) who are subjected to long processing times.

According to CIC (2004), accelerated processing of urgent and vulnerable cases is the third principle that governs the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. The objective of this principle, as claimed by CIC, is to immediately identify refugees who are in “urgent need of protection” since, if immediate protection is not given to these refugees, they are likely to be killed, subjected to sexual assault, torture, abduction or arbitrary imprisonment. Refugees, who are considered to be “vulnerable”, but are not under an immediate threat and who are in greater need of protection than other refugees, also receive protection under this principle (CIC, 2004). Refugees who are considered to be in urgent need of protection or considered vulnerable are not in any way required to demonstrate that they have the ability to successfully settle in Canada (Orr, 2004). In these urgent cases, CIC points out, that it is them, with the collaboration of the UNHCR, who identifies the need for urgent protection or vulnerability and offer protection to those in need. This is significantly different from the cases that are determined by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), where the burden of proof is on the refugee claimant to demonstrate that he or she is in need of Canada’s protection.

The objective of the fourth principle is to build close relationships with other stakeholders, such as private sponsors and agencies like the UNHRC and the International Organization of Migration (IOM). The main aim here is to increase the flexibility of the program in order to expand the resettlement through private sponsorship (CIC, 2004). However, this may not necessarily mean the number of refugees that are resettled in Canada will be increased. Rather, this could signal a reduction in the number of sponsorships undertaken by the government when the private sponsorships start increasing.

The *1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (Geneva Convention) is the principle international legal document that defines who is a refugee, the rights of the refugees and the obligations of the states who are signatories to the Geneva Convention (UNHRC, 2005). As a signatory to the Geneva Convention, Canada has incorporated its definition of a refugee into the IRPA. Therefore, Canada recognizes as Convention refugees, persons who:

have a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinions or membership in a particular social group; are outside the country of their nationality and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to be protected by that country; or not having a country of nationality, are outside the country of their former habitual residence and are unable or, by reason of that fear, are unwilling to return to that country (CIC, 2005).

While Canada grants Convention refugee status (after determination by the IRB) to some individuals who arrive at its borders, there is also another process to identify refugees who cannot physically arrive at the border to seek asylum. The *Convention Refugees Abroad Class*, as defined by CIC, includes convention refugees who are in another country and are in need of resettlement. For these individuals, resettlement is the only available solution to resolve their refugee situation within a reasonable time period (CIC, 2005). Further, the *Country of Asylum Class*, (persons outside their country of citizenship or habitual residence who continue to be seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict or massive violations of human rights) identifies the resettlement needs of people who are in refugee-like situations but do not qualify as Convention refugees (CIC, 2004). The individuals who belong to *Source Country Class* (people who would meet the definition of Convention refugees but who are still living in their country of citizenship or habitual residence) are also offered protection under the IRPA. Currently, the *Source Country Class* is limited only to nationals of El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone (CIC, 2005).

Canada's signature to the Geneva Convention has obligated Canada to become an active participant in refugee protection. This obligation, combined with Canada's historical claim of providing refuge to people who are in need of its protection (i.e. the humanitarian tradition) and the recently introduced IRPA, has outwardly moved Canada's refugee policy towards a more inclusive approach.

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) make up the majority of individuals who are resettled under the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. Persons who fall under the *Convention Refugees Abroad Class* and *Source Country Class* are eligible to be sponsored by the Government of Canada for resettlement (CIC, 2004). The referral of the GARs to the CIC (for resettlement in Canada) is done exclusively by the UNHCR. While the IRPA allows other organizations to be designated for the referral of GARs, presently, Canada solely relies on the UNHCR for the referral process (Orr, 2004). However, under the IRPA, CIC is directly involved with the selection process of GARs and may designate other agencies for referral purposes. Further, any individual who may fall into the *Source Country* category can directly apply to a visa office at a Canadian mission for resettlement in Canada (CIC, 2004).

There are an estimated 19.2 million individuals in the world that the UNHCR recognizes as “people of concern”. Out of this population, 9.3 million people are recognized by the UNHCR as *refugees* (UNHCR, 2005). Persons who are resettled in Canada with government assistance are selected from the group that the UNHCR recognizes as *refugees*. According to the CIC (2005), during the last four years (2002 to 2005), approximately 7500 GARs have been admitted each year to Canada as permanent residents.

The countries of origin of the GARs who are resettled in Canada closely reflect the origins of the major refugee populations of the world. The UNHCR identifies Afghanistan, Sudan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Palestine, Viet Nam, Liberia, Iraq, and Azerbaijan as the top ten refugee producing nations of the world (UNHCR, 2004 a). In the year 2004, GARs from Afghanistan, Sudan, Congo, Somalia, and Liberia were resettled in

Canada. The GARs, who arrived in the province of Ontario, were resettled in Hamilton, London, Windsor, Kitchener, Toronto, and Ottawa (CIC, 2005).

Selection of GARs

Canada depends on the UNHCR as its only source of refugee referrals (CIC, 2004). For the most part, the CIC accepts the refugees that are referred by the UNHCR to be resettled in Canada. However, the UNHCR's referral alone is not a guarantee that a refugee will be admitted to Canada for resettlement. After the referral is made, Canadian visa officers process the GAR applications to determine whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, (i.e. Convention refugee or Source Country status) and the admissibility criteria through criminal, security checks and health examinations (CIC, 2004). However, the health checks are conducted only to determine if the applicant has a serious communicable disease that could be a danger to the Canadian public (Orr, 2004). GARs who suffer from mental health issues and physical disabilities are not prevented from coming to Canada (CIC, 2004). This is an interesting departure from the strict regulations that apply to both the independent and family class immigrants who are subjected to rigorous health checks before they are allowed into Canada. In the case of the GARs, the federal government assumes the responsibility for their health and wellbeing from the time of selection. This procedure is compatible with government sponsorship of refugees which specifically targets the most vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, victims of torture and trauma, and persons who have special medical needs (Orr, 2004). Once the refugees are selected for resettlement in Canada, they are granted an immigrant visa. Upon their arrival in Canada, these individuals become landed immigrants or permanent residents (CIC, 2005).

Resettlement of Refugees in Canada – Resettlement Assistance Program

Resettlement is defined by CIC (2004) as a limited yet, vitally important solution to the refugee crisis, an instrument of protection and as a durable solution. When the resettlement of refugees is described in a Canadian context, it essentially means resettlement of refugees in a third country. For some refugees, third country resettlement is the only durable solution that is available, since there are no local integration prospects in the country of asylum and no realistic possibility of repatriation to the country of origin (CIC, 2004).

GARs who are resettled in Canada receive settlement assistance through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP). Once GARs are selected to be resettled in Canada, they can be sent to any city or town in any of the nine provinces where there is a RAP centre. Currently, there are 23 RAP centers across Canada. There are no RAP centers in the province of Quebec as Quebec has its own resettlement program (CIC, 2006). In Ontario, there are RAP centers in Ottawa, Toronto, London, Kitchener, Windsor and Hamilton. The RAP in designated cities is run by Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) contracted by CIC. Ontario resettles approximately 2000 GARs per year among its six centers (SISO, 2006).

The RAP is funded by the federal government of Canada through CIC and its budget is approved by the Treasury Board of Canada (CIC, 2004). One of the important criteria used to govern the RAP is the Contribution Accountability Framework (CAF). This framework ensures the accountability of settlement expenditures by monitoring the delivery of services and by evaluating the effectiveness of the program (Treasury Board of Canada, 2005).

The RAP provides the GARs with income support for a period of 12 months and up to a maximum of 24 months in special circumstances (CIC, 2004). Upon arrival in Canada, the income support payments are paid in a lump sum (as a start up payment to buy essential

household items) and then in monthly payments for the next 12 months (CIC, 2003). Under the RAP, GARs receive income support that is approximately equivalent to the provincial levels of social assistance that is available to people in Canada (CIC, 2003). However, income assistance through RAP is not an automatically guaranteed benefit. The income assistance could be refused, reduced or discontinued depending on the circumstances of GARs and is given at CIC's discretion (CIC, 2003). At the end of the CIC income support, GARs qualify for income support through provincial welfare agencies. GARs who live in Ontario can apply to Ontario Works (Ontario welfare agency) when they are unable to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing for themselves and their dependents (CIC, 2003).

In the year 2005, \$ 42.5 million was spent to resettle 7416 GARs in Canada (CIC and Treasury Board of Canada, 2005). This money was spent on providing both income support and settlement services to GARs. While the income support is paid monthly by CIC, the actual delivery of settlement services is carried out by designated SPOs who are funded by CIC (CIC, 2003). The SPOs are responsible for welcoming GARs at ports of entry, providing temporary accommodation, assessing entitlements and needs, conducting orientation sessions (to ensure that GARs understand their income support entitlements, right and responsibilities etc.), providing help with finding permanent accommodation, assessing clients for their needs and making referrals to other community organizations as necessary (CIC, 2003). It is important to note that once GARs land in Canada, the main and only role that CIC plays is to issue the monthly income support cheques. All the other settlement needs of GARs are met by the SPOs and other government and community agencies. This means that once CIC's income support obligations end after the 12 month period, its association with GARs essentially ends.

While the RAP income support only covers the essential living expenses, the other resettlement needs of GARs (economic and cultural adaptation) are provided by SPOs through programs such as Integration and Adaptation Program (ISAP), Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC), Job Search Workshop (JSW) and HOST. As permanent residents of Canada, GARs are entitled to receive all of the settlement services that are available to other immigrants to Canada (CIC, 2004).

Hamilton, Ontario as a Place for Refugee Resettlement

According to the 2001 census, the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) had a population of 655,000. Of this, approximately 154,000 or 23% were identified as foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2005 a). After Toronto and Vancouver, Hamilton has the third highest percentage of foreign born population in a Canadian city. From the size of the actual foreign born population, Hamilton ranks seventh among Canadian cities (Statistics Canada, 2005 b). However, only a small number of the people in Hamilton (10 %) belonged to racialised or visible minority groups (Statistics Canada, 2001). A vast majority of Hamiltonians have identified themselves as “white” (Statistics Canada, 2001) The city of Hamilton receives approximately 3500 newcomers per year (Canadian Labour and Business Center (CLBC), 2005) and of these newcomers, approximately 400 or 11% are GARs (SISO, 2006).

Due to its proximity to the city of Toronto, one of the most diverse metropolises in the world, at first glance, Hamilton, Ontario does not seem like an ideal place to resettle GARs. Since the majority of new immigrants to Canada tend to settle in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and there is clear pattern of secondary migration to Toronto among all newcomers to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001), it seems unlikely that Hamilton would be able to retain GARs who are sent there. However, due to the efficient settlement services and other social service resources that are available in Hamilton, the city has been able to retain newcomers who arrive there (SISO, 2006).

RAP in Hamilton

In Hamilton, the SPO designated by CIC to deliver RAP services is the Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). Since its inception in October 2001, the RAP in Hamilton has been involved in the resettlement of approximately 2000 GARs or 400 GARs per year (SISO, 2006).

The GARs who have been resettled in Hamilton belong to different ethnic backgrounds and come from different parts of the world (SISO, 2006). The main GARs groups to be resettled in Hamilton were Somalis who came from Dadaab camps in Kenya, Afghans from Tajikistan, other parts of central Asia and Russia, Liberians from camps in Guinea and Ghana. Further, refugees from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sierra Leone who have lived in various camps in Africa have also been resettled in Hamilton (SISO, 2005). In 2006, Karen GARs from Burma (Myanmar) who live in refugee camps in Thailand, will be resettled in Hamilton.

Research on the Settlement Experience of GARs - Literature Review

While the settlement experience of refugee claimants in Canada has been extensively researched, the same can not be said about the GARs. Only a handful of research has been conducted to exclusively examine the settlement experience of GARs in Canada. Therefore, in order to get a better understanding of the settlement experience of GARs, it is also essential to examine CIC policy documents and program evaluation reports along with the available literature. It is important to note that the settlement experience of GARs in Hamilton, Ontario has never been extensively researched. There are two previous studies involving the settlement experience of the Kosovars and Sudanese in Ontario, which also included GARs who lived in Hamilton (Anisef, Lam and Jansen, 2001; Simich and Hamilton, 2004). Further, the Kosovar GARs who came to Hamilton in 1999 have been studied in comparison to the Czech Roma (who were asylum seekers) to examine whether the organized settlement efforts led to better adaptation and perceived health status (Redwood-Campbell, Fowler, Kaczorowski J, Molinaro, Robinson, Howard, and Jafarpour; 2003). Further, GARs in Hamilton were involved in the evaluation of the CIC GARs Life Skills Program (Kappel, Ramji, 2005).

The literature reviewed for the purpose of this MRP used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. While the quantitative studies included surveys and questionnaires with close-ended questions and statistical analysis of the findings, the qualitative methods included in-depth, unstructured or semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to examine the common themes and issues that were faced by GARs. While the Kosovar health study conducted by Redwood-Campbell et al. used a sample that was randomly selected, all of the other studies used purposive samples. At least one study used survey data collected by a third party in order to analyse the settlement experience of the GARs. In order to

examine the secondary migration pattern among GARs, Simich, Beiser and Mawani (2002), selected a purposive sample of GARs with the assistance of the counsellors at reception centres and settlement agencies. Their rationale of selecting a purposive sample highlighted the difficulty of recruiting GARs for research purposes. As Simich et al, (2002) pointed out, the GARs come from unsafe environments, they are easily intimidated and they fear the motives of others who want to question them. Therefore, a sensitive approach is needed when selecting the sample and conducting the interviews (Simich et al, 2002). While all the studies under review used a unique method to select the samples, all the researchers made their first contact with GARs through either a settlement agency or a community group. Therefore, it is evident, that third party involvement is vital for recruiting GARs for a research study. Further, it must be noted that since GARs arrive in Canada as permanent residents, identifying GARs would not be possible without the assistance of settlement workers or community groups.

The theoretical aspects of some the studies reviewed here look at the dependency of refugees on power structures (such as the CIC and RAP program) in Canadian society (Simich, 2003; Simich et al, 2002,). While the GARs arrive in Canada as permanent residents, their dependence on the power structures put them at a disadvantage compared to other permanent residents of Canada. In other words, these studies take a social exclusion perspective to examine the settlement of GARs in Canada. This perspective allows the researchers to examine the ways in which GARs are excluded from the opportunity structures in the mainstream Canadian society because of their allocated status in Canada as refugees. However, it is important to note that once in Canada, GARs are no longer refugees.

When reviewing CIC policy documents, it becomes obvious that the government of Canada rigorously controls the selection and resettlement process of GARs (CIC, 2004). CIC

operation manuals, such as *Overseas selection and processing of convention refugees abroad class and members of the humanitarian-protected persons abroad classes* and *In Canada processing of convention refugees abroad class and members of the humanitarian-protected persons abroad classes*. *Part 2 resettlement assistance program*, clearly states that the Canadian government has the final say over granting visas, where to resettle refugees and the type of settlement assistance that is given to GARs. Therefore, the GARs resettlement process can be viewed as a controlled process that is implemented entirely on Canada's terms.

When analysing the settlement services that GARs receive in Canada, both the Kosovar study and the Sudanese study indicated a few common concerns among the GARs. One concern was the lack of access to resources, such as sufficient information about finding employment and day-to-day functions, such as paying bills, shopping etc. This indicates a weakness of the orientation programs that are conducted by the SPOs. However, it is important to note that the guidelines for the orientation programs are set out by CIC. The evaluation of the RAP (2002), found that RAP orientations are not geared towards the needs of the different refugee groups, rather, they are uniformly administered to all GARs. However, it is clear that GARs are not a homogeneous group and their needs (even common ones such as the ones noted above) have to be addressed according to their unique situations.

The shortage of the research involving GARs may be due to the fact that the settlement of GARs is a relatively new area in research. One of the significant features of the majority of literature reviewed was that the research was either conducted with the direct collaboration of the CIC or funded by the CIC. In one way or another, all the research looked at the level of resettlement successes of GARs. The CIC involvement in the existing research may indicate that the government of Canada is keeping tabs on the effectiveness of the GARs program. A direct

outcome of the government's involvement in this research could be either an increase or a decrease in the number of GARs that are admitted to Canada, depending on the perceived success or failure of the resettlement program.

While all other immigrants such as independent, family class and asylum seekers somehow chose Canada as their destination, GARs do not have a choice of their destination and did not choose to come to Canada. Therefore, GARs are a unique group of immigrants and they provide many possibilities for research. In this context, this MRP attempts to document the pre-migration experience and the settlement experience of GARs in Hamilton, in order to examine the Canada's refugee and humanitarian settlement program, its principles and objectives and if the resettlement of GARs fulfills the objectives that have been set out by CIC.

Methods – Sample, Recruitment and Data Collection

The GARs who live in Hamilton can be viewed as a special population or a difficult to reach population. Therefore, the sample that was selected for this study was purposive. A purposive sampling method was deemed to be appropriate since the research is qualitative in nature and the purpose of the study was to shed light on the lived experience of the GARs in Hamilton and to critique Canada's refugee and humanitarian resettlement program through their experience.

The GARs informants were recruited for the study with the assistance of the RAP staff at SISO. The sample was limited only to GARs that have lived in the city of Hamilton for a period at least one year and less than three years. The assumption was that GARs who have lived in Hamilton for at least one year would have sufficient time to become familiar with the city itself, Canadian culture, climatic conditions, and have a general idea about living in Canada. Further, GARs become ineligible to receive financial assistance from CIC after one year and they are expected to become self-sufficient in their second year in Canada. Since the GARs become eligible to become Canadian citizens after three years of residency in Canada, and they become ineligible to receive many settlement services, it is important examine the GARs settlement experience before they complete three years in Canada. The above reasons were the rationale behind limiting the sample to GARs who lived in Hamilton for at least one year and less than three years.

Since purposive sampling was carried out to overcome the difficulties of recruiting GARs for the study, it is not possible know if the sample selected is representative of all the GARs who have been resettled in Hamilton between a period of one to three years. While the statistics for GARs who were settled in Hamilton is available through SISO, it is impossible to know many

GARs who were settled in Hamilton are still actually living in Hamilton, as there is evidence that GARs undertake secondary migration within Canada (Simich et al, 2002; Simich, 2003).

The study was advertised among the GARs individuals (who fit the selection criteria) with the assistance of the RAP staff at SISO. A flyer with information about the study and contact information for the researcher was given to the RAP staff, which, in turn, made the information available to their former clients. The RAP staff was also asked to make the information available to as many GARs individuals, both male and female and from many GARs communities in Hamilton. This approach was taken to capture as many GARs as possible from varied countries, genders, age groups and socio-economic status. The informants were asked to contact the researcher directly if interested in participating in the study. The reason behind this approach was to minimize the perceived level of coercion to the GARs. Since the RAP staff have had a client-service provider relationship with the GARs, this approach made sure that the potential informants did not feel obliged or coerced to participate in the study. The RAP staff were only asked to provide information about the study to the GARs, not to solicit their participation in anyway.

The original intention was to interview ten informants for the purpose of this study. Ideally, the expectation was to recruit two participants each (male and female) from the four main GAR communities in Hamilton and two participants from the smaller GAR communities in order to identify common settlement related issues that are faced by GARs regardless of gender and cultural differences. Interestingly, this approach also presented an opportunity to examine the flipside of the above rationale; that is, how the settlement experience of GARs differs according to gender and cultural differences. According to the statistics available at SISO (2006), the Somali, Afghan, Sudanese and Liberian communities, are the four major GAR

groups in Hamilton. Further there are smaller GAR communities from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sierra Leone also living in Hamilton.

However, only seven informants contacted the researcher indicating their willingness to participate in the study. Further, before the beginning of the interview, one informant withdrew consent. Therefore, this study is based on only six interviews. Of the six informants, four were females and two were males. The informants came from Somalia, Afghanistan, Liberia and Sudan. Therefore, the sample is consistent with the main GARs communities in Hamilton. There were two informants each from Somalia (two females, identified in the study as Somali female-1 and Somali female-2) and Afghanistan (one male and one female). The informant from Liberia is a female and the informant from the Sudan is a male. The age range of the informants is 19-42. Two of the informants indicated that they would be completing a year in Hamilton only at the beginning of October 2006. However, these informants were included since they were nearing the completion of one year in Hamilton.

Due to the inability of recruiting the desired sample according to the gender and cultural backgrounds, it was not possible to investigate the aspects of the settlement experience of GARs that might have differed along to gender and cultural lines. This is a limitation of this study. However, it was possible to identify common themes associated with the resettlement experience of the GARs in Hamilton by talking to the six informants who took part in the study.

The informants were asked to choose the interview location. All informants, except one, chose their homes as the interview location. One informant chose SISO as the location for the interview. A consent form, in English, explaining the study, voluntary participation (without any compensation), rights of research informants, responsibilities of the researcher and the data collection method were made available to all of the informants. Three informants read the

English consent form and gave consent by signing it. For two informants, the contents of the consent form were explained through a translator and oral consent was obtained. One informant asked for the consent form to be read out in English and consented orally. When the permission was sought for the interviews to be audio taped, all the informants, except for one, declined to grant permission. However, all of the informants allowed their responses to be typed directly into a laptop computer.

Interviews were conducted in the month of August 2006. An interview guide was used and the same basic questions were asked of all the informants. However, most of the interview questions were open-ended and the informants were encouraged to elaborate on their answers as much as possible using their own words, without any suggestive remarks or prompting by the researcher. This method was utilized in order to capture a more complete and true picture of the settlement experience of GARs in Hamilton. The interviews lasted 1.5 - 2 hours. Four interviews were conducted directly in English, the other two were conducted with the assistance of translator.

The interview was in four parts. The first section dealt with the pre-migration experience of the GARs. The pre-migration section only focused on the living conditions in the country of asylum and the immigration process to Canada. The questions about the circumstances that led to informants becoming refugees and other traumatic experiences were purposely avoided for ethical reasons. The second section dealt with the informants' arrival in Canada and in the city of Hamilton. The third section focused on the settlement services that the informants received in Hamilton. The fourth section, the most important part of the interview, focused on the resettlement process.

Apart from the interviews with the GARs, academic literature (reviewed above), the policy documents and operational manuals from CIC and parts of the Canadian immigration legislation were analysed to critique Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program in depth.

The Inquiry into the Settlement Experience of the GARs in Hamilton, Ontario

The Pre-migration Experience

All of the GARs who were interviewed indicated that immediately before coming to Canada, they were living outside their country of origin. These countries include Pakistan, Kenya, Guinea, Egypt and Tajikistan. Three of the informants indicated that they lived in refugee camps and the other three indicated that while they did not live in a camp itself, they did not have any legal immigration status in the country in which they were living. In other words, they were living in a state of legal limbo. All the informants stated that they lived in refugee situations for various lengths of time. The two GARs from Somalia also indicated that they had been internally displaced inside Somalia for a long period of time before going to a refugee camp in Kenya. The shortest time as refugee was spent by the informant from Sudan who indicated that his family lived in Egypt only for two years before coming to Canada. The two Somali female informants spent the longest time period as refugees. These two informants indicated that they lived in a refugee situation for 14 years (including 8 years, spent as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Somalia). Among the other informants, the Afghan female indicated that her family spent 8 years in refugee situation in Pakistan. The Liberian female spent 12 years in a refugee camp in Guinea and the male informant from Afghanistan spent 6 years Tajikistan. This indicates that the GARs, who were selected to be resettled in Canada, had been living in refugee situations for lengthy period of time.

Four of the informants indicated that they did not make the decision to come to Canada on their own. The Afghan female said that her family was looking for a place to resettle when her cousin, who lives in Vancouver, provided them with the information to apply to be resettled in Canada. All other informants stated that they were not involved in the decision to be resettled

in Canada. The Somalis informants, who came from the Dadaab camps in Kenya, indicated that the United Nations and the Canadian Government were involved in the decision of sending them to Canada.

All the refugees have a UN Card. They used the cards to select us randomly. They selected us randomly. I was my name on the notice board to go to Canada (Somali - 1).

Canada government made the decision. They used the UN card to select us randomly. They just put your names on a board and say you will be resettled somewhere. At that time [time of her selection] three countries were accepting refugees, Australia, Canada and United States. When we saw the names on the board we knew we are going to one of these countries, but we did not know it was Canada. You just fill out the forms. That's it. They do not give a choice at all (Somali - 2).

The Somali informants indicated that they were not very clear about how or who was exactly involved in making the decision for them to be resettled in Canada. However, the Liberian informant knew in detail how the decision was made for her.

I was working with ARC- American Refugee Committee, an international US organization. They recommended me to UNHCR, for resettlement in a third country. They [UNHCR] gave me an interview and UNHCR accepted me for resettlement. You do not chose your country [to be resettled], nor does UNHCR, they sent the documents over to Geneva, In Geneva, Canadian government took my case. Then they came with a list of names to the refugee camp saying that I am going to Canada. Then Canadian immigration officers came to the camp and interviewed me (Liberian).

Both the Sudanese and the Afghan male informants also indicated that they knew that there was involvement by the UNHCR when the decision was made to resettle them in Canada. The Sudanese informant stated that the UNHCR recommended to his family that they apply to Canada to be resettled.

When asked about the application procedure to be resettled in Canada, the informants gave varied responses. The Somali informants indicated that their application forms were filled on their behalf by people that they identified as “people from Canadian Government”

I did not apply. They applied for us. They were from the government of Canada (Somali-1)

I did not fill any forms. Someone asked the questions and filled the form. Canadian government (Somali - 2)

The Liberian informant managed to describe complexity of the application procedure in more detail.

It is a long procedure. Lot of questions about what made you leave your community. Why can't you be in the refugee camp? Why you can't go back to Liberia? You have to give a oral case history, and they write it down. They said that they have to verify what I said. They somehow verified it. Then they let you know that you have been successful. They write to and tell you that you have been successful (Liberian).

The Afghan male informant indicated that he was selected to be resettled in Canada by a special program put together by the CIC, UNHCR and IOM in Tajikistan.

First time UNHCR came and did [an] interview with me and other Afghan people, they took my and my family pictures, after 4 months UNHCR people came back did a second interview. Then UNHCR, they introduce [me to] IOM. They said to come to Canada (Afghan- male).

The other informants indicated that they filled the applications with help from various sources such as friends and people whose applications were still pending at Canadian missions in the countries that they were living at that time.

What is noticeable from the information that the informants provided is that for individuals who lived in refugee camps, the CIC officials visited them in order to assess resettlement needs, determine admissibility and complete the necessary paper work through

informational interviews and decisions. For the individuals who lived in refugee situations outside of camps, these individuals had to apply themselves to be resettled in Canada at Canadian missions.

The length of time that it took for the individual cases to be processed and immigrant visas to be issued also varied. The Afghan female said that her family's application took somewhere between a year and 18 months to be processed. The Somali informants, who came from the same area camps, differed on the lengths of time that it took for them to be accepted to be resettled in Canada.

Since I saw my name on the notice board in 2003 I waited until 2005 to come to Canada (Somali -1).

Somali-2 stated that she waited from June 2003 to November 2004 to be resettled in Canada. The Liberian informant indicated that she waited from November 2003 to April 2005 to be resettled in Canada. The Afghan male participant indicated that he waited for 11 months to come to Canada. The Sudanese informant said that he was not exactly sure how long it took but felt that it was more than a year.

The time that CIC takes to process GARs' applications is shorter than other types of immigrant and refugee applications. According to CIC (2006), the average GARs application can take anywhere between 5 and 16 months. For GARs who participated in this study, their processing times were within the time range specified by CIC for those particular parts of the world from where they came (CIC, 2006).

The expedited application and selection process of GARs is compatible with the principles that governs Canada's humanitarian resettlement program. From the interviews, it became clear that the GAR applications are processed in an expedited manner. However, for

people who live in dangerous and vulnerable situations, waiting for a few months may not be the ideal situation. The CIC processing times include completing paper work and conducting admissibility checks such as health check ups and criminality checks.

All the informants stated that they had to undergo a health check up before being granted the immigrant visa to come to Canada. However, only the Liberian informant stated that there was a criminal check as well. The other participants indicated that they did not know if there was a criminality check or not. However, CIC states that all GARs are subjected to admissibility regulations based on health, criminal and security checks (CIC, 2004).

Once the application has been approved for resettlement in Canada, the GARs are directed to cities in Canada where there are RAP centers. All the informants indicated that they did not know before hand that they would be resettled in Hamilton, Ontario. All the informants also stated that they had not heard of Hamilton and did not know any information about Hamilton or what to expect when they got there.

I knew that we were going to Hamilton after I sat on the plane... I had the paper [immigration document] and I read there, we are going to Hamilton. I was not sure about the city.... I said 'mum, we are going to somewhere called Hamilton... (Afghan Female).

When the notice came, it said I am going to Burlington and at Toronto Airport they said Hamilton. I did not say anything because it is the government (Somali-1).

I only knew I am Hamilton, the day I signed the visa. They took a map out and showed me (Liberian).

The informants indicated that they were not offered a choice of where to be resettled in Canada. One of the not so obvious aims of Canada's humanitarian resettlement policy is to resettle GARs in communities across Canada (Simich, Beiser, Mawani, 2002; Simich, 2003). While CIC does not attempt to direct other immigrants (i.e. non-GARs) to any particular

destination in Canada, it uses the unequal power relation that it has with GARs to direct them to particular destinations in Canada (Simich, 2003). This can be viewed as a controlled attempt to disperse immigrants to other parts of Canada in order to prevent immigrants from flocking to major immigrant centers, such as Toronto. However, when GARs arrive in Canada, they have the opportunity and the right (under the *Charter of Rights*) to move to any other destination within Canada. What is significant here is that in refugee situations, GARs were forced to migrate, in the resettlement process, they were directed to migrate and after becoming residents in Canada, they are free to move to another part of Canada at their own initiative.

Simich et al (2002) and Simich, (2003) have found that GARs undertake secondary migration within Canada. The main reason for secondary migration has been identified as a lack of social support through community and family networks in the places where GARs have been initially resettled. Further, many GARs have indicated that they would prefer to select their resettlement destination in Canada (Simich et al, 2002; Simich, 2003). This shows that CIC's intentions of resettling GARs in certain locations in Canada has not been a great a success, due to the limited community support (emotional and social) available in some locations.

The Afghan male informant said that he was a secondary migrant to Hamilton. He said that he was not given a choice about where to resettle in Canada.

They said that you are going to Winnipeg. I did not know where it is or anyone there. I only stayed in Winnipeg for 20 days. I did not know any one there. No Afghans. I called my friend in Hamilton. He said to come to Hamilton, Hamilton is good (Afghan male).

This shows that GARs would like to go a place where there is least some type of community support. When resettled in Canada, GARs seek out social support from people who are from the same ethnic background and the same country as them (Simich et al, 2000). Further,

it is important for GARs to have advice from someone who went through a similar settlement experience (Simich et al, 2000).

While some informants indicated that they knew some general information about Canada, two informants said that did not know anything about it. However, they said that they were hopeful that things in Canada would be better than the situation that they were in:

I knew nothing about Canada, if it was like a big country or a small village. I knew nothing... I just knew it will be better than the hectic place that I lived in and I knew my kids will find better education and better life and pace (Somali -1).

It was an unknown country for me. When I think of Canada, what kind of county, I closed my eyes and tried to think of a place where we are happy, I think about the children, and a place where they are happy and safe (Afghan male).

The information about Canada that was given to the GARs prior to their arrival varied greatly. While some informants said that they received an intensive orientation, others said that they did not receive any information at all. According to CIC (2004), providing information and orientation sessions to GARs are left up to local agencies that are designated by IOM. Therefore, depending on where the GARs come from, they could receive a lot of information about Canada or no information at all.

The travel arrangements for the GARs are also carried out by the IOM. However, the CIC, UNHRC or IOM do not provide free travel to the GARs. If the applicant can not afford to pay, the cost of travel to Canada is covered through an immigration loan that is granted to the GARs by CIC (CIC, 2004). The GARs are expected to start paying these loans as soon after their arrival. While this loan covers the travel expenses, it also put many GARs in debt even before they arrive in Canada and hinders their financial independence. Some informants in this study indicated that they are already in the process of repaying the immigration loan even though they live on social assistance.

Arrival in Canada and Hamilton, Ontario

The informants had very different first impressions about Canada. While some noticed the affluence, others noticed safety and the peaceful nature of the society and some noticed the weather. Overall, the informants said that their first impression about the Canada was a positive one and they felt Canada was a welcoming place.

First thing I noticed was how peaceful the life was compare to the camp. The life did not look hectic. In May it is cold too (Somali -1).

First impression was how the immigration [at the airport] embraced me. I knew there is no discrimination or segregation. This was a totally new experience for me because in the country where we sought refuge, we were discriminated and harassed. This [treatment in Canada] made a good impression on me. They welcomed us with open arms. These white people, they not even my color, but they embraced me. I shed a tear (Liberian).

The people were quiet. City was quiet. Tajikistan [was] very loud. There, every store sell cassettes and they play the music very loud. In Winnipeg it was very quite. Clean. I felt calm (Afghan male).

As the Liberian informant pointed out, her refugee experience has not been a positive one in the places where she had lived before. For her, having a permanent home to live, after 12 years of being a refugee, made very a good impression about Canada. The fact that GARs come to Canada as permanent residents, leaving behind years of conflict and living uncertain lives, seems to have a definite impact on how the GARs perceive Canada and Canadian society. All the informants said that they were happy and relieved when they knew that they had been accepted to be resettled in Canada. Their actual arrival in Canada made these happy feelings more real.

When asked about the first impressions of Hamilton, the informants also said that had a positive first impression. These first impressions were both associated with feelings of fascination about the new surroundings and being happy to be in place that is safe and peaceful.

Life looks good and peaceful [in Hamilton]. Peace no harassment, nice and clean, safe for my kids. If you have peace you have everything. No bandits in Hamilton. No one here to harass me. In camps bandits come all the time. When the bandits come to one part of the camp people make noise by banging on tins and pots to let other know that bandits have come. I was afraid in the camp that someone would steal my belongings. Even in Hamilton I carried my purse close to me [at first] thinking a bandit will take it. Then I realized there are no bandits here. I have nothing to worry about (Somali -1).

While the Somali-1 informant was relieved to find safety for herself and her children, the other informants found fascination with the new surroundings and the multicultural make up of the city:

Crossings of the road were fascinating. I have not seen a crossing like that before (Somali-2).

It was interesting place because I met other people from different countries (Sudanese).

When I arrive at Hamilton the first thing....a person from SISO was there. This person made me happy, this person helped me. In other countries we were on our own but in Hamilton we were not. I felt good about Hamilton. Good. I felt good. I thought there were no Africans in Hamilton. Then I met people from Africa in the hotel. I told my children that there are Africans in Hamilton from Sudan and Somalia (Liberian).

When the GARs arrive in Hamilton, the RAP staff from SISO meet and welcome them at the temporary accommodation. Since the Hamilton RAP does not have a dedicated reception house, they rent rooms from a downtown hotel that acts as the temporary accommodations for the GARs. All the informants, except the secondary migrant from Winnipeg, said that the first person to contact them in Hamilton was a RAP staff member from SISO. The RAP Hamilton provides the initial settlement services for GARs under the mandate given to them by the CIC.

Settlement Services

The RAP centers receive the information about the GARs who are to be sent to that particular center before they actually arrive (CIC, 2004). Information such as date of arrival (the flight itinerary), number of GARs arriving at the centre, the languages they speak, their ages, gender and any special needs that the GARs might have, are given (in most cases) well in advance to the RAP centers by CIC. This information allows the RAP staff to plan to receive the GARs in that particular center.

All the GARs that arrive in Hamilton receive RAP services only from SISO. The RAP Hamilton is responsible for providing clients with such settlement assistance as orientations, assistance with obtaining government documents (such as Permanent Residence Cards, Social Insurance Number Cards, Ontario Health Cards, etc), assistance with finding housing, opening of bank accounts, life skills training (which includes orientation activities such as shopping, safety, responsibilities etc), and referral services to other available settlement programs (SISO, 2005). Further, the RAP staff also assist GARs to obtain their allowance from CIC, assist to get telephone and television cable services, and order furniture on their behalf from CIC's contactor.

The informants categorized the initial settlement assistance from the RAP Hamilton as very useful and very important. All of the informants also found that the initial orientation sections were useful in order get oriented to Canadian society. However, one informant said that the video that is used for the orientation in Hamilton was shown to her before her departure to Canada. Most of the informants felt that without the assistance of the RAP services and staff, they would not have able to cope with the sudden change of lifestyle that they experienced.

One of the most significant changes in the lifestyle for the GARs was their experience with housing in Canada. All of the informants indicated that the RAP housing counsellor at SISO

assisted them to find rental housing in Hamilton. From all the settlement services that the informants received, overall, they found the housing service to be the most valuable. The informants found that their housing experience in Canada was a positive one. When asked about the condition of their house in Canada, these were some of the responses that were given:

You can not even put this home in the same category as a refugee camp (Laughter). I laugh because of the difference between the camp and the new home. It is so great. Home in Canada is so good (Somali -1).

There was a big difference between the camp and this house. I never used the stove, the fridge before, electricity, running water. I enjoyed all the new comforts I got (Somali -2).

I received housing assistance from SISO. I was very happy. It was 95% better than my previous home. It was not a refugee shelter it was a house. I was given a bed to sleep on, not a mat like in the refugee camp (Liberian).

Where we were living [before coming to Canada] we only had two rooms, here [in Hamilton] we have like three rooms, we have bedrooms, we have perfect dining room living room...this home was much better than the one we had before (Afghan female).

These experiences indicate that the housing standards in Canada are better than what the GARs had when living in refugee situations. However, it is important to note that the informants live in low income housing units in Hamilton, since these are the only type of housing that they can afford. According to Murdie (2004), the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) looks for three components in its Core Housing Needs Model. These components are: adequacy – the physical quality, suitability – the appropriateness of the dwelling to accommodate a particular size and type of household, and affordability – the maximum amount of before tax-income that a household should spend on a shelter. When a household can not rent in the local area to a minimum standard that is set out by the CMHC, that household is said to be a “core-need” household. However, the GAR informants who participated in study could not be

identified as being in a core-need household since questions about the exact amounts of rent that they pay and household incomes were not asked due to sensitivity reasons.

The RAP is only mandated by the CIC to provide the initial and immediate settlement services. The RAP relationship with the GARs basically lasts for about 6 weeks (CIC, 2006). Within this short period, the RAP is expected to meet the initial settlement needs for the GARs and refer them to other long term settlement programs such as ISAP. The GARs are also referred to other programs such as LINC, JSW, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and HOST. All of these settlement programs address the long term settlement needs of the GARs. All of these programs are available in Hamilton through SISO. The informants indicated that through settlement counsellors at SISO, they have registered with family doctors and their health care needs are adequately met. However, only two of the informants said they have an active relationship with settlement counsellors at SISO. The others stated that while they are not actively seeking help from their settlement counsellors, they feel that they have access to them if there ever is a need.

While all the informants understood the role of SISO to be a one of assisting them to resettle, interestingly, two of the informants thought SISO was also a part of the “Canadian government”. These informants pointed out that they could not distinguish between the role of CIC and SISO because of the apparent close relationship between CIC and SISO.

While three of the informants said that they were completely satisfied with all the settlement services that they received in Hamilton, three informants felt that they needed more assistance. Two of the informants stated that there were no settlement services to provide information about the post secondary education system, about admission to universities and colleges. They found that trying to find information about high school course requirements in

order to again admission to post secondary educational institutes in Canada was particularly frustrating. One informant felt that the assistance that was given to find employment was inadequate. This informant indicated that while the employment program provided information about finding employment, no actual assistance (such as job leads) were given to find a job. This informant said that it was another settlement services agency in Hamilton that actually assisted in getting a job.

All the informants stated that, overall, they felt the help given from settlement programs were adequate and they were satisfied with quality of the service that SISO provided. Apart from the informant who sought employment help, all of the other informants stated that they did not access any other settlement services agencies in Hamilton, other than SISO. Overall, the informants indicated that they felt the settlement services that they received in Hamilton adequately address their settlement needs.

Resettlement Process

Granting GARs permanent residence status in Canada can be viewed as the defining character and the most significant feature of Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program. When refugees are given a permanent place of residence in Canada, it essentially eliminates the ambiguous immigration status that they were faced within their previous host country. Permanent residence status in Canada is an important first step towards putting down roots once again, after they were uprooted by conflict. All the informants said that they were very pleased and grateful about having a permanent place to live:

I feel fabulous [About having a permanent place to live]....We know, we are permanent residents. We feel like this is our home, we feel comfortable with people... We love the attitude of people here... We did not feel like that we were in a strange place (Afghan female).

I feel like I am part of a new family, have a home and I have an identity (Somali-1).

I am happy that I have a home (Somali-2).

I feel good and safe (Sudanese).

The informants also felt that they have an enormous sense of belonging in Canada and they did not feel different to the people who live in Hamilton. All of the informants indicated that they are applying for citizenship as soon as they become eligible. Except for the Sudanese, all the others said that they will not repatriate back to their original home countries even if the problems there somehow got resolved:

Yes... I consider myself a part of Canada... I definitely want to be a Citizen. I will only go back to Somalia only as a tourist not to live (Somali-1).

I feel free... I can go anywhere I want without fear... I make my living here and this is my home. I can't even wait to get my Citizenship (Somali-2).

I feel this is my country. Wherever I go this country people accept me, they are accepting. I do not feel foreign here. I will apply for Canadian Citizenship (Afghan male).

The informants also indicated that they feel much safer in Canada than the places they came from and they do not feel anxious. They said that in Hamilton, they have no fears about their safety:

I feel a huge sense of safety for me and my children. I have no words to describe how I safe I feel (Somali-1).

Yes, I feel safe. I can walk at night. Back where I come from, I can't even think of doing that, mostly for women. As a woman I feel safe in Hamilton (Somali-2).

Yes, from the date of my arrival no one asked me to identify myself in the streets. I feel safe there is no harassment and intimidation (Liberian).

When asked about their experience about practicing their cultures and religion in Hamilton and about the multicultural character of Canada, the informants said that they felt that

Canada is a truly a multicultural society where people are free to practice their culture, religion and be free.

Yes, people co-exist very well here. I don't interfere with their values they do not interfere with mine. I like that. It [multiculturalism] is a good thing, I like it very much. It is like sitting at a round table. Everyone is equal and there is peace because of that (Somali-1).

I am free to wear what I want, at my work place I am the only one who looks, like me. I mean black and wear the Hijab, but no one has problem with that. To me multiculturalism means freedom. Yes, it shows me there is freedom in Canada (Somali-2).

All the informants said that they have not felt racism or sense of exclusion from the main stream Canadian society. Interestingly, one of the informants said that she expected people in Canada to be racist but she has not experienced it yet. The informants further said that they feel like they are members of the Hamilton community and feel comfortable in participating Hamilton community activities. Four informants indicated that they actively participate in community activities in Hamilton and the other two said that they do not due to lack of time. All the participants stated that they participate in leisure activities in Hamilton as well. These activities included, playing sports, dancing chatting with friends and watching movies. All the informants said they now call Hamilton their hometown.

Yes if someone ask me where I am from I would say Hamilton (Afghan female).

It is the first city in Canada that that made me opened my eyes. I love Hamilton I opened my eyes here. I will say I am from Hamilton this is my home.... I won't leave Hamilton anything of the sort never even crossed my mind. I like to live in Hamilton (Somali-1).

Yes Hamilton is my hometown, I am happy to be here, there is no place I would rather be I would only leave Hamilton if get a good job a better paying job somewhere else (Somali-2).

Overall, every informant felt that they feel that they are settling well into their new life in Canada. All of them indicated that they are taking action by themselves to take control of their lives. There was a general indication among all of the informants that rather than material wealth, they valued the aspects of Canadian life such as peace and safety. One of the informants summed up about her life in Canada this way:

There is nothing that I longed for when I came [to Canada] expect for safety and pace. I have that now. I am very comfortable the way I am right now (Somali-1).

It is evident that the GARs have found the safety and peace that they were looking for by coming to Canada and Hamilton. They are now able to concentrate on reconstructing other parts of their lives such as getting an education and pursuing careers or livelihoods that they had to put on hold because circumstances that made them refugees. It is also clear from the interviews that all of the GAR informants in this study have a great sense of belonging in Canada. This feeling of belonging has become an important first step towards rebuilding there lives and it has given them the necessary confidence to do so. All the informants said that in the future, they all hope to be educated and employed. The informants also indicated that they have no problem in accessing the necessary settlement or government services that they need in order to make their lives better or more comfortable. The fact that the GARs want to take charge of their lives indicates that they are moving away from the feeling of dependence that they had as refugees.

Socio-Economic Status

From the GARs who participated in this study, only two indicated that they are employed. While one of these two informants had a fulltime job as a manual labourer, the other had an on-call or relief residential counsellor's position. This informant felt that she is under-employed since her work was not regular. Three of the others indicated that they were

unemployed and one informant was a co-op student. Three informants said that the lack of English language ability is the major barrier to access employment in Hamilton. Two saw the lack of “Canadian education” as the major barrier. One felt that once the education is completed, finding a job should not be a problem. One of the informants said that she was told before she arrived in Canada, that she will have no problem of finding a job in Canada.

The information that they gave us mislead us actually. Before we came they said, when you go, carry your credential with you. If you have an education you will get a job quick. But when we came here we saw things like the education and employment level. Even if you have university paper they do not honour it. I am university graduate form business management (Liberian).

In many ways, this informant’s experience is similar to many skilled immigrants who arrive in Canada expecting that their educational qualifications will receive the same recognition as in their countries of origin. What is evident is that when it comes to finding suitable work and getting their credentials recognized in Canada, the GARs’ experience is very similar to other categories of immigrants to Canada. They face the same barriers as other immigrants.

All of the participants felt that education and employment were their priority in Canada, now that they have found safety and security. Since they have peace and security, they feel that they will also be successful in finding employment and getting educated. Some of the GAR informants indicated that they have specific career goals in mind, such as becoming a nurse, a mechanic, and a counsellor. The others said they will be happy to do any job that gives them a stable and permanent income. All of the informants identified going to school to learn English or getting an education as an important aspect of finding suitable employment. The GARs who have specific career plans wanted to attend university or college. The ones who were hoping for any type of employment indicated that they are attending English as a second language classes.

Two of the unemployed informants indicated that they were receiving their primary income from CIC, and they were planning to access Ontario Works (Ontario social welfare agency) once the CIC financial assistance ends in October. The other unemployed informants were receiving their primary income from Ontario Works. Four informants who have children also stated that they were receiving income through child benefit as well. All the informants said almost all the income that their families receive is spent on essential items such as rent, food and utility bills.

It was evident that none of the informants wanted to complain about their low incomes since they perceived it as being ungrateful towards Canada. When talking about the social assistance she received, one informant said the following:

What I get is not enough to cover everything so it is hard make ends meet. I am not demanding or anything but if they can give more money I will be happy (Somali - 1).

The informants who are employed also indicated that they were spending nearly all of their income on essential items, but were pleased that they had some type of employment.

I work as a labourer, my wage, it is enough. It is not the desired wage, but it is enough. I Live comfortably (Somali – 2).

My part time wage is not enough for us to live. I love my job. I would like to be fulltime there. (Liberian).

When speaking to the informants about their socio-economic status, it became evident that they found making the ends meet difficult with the low income that they receive. However, remarkably, none of the informants was critical of the CIC financial assistance, welfare or low wages that they received. All of them were hopeful that their lives in Canada would get better.

Discussion

A few themes have emerged from the inquiry into the settlement experience of the GARs in Hamilton. First, in Canada, they have found the peace and security that eluded them in their former host nations. Second, since they came to Canada as permanent residents, the uncertainties that they faced about their lives and future have disappeared. Third, they are now concentrating on rebuilding the lives that were devastated by the conflicts in their home countries. Lastly, their life in Canada has been a struggle. Yet, they are unwilling to complain of the hardships, since they are grateful to Canada for offering them a new lease on life.

When analyzed against the core principles and objective of Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, it is evident that resettlement of the GARs in Canada meets these objectives to a certain degree. It was evident that all of the GAR informants in Hamilton have been selected to be resettled in Canada, according to the principle of giving priority for those who need protection rather than a person's ability integrate into Canadian society. The selection of people who lack specific job or professional skills, lack of official language ability, low levels of education and without wealth or financial means to resettle in Canada on their own, seem to be consistent with the first core principle and the objective of the Canada's Refugee Humanitarian Resettlement Program.

While all the informants who participated in this study felt that they were most deserving to be resettled in Canada, it was difficult to determine through the interviews that they in fact were the most urgent or deserving cases that needed Canada's protection. According to the CIC policy documents, the UNHCR is assigned with the making the referrals to the CIC as to who needs to be resettled in Canada, from where, and when (CIC, 2004). This indicates that Canada's resettlement decisions are guided by UNHCR recommendations. Then, the question is, how the

UNHCR makes the decision that one group of refugees deserves to be resettled in Canada over another. According to the UNHCR (2004), the selection of refugees for resettlement in a third country is carried according to guidelines such as legal and physical protection needs, survivors of violence and torture, medical needs, women at risk, family reunification, children and adolescents, older refugees and refugees without local integration prospects. When the information gathered from interviews were scrutinized against the UNCHR resettlement guidelines, it becomes clear all the informants, to one degree or another, met the criteria that qualified them for protection in a third country. Some informants stated that their legal status was uncertain in their host countries and they faced forced repatriation to their countries of origin, some women informants felt that they faced a real risk of violence in their refugee situations and some indicated that there were no possibilities at all for them to integrate into their host nations. Since CIC gets its referrals for resettlement of GARs from the UNHRC, it largely concurs with the UNHCR's selection criteria, and its resettlement policy actually mirrors the UNHCR guidelines, it can be argued that Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program adheres to its core principle of offering protection to those who need it without consideration of their ability to integrate.

The principle of rapid reunification of families seems somewhat ambiguous. It is evident that for the purpose of reunifications, the definition of the family is strictly interpreted and GARs who are actually related each other are benefited from this principle. However, when dealing with GARs, the definition of family must be expanded to include the members from the same ethnic communities. It is obvious that in refugee situations, members of the communities act as members of the family in order to protect and provide for those who lost their family members due to conflict. The objectives of this core principle should be expanded and there should be an

attempt to rapidly reunite people of the same communities who are dispersed by the conflicts in their home countries. It must also be taken into consideration that family, friends and ethnic communities provide social support for each other in times of need (Simich et al, 2000) and when GARs are resettled in Canada, it is important to make sure that they have community support in the cities that they are sent to, in addition to the available settlement services. GARs' resettlement should not only be about making them safe, it should be also about encouraging people to rebuild the communities that were shattered by conflict.

The accelerated processing of people who are in urgent need of protection is evidently taking place. The GARs informants indicated that their cases were processed in a timely manner. The informants, whose applications were processed the fastest, indicated that CIC was actually aware of fact that their time in the pervious host country was rapidly running out.

It is evident that the motivations for Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program is primarily about saving lives, upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition and fulfilling its international obligations. These three main characteristics of the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program reflect the refugee protection objectives that are set forth under the IRPA (Li, 2003). It is also evident that the current Canadian refugee policy is not driven by the economic, social or cultural benefits to Canada that is usually associated with Canada's immigration policy. Therefore, overall, it can be concluded that the objectives of providing protection to refugees is met under Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program.

However, what is missing is a set of principles to govern the actual resettlement process once the GARs are given physical safety in Canada. It is evident that by bringing GARs to Canada, their safety has been restored. However, providing just physical safety is simply not enough for these individuals to rebuild their lives. Therefore, Canada's Refugee and

Humanitarian Resettlement Program should be governed by two sets of core principles: one to offer protection and the other to rebuild lives. However, one obstacle to setting out the latter is the lack of a provision in the IRPA that can be used as the legislative frame work.

When examining the settlement experience of GARs in Hamilton, it is clear, that from their own perspective, the overall settlement experience is a positive one. Living in safety and peace is the top priority for these individuals. Since they have accomplished this goal in Canada, they are now on their way to rebuild other aspects of their lives that have been shattered as a result of their refugee experience. Their loyalty and gratefulness towards Canada and Hamilton are immense. The fact that none of the participants were critical towards the financial support received from CIC and welfare agencies, settlement services in Hamilton or about the life in Canada in general may indicate that they do not want to sound ungrateful towards the country that provided them with safety and peace.

However, this study managed to uncover, to a certain extent, that the GARs who were interviewed, have low incomes, unemployment issues, language barriers, issues with accessing higher education and struggle to make their lives in Canada work. In other words, they are living in the fringes of Canadian society that put their lives at a level of poverty. Their perception that their life in Canada is better than what they left behind and the feelings that their quality of life has dramatically improved by coming Canada, has much to do with their points of reference that are situated in their former refugee lives than their actual living conditions in Canada.

Poverty can be defined as being deprived of the essentials of well-being such as adequate housing, food, sufficient income, employment, access to required social services and social status (UNDP, 2006). For the GARs, their points of references of poverty are still situated in the conditions of their refugee situations. Since poverty is relative to one's physical location and

these individuals are living in Canada, their level of poverty needs to be analysed and measured with reference to and in terms of Canadian conditions of living, not in the terms of people who live in refugee situations outside Canada. These GARs have an optimistic attitude about their Canadian lives and are generally pleased about the situation that they are in. This could be a result of that their point of references about the quality of life is still situated in their refugee experience. This could be the reason why they do not see the barriers that are in place to hinder their integration into Canadian society or upward social mobility. However, this does not mean that these GARs are unaware or unable to grasp their current socio-economic condition in Canada. What this means is that they still do not look at themselves with reference to other Canadians, but to the other refugees who they left behind.

Ideally, GARs are expected to integrate into the labour market within one year (CIC, 1998). Four of the informants who participated in this study were receiving financial assistance either through welfare or CIC, and as noted earlier, the informants who were approaching the end of RAP assistance were also planning to access welfare. This finding is consistent with other studies that found a significant number of GARs will depend on other income assistance programs after the RAP supports stops (Dempsey & Yu, 2005). Among the reasons that prevent GARs from accessing the labour markets are lack of proficiency in an official language, limited schooling, lack of work experience and difficulties that are associated with adjusting to the new environment (Anisef et al., 2001; Simich and Hamilton, 2004). The GARs in Hamilton also indicated similar reasons for not been able to find employment. A useful and workable approach would be for CIC to extend the RAP support for a period of two years. This will allow the GARs to become oriented to Canada, learn the language for first year, and actively look for employment in the second year. As per the current procedure when GARs earn more than 25%

of their RAP income, CIC deducts dollar for dollar from their entitlement (CIC, 2004). This is a misguided approach. Rather than penalising GARs for working, they should be rewarded by allowing them to keep the full RAP entitlement. This approach could provide GARs with an added incentive to try access labour markets sooner and gain work experience in Canada.

Further, beginning to pay back the immigrant loan soon after their arrival in Canada also puts an undue burden on GARs. The issue of this loan can be addressed in several ways. Ideally the loan should be eliminated altogether and CIC should pay for the passage to Canada. If the total elimination of this cost is a burden, the government can allow the GARs an interest free grace period of five years before the first payment is due.

It is clear that GARs have the ability to successfully integrate into Canadian society just as any other group of immigrants. However, their settlement process takes a longer period of time. What is needed for successful resettlement is the availability of proper social and income support over a longer period of time. One way to address this problem would be to establish a dedicated program that is responsible for addressing the long term settlement needs of GARs. Since the GARs are appreciative of the safety and peace that Canada provided for them, they may not demand more assistance for rebuilding their lives, and they may accept the level of settlement assistance that they are given, without a fuss or protest. This may lead to them becoming essentially forgotten after their initial settlement needs are met.

It can be argued that the RAP achieves the objective of assisting GARs to rebuild their lives. However, as discussed earlier, the mandate and scope of the RAP is limited to providing only the immediate settlement assistance to GARs and not the intermediate and the long term assistance needed to rebuild their lives. The settlement of immigrants to a new country occurs in three stages: immediate, intermediate and long term (Wayland, 2006; Mwarigha, 2002). The

settlement needs that are addressed through RAP such orientations, assistance with obtaining documents, housing, and life skills can be viewed as immediate settlement needs. The services that are provide by ISAP and such other programs covers some aspects of both immediate and intermediate needs. However, the problem with these programs is that they are not designed to address the specific settlement needs of GARs. Canada's settlement programs are mainly designed to address the needs of all immigrants and they are not especially geared towards refugee resettlement (Parsons, 2005). Further, most of the settlement programs in Canada have only been designed and funded to address the immediate settlement needs of immigrants (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003). There are also funding constraints that limit the scope and effectiveness of settlement related activities.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Unlike other groups of immigrants, GARs do not choose Canada as their destination. Rather CIC brings them to Canada. Therefore, it is important to note that GARs are unique group of immigrants and Canada has a special responsibility towards meeting their resettlement needs. In order to make the GARs resettlement in Canada more inclusive and eliminate barriers to their settlement, a special program must be created. This program can easily and effectively be an extension of the RAP. This program must begin when CIC selects the GARs to be resettled in Canada. The first step of this program should be to provide GARs with extensive information about Canada, in general, and their destination, in particular. This information should be accurate and up-to-date. As suggested by Simich et al (2002), GARs must be involved in selecting their final destination in Canada. When there is family and friends in Canada, GARs must be given a choice to select that destination if they wish. When there is no family or friends, information should be provided about as many destinations as possible get the GARs involved in the final decision making (Simich et al, 2002).

This straightforward step could achieve several objectives. First, it would reduce the secondary migration among GARs, thus saving the costs associated with it (Simich et al, 2002). Second, if there are social support networks through friends, family or members of the community, this will reduce the burden on SPOs. Third, this step will help somewhat relieve the feelings of anxiety about resettlement in an unknown place.

Once the GARs arrive in Canada, the time that they spend in the RAP (settlement services) should be extended for minimum period of one year or until the RAP counsellors consider the client to be self-sufficient. During this time, the RAP counsellors should carry out the all of the immediate and some of the intermediate settlement needs.

The reason for this approach is that the RAP is the only specialized settlement program to provide services to GARs. Therefore, RAP has the proper expertise to deal with these individuals. Every GAR should have a dedicated RAP counsellor who will be responsible for monitoring the settlement progress of clients. Within the RAP, other support programs, such as youth and child programs, mental health programs, educational assistance programs, and community support programs should be created. These programs will help to address all of the areas of needs as they arise. Further, in order to address the intermediate and long-term settlement needs, GARs should be allowed to access all of the settlement programs beyond the normal three year entitlement (Omidvar and Richmond, 2003) and even after obtaining Canadian citizenship.

Further, LINC programs should be specialized to address the language learning needs of GARs. The current classroom based approach may not suit GARs since this approach is mainly geared towards immigrants who are used to a classroom environment. Therefore, it is vital that a specialized LINC program that has the flexibility to accommodate the needs of the GARs be put in place. Also, the GARs should have access to LINC classes till they become fluent in English.

An employment strategy that enables GARs to access jobs that require a minimum level of official language ability must also be put in place. This could be achieved through targeting specific employers such as farmers, factory owners and general labour contractors. Also, through strategic resettlement initiatives, GARs can be directed to parts of Canada where they are most likely to find employment.

Finally, an all inclusive approach must also address the negative connotations of problematic terminology. Since these individuals arrive in Canada as permanent residents, it is

counter productive to call them refugees once there are here. Therefore, they should be identified as Government Assisted Immigrants or GAIs.

Further Research

This study only managed to scratch the surface of the resettlement issues relating to GARs in Canada. There are many issues that concern GARs that need to be addressed through further research. First a thorough analysis of the overseas selection process of GARs must be carried out. While on the surface it appears to fulfill the humanitarian objectives, the motivation of Canada as to whom is selected, from where and when seems arbitrary. While any GAR would argue that she or he deserves to be resettled, there is no way to know what motivates CIC and UNHCR to select certain groups and not others. For example, a recent CIC initiative was launched to resettle 810 ethnic Karen refugees from Burma (Myanmar) who live in refugee camps in Thailand in Canada (CIC, 2006). The UNHCR recommended that these refugees also be resettled in the United States and other resettlement countries (UNHCR, 2006). However, neither the UNHCR nor the CIC has made any announcement to indicate whether resettlement will be offered to Sudanese refugees in the Darfur region who are faced with a major humanitarian crisis. Therefore, it is not clear how these decisions are made and what motivations are behind these decisions. An in depth analysis of both CIC and UNHCR policies and procedures concerning the selection of refugees for resettlement would also shed some light on these issues.

Further, a study that examines the socio-economic issues among GARs will also be useful. One of the key areas of research in this regard would be the amount of time that it takes for GARs to fully access the Canadian labour market and stop their dependency on the social welfare system. This study can also look into the time that it takes for GARs to achieve fluency in official languages and the time it takes to achieve income parity with the mainstream Canadian population. This type of research would be able to paint an accurate picture of the

effectiveness of the settlement and other services that are available to assist GARs with their integration. This research can also investigate the barriers that delay or prevent the GARs from integrating fully into Canadian society. Another approach for this study would be to look at the socio-economic performance of the children of GARs and compare whether they manage to achieve parity in socio-economic status with other Canadians of similar age groups. This approach will be able to determine if the GARs' children will face the same barriers as their parents.

One of the major areas of research that needs to be swiftly conducted is a thorough assessment of mental health issues among GARs. Since many GARs arrive from conflict zones of the world, it is fair to assume that they have been exposed to violence or trauma to a certain degree. Therefore, extensive studies to examine the prevalence of post traumatic stress disorder among GARs are quite warranted. This type of study can also examine the mental health factors that are associated and can affect the resettlement process.

Conclusion

Each year, through its Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, the federal government of Canada, sponsors refugees to be resettled in Canada. Once selected to be resettled in Canada, these refugees are granted permanent residence status. The federal government also bears the costs that are associated with resettlement of these refugees in Canada. Under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program gives priority to saving lives and protecting people rather than their ability to successfully integrate to Canadian society.

When analysed through the settlement experience of a group of individuals who arrived in Hamilton, Ontario, it becomes evident that Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program fulfills its objectives by principle and to a certain degree in practice. The principles in this program are grounded in Canada's humanitarian commitments to protect refugees by providing them with safety and security.

In practice, this program provides a durable solution for refugees who are in need of protection and have no real hope of repatriation by helping them to resettle in Canada. Since there is no real economic, political, social or cultural benefit for Canada to participate in this program, it can be concluded that the motivation that drives this policy is essentially humanitarian in nature. However, the lack of dedicated long term settlement programs hinders the full integration of these individuals into Canadian society. While these individuals are grateful towards Canada for providing them with peace and security, they live on the margins of society in relative poverty. An all-inclusive approach that includes a specialized resettlement program, that begins even before they arrive in Canada, and lasts till they are fully integrated in

to Canadian society, will complete the objectives of Canada's Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program also in practice.

Appendix

1. The Settlement experience of Government Assisted Refugees in Hamilton - Interview Guide

Bio - data

Country of Origin –

Gender –

Age -

Occupation in Canada –

Income Source –

Pre-migration experience

- Before coming to Canada/ Hamilton where did you live? Tell me about you home before to coming to Canada?
- How long have you lived there? Where else have you lived?
- Who made the decision for you to come to Canada? Did you apply or did someone made that decision for you? Were you given a choice of countries to be resettled? If so what were they?
- How long did you have to wait from the time you applied to migrate (to Canada) and till you knew that you application has been successful? –
- What was the application procedure like? Easy/ Hard /Complicated
- What type of tests or procedures did you have to undergo as a part of the application procedure? Medical, Criminal etc.
- How did you feel when you found out that you are going to Canada?
- When did you know that you are going to Hamilton?
- Before you arrived, what did you know about Canada? Hamilton?
- Have you heard of Hamilton, Canada before you knew that you were being resettled there?
- Did anyone give you any information about Canada before you left? What was that information, who provided you with this information?
- Who arranged your travel to Canada? How long did it take from the day that you knew that you are going to Canada and actually arriving in Canada?
- What were your expectations, hopes and dreams about your new life in Canada?

Arrival in Canada/ Hamilton

- What were your first impressions about Canada? What were the first things that you noticed in Canada?
- What were your first impressions about Hamilton?
- How did you feel about being in Hamilton, Canada?

- Who was the first person to contact you or come to meet you in Hamilton? What role if any, did this person play to familiarize you to Hamilton?
- How long did it take you to become familiar with you new surroundings?
- What were the easiest / hardest things to comprehend in Hamilton?
- Did you contact anyone in your former home, soon after you arrival in Hamilton? What did you tell this person about Hamilton?

Settlement Services

- What type of settlement assistance did you receive in Hamilton?
- How useful were these services?
- What did you think about the orientation program? Did you find that information useful? Were you given too much/too little information about living in Canada and Hamilton?
- What are your thoughts on the initial settlement allowance and other things such as furniture that you received from CIC?
- Apart from the initial orientation, what were the other services that you received in Hamilton?
- How long did you stay in the temporary accommodation?
- How did you find your permanent accommodation? Did any one assist you? Were you happy with your new home? How is this new home different from your previous home? Better? Worse?
- What were the easiest /hardest things to get used to in your new home?
- Did you receive assistance in order to settle into your new home? What type of assistance? Adequate/ not adequate?
- A apart from the RAP program did you receive assistance through any other settlement program? What type of help?
- Apart from the services that you already received, what were some other services that you wanted but did not get?
- What did you do to get the services that you mentioned above?
- What did you understand the role of SISO to be?
- Did you access any settlement service agencies other than SISO?
- What types of services did you get from those agencies?
- What was the most / least valuable settlement service that you received?
- Overall, did you find the settlement assistance that you received in Hamilton adequate / inadequate?

Resettlement Process

- Now that you are a permanent resident in Canada. How do you feel about having a permanent place to live?
- Do feel a sense of belonging in Canada? Yes No elaborate
- Are you planning to apply for Canadian Citizenship once you become eligible to apply?
- Are you thinking about repatriating to your native land if the problems there were somehow resolved?
- Do you feel safe in Canada compared to where you lived before? Yes No elaborate
- How well do you think that you are settling in Canada? Elaborate
- How easy or difficult is for you to access the services that you need? Such as health care, education system etc. What are the reasons for this difficulty or easiness?
- When think about the dreams and expectations that you had before coming to Canada, how close are you to achieving them?
- What are some of your goals for the future? How are you planning to achieve them?
- What are some barriers that you see between you and achieving these goals?
- In order to make your life in Canada comfortable what steps have you taken? For example going to school, learning English etc.
- Have you experience racism in Canada?
- Have you ever felt like that you were excluded from Canadian society because of who you are where you come from?
- Are you employed? What type of work are you doing? Are you satisfied with the wages that you get from this job? Are these wages adequate for you and your family to live comfortably in Hamilton?
- From your income, what is the percentage that you spend on food, rent and other essential items?
- Are you employed in a job that you would like to do? What type of work would to like to do?
- Canada is said to be a multicultural society. Do you feel free to practice your culture and religion in Canada? Yes No elaborate
- What do you think about living in a multicultural society?
- Do you participate in the community activities in Hamilton? What are they?
- What do you do during your free time?
- Are you happy to be in Hamilton/Canada? Do you consider Hamilton your hometown (elaborate)
- Do you ever think of leaving Hamilton to another part of Canada? What are the reasons behind this decision?

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Glossary

CIC – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

GARs – Government Assisted Refugees

LINC – Language Instruction for Newcomer

IOM – International Organization of Migration

IRB – Immigration and Refugee Board

IRPA – Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

ISAP – Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program

RAP – Resettlement Assistance Program

SISO – Settlement and Integration Services Organization

SWIS – Settlement Workers in Schools

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNDP – United Nations Development Program