

Faces of Refugees



Settlement Patterns in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) January 2003 - December 2006

June 2007



IMMIGRANT SERVICES SOCIETY
of British Columbia

1972-2007

Celebrating 35 years of working with immigrants in our communities

Message from ISS

For almost four decades Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS) has welcomed and supported the immediate needs of resettled refugees from around the world. Whether it is the Asian Ugandans escaping the Government of Idi Amin in the late 1960's, Vietnamese refugees fleeing the Vietnam War, the Kosovar emergency refugee resettlement movement of 1999 or the more recent exodus of Afghans as well as Southern Sudanese and, most recently, the arrival of the Karens, ISS has been at the forefront in providing immediate shelter and first language supports to these new and emerging populations in the Greater Vancouver area. In the past ten years alone close to 8,000 government-assisted refugees have settled in British Columbia.

With the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in June 2002, significant changes were introduced to Canada's refugee resettlement program. Since IRPA, there has been a particular focus on refugees in urgent need of protection and resettlement to Canada. The immediate outcome of the Federal policy has meant an increase in special need refugee cases, requiring more long-term support in order to successfully integrate into Canadian society.



Patricia Woroch

Jim Tallman

The update of this publication is to highlight the change in settlement patterns and to emphasize the unique needs of an increasing at-risk, multi-barrier refugee population settling in BC. We hope to bring to the attention of the community at large the need to explore supports and programs required to address the settlement and integration needs of this population.

Patricia Woroch
Executive Director

Jim Tallman
Board President

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the resettled refugees who participated in this publication. It is our hope that we have captured and highlighted their settlement patterns.

Introduction

The focus of this publication is on the government-assisted refugee (GAR). GARs are defined as refugees that are selected from abroad and arrive in Canada as Permanent Residents. Refugee claimants – refugees that seek asylum in Canada and undergo an asylum hearing with the Immigration and Refugee Board – are not included in this report. Group Sponsored refugees – refugees that are sponsored by various groups such as churches – are also not included in this report.

Since January 2003, government-assisted refugees have settled in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) from 39 different source countries. The following table provides an overview of GARs from various source countries.

All statistics are provided based on data collected by the Immigrant Services Society of BC between 2003 and 2006.

Government-Assisted Refugee Source Countries January 1, 2003 - December 31, 2006

Top 10 Source Countries			Burundi	34	0.01	Nepal	1	0.0003
Afghanistan	851	26%	Cameroon	3	0.001	Pakistan	7	0.002
Sudan	442	14%	China	5	0.002	Rwanda	35	0.01
Iran	393	12%	Congo	48	0.02	Serbia	6	0.002
Colombia	231	7%	Croatia	9	0.003	Sierra Leone	49	0.02
Myanmar	209	6%	Cuba	3	0.001	Sri Lanka	24	0.008
Indonesia	154	5%	Eritrea	61	0.02	Togo	3	0.001
Iraq	131	4%	Georgia	3	0.001	Turkey	1	0.0003
Ethiopia	130	4%	Guatemala	5	0.002	Uganda	13	0.004
Liberia	121	4%	Guyana	3	0.001	Uzbekistan	9	0.003
Somalia	119	4%	India	1	0.0003	Vietnam	98	0.03
Source Countries A - Z			Kuwait	1	0.0003	Zambia	3	0.001
Angola	2	0.001	Kyrgyzstan	3	0.001	Zimbabwe	1	0.0003
Azerbaijan	6	0.002	Morocco	1	0.0003	Total*	3219	100%

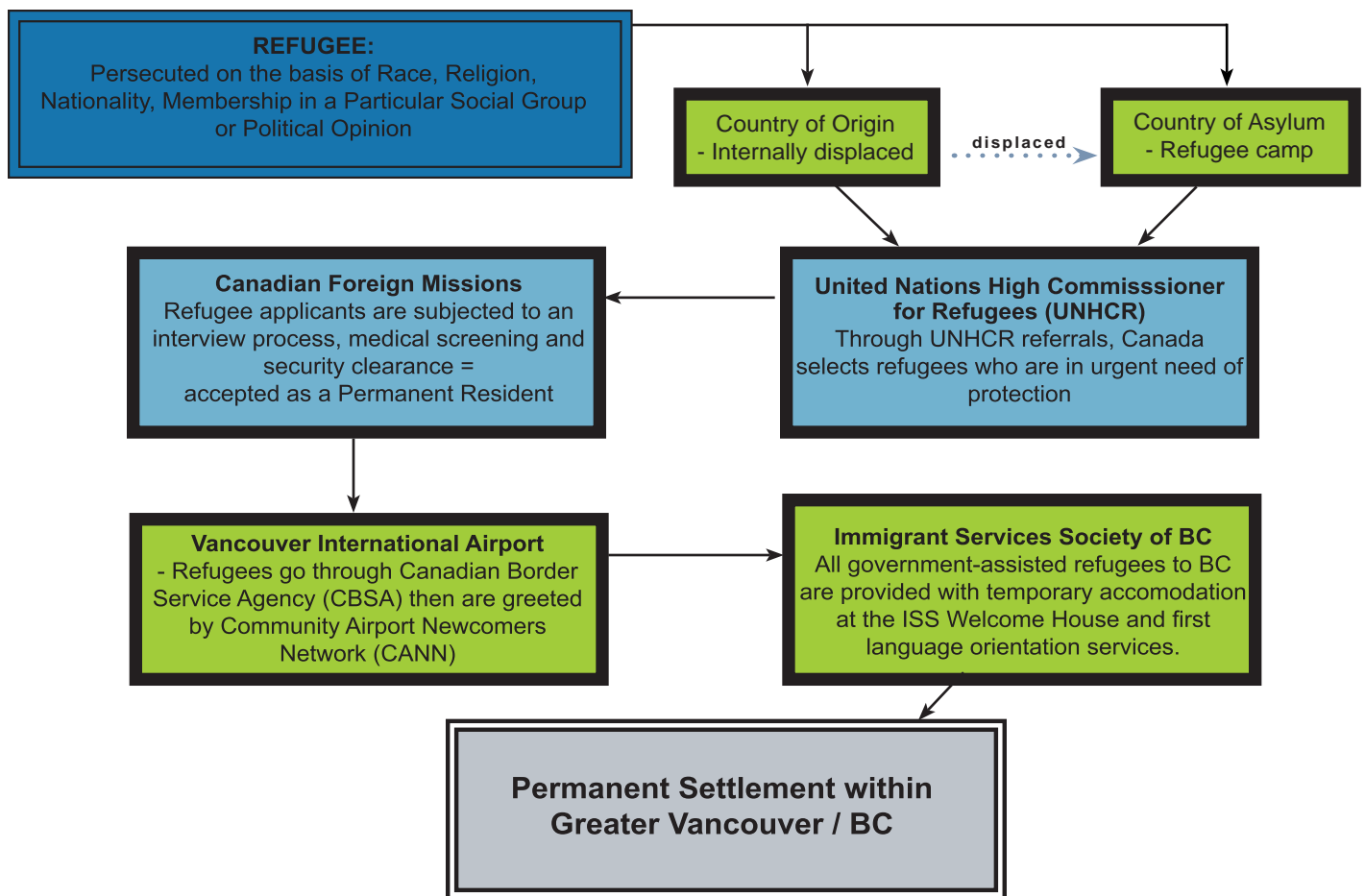
* Total does not include net migration figure on page 9.

The Refugee Experience

Each year approximately 7,500 government-assisted refugees arrive in Canada as permanent residents. Approximately eight hundred refugees or 11% of the national target settle in British Columbia. An additional 100 - 125 self transfer to BC from other regions of Canada. In 2006,

refugees, including GARs, represented close to 5% of the overall immigration levels (estimated at 43,600 immigrants) to BC.

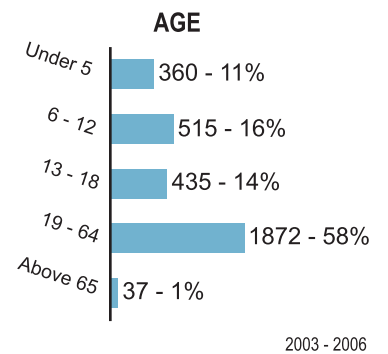
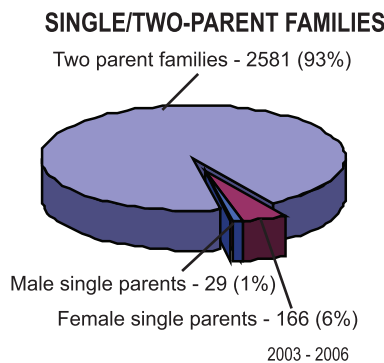
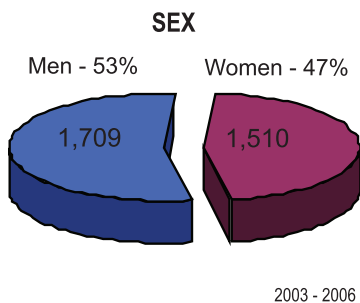
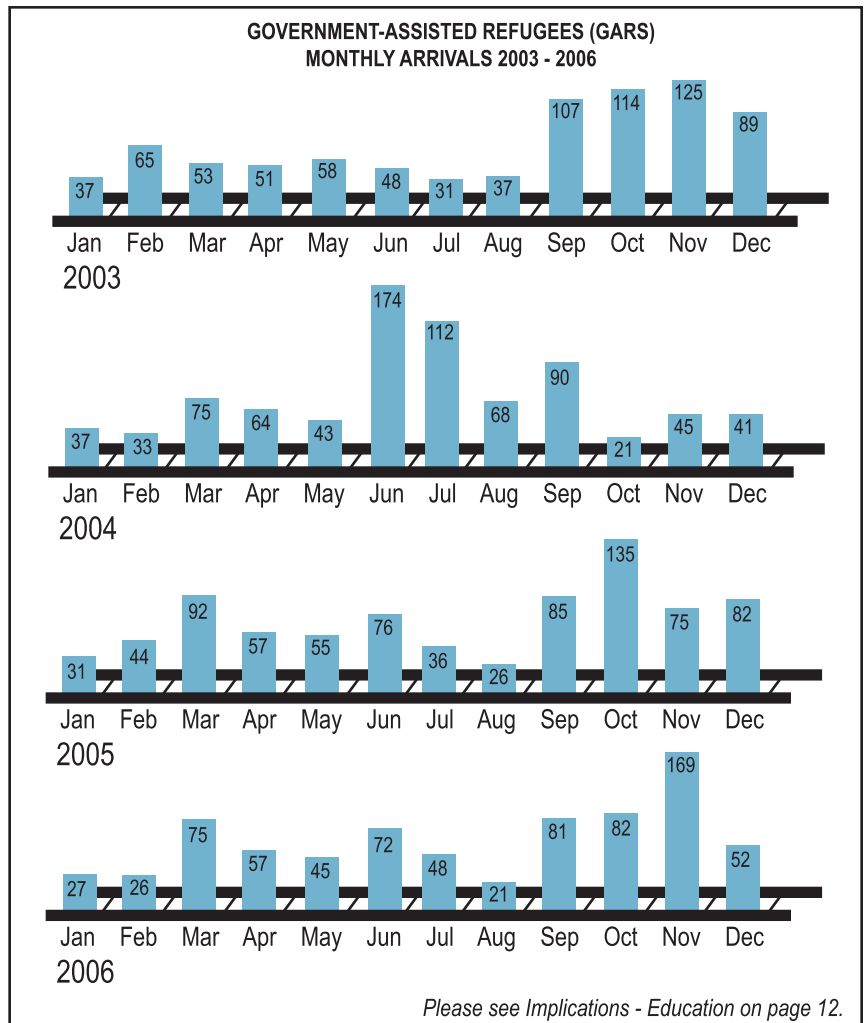
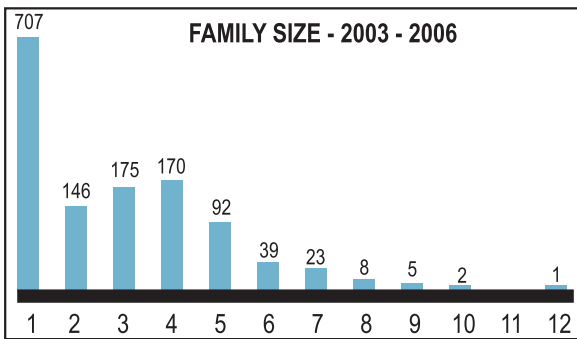
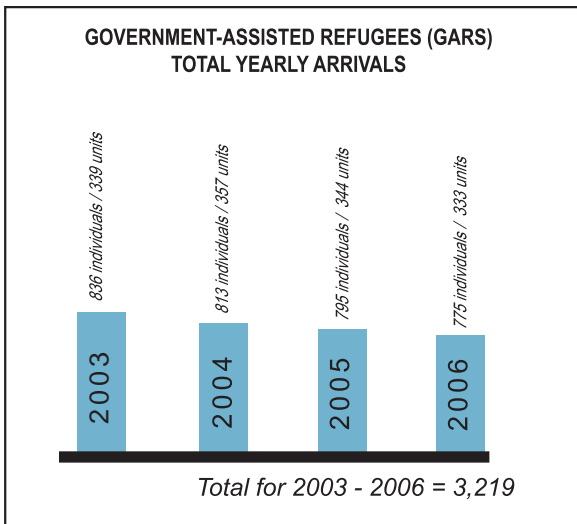
The immigration process for government-assisted refugees is illustrated in the following flow chart:



Statistical Highlights

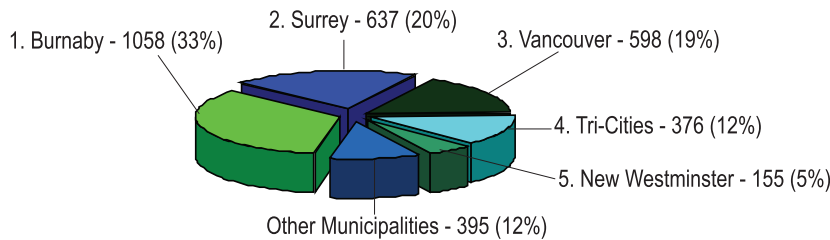
Arrival patterns, refugee characteristics and having adequate supports in place have a significant impact on the settlement outcomes of the refugee population. Data compiled by ISS in the past four

years provides a broader picture of the make-up of newly arrived GARs. The following charts provide an overview of some of their revealing characteristics.



Refugee Settlement Patterns

The following describes in numerical terms settlement trends and countries of origin for the majority of government-assisted refugees in the GVRD:



Burnaby

Afghanistan 440	Iran 94
Angola 2	Iraq 11
Azerbaijan 4	Liberia 61
Burundi 20	Rwanda 12
Cameroon 3	Sierra Leone 28
China 1	Somalia 36
Colombia 37	Sudan 114
Congo 26	Togo 3
Cuba 3	Uganda 9
Eritrea 40	Uzbekistan 8
Ethiopia 54	Zambia 3
Guyana 3	Total 1058 (33%)
Indonesia 45	

Vancouver

Afghanistan 34	Croatia 6	Kyrgyzstan 3	Turkey 1
Azerbaijan 2	Eritrea 6	Myanmar 83	Vietnam 98
Bangladesh 1	Ethiopia 25	Rwanda 13	Yugoslavia 4
Burundi 13	Indonesia 85	Serbia 2	Total 598 (19%)
China 2	Iran 66	Sierra Leone 1	
Colombia 93	Iraq 41	Somalia 4	
Congo 6	Kuwait 1	Sudan 8	



Tri-Cities

Afghanistan 195
Croatia 3
Iran 159
Iraq 8
Sudan 11
Total 376 (12%)

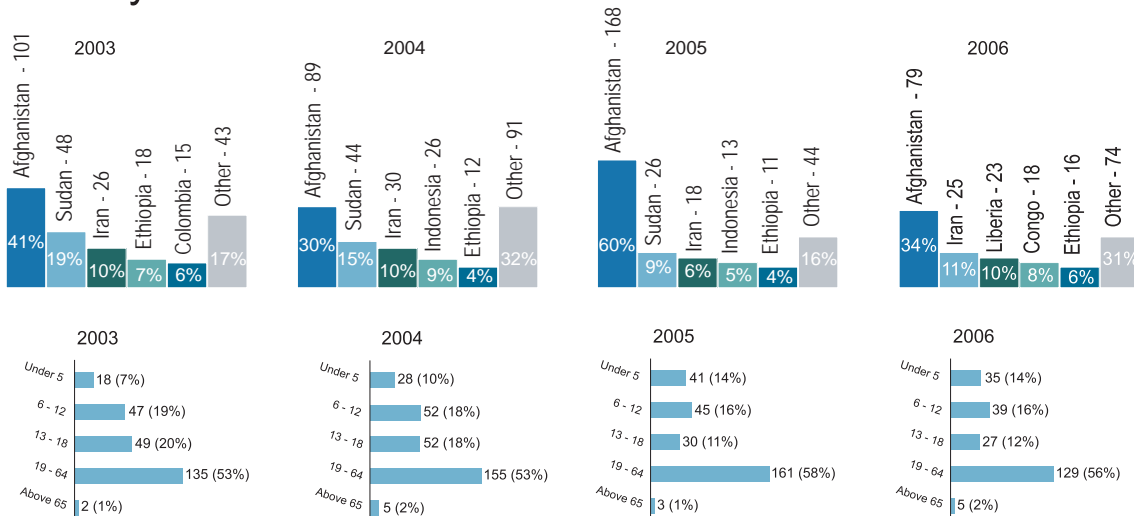
New Westminster

Afghanistan 16	Iraq 20
Burundi 1	Liberia 3
Congo 1	Somalia 2
Eritrea 6	Sudan 64
Ethiopia 12	Uganda 4
India 1	Total 155 (5%)
Iran 9	

Surrey

Afghanistan 68	Myanmar 117
Colombia 71	Pakistan 5
Congo 11	Rwanda 6
Ethiopia 21	Sierra Leone 16
Guatemala 5	Somalia 57
Indonesia 23	Sri Lanka 12
Iran 14	Sudan 120
Iraq 36	Zimbabwe 1
Liberia 53	Total 637 (20%)
Morocco 1	

Burnaby



Total 2003 - 2006

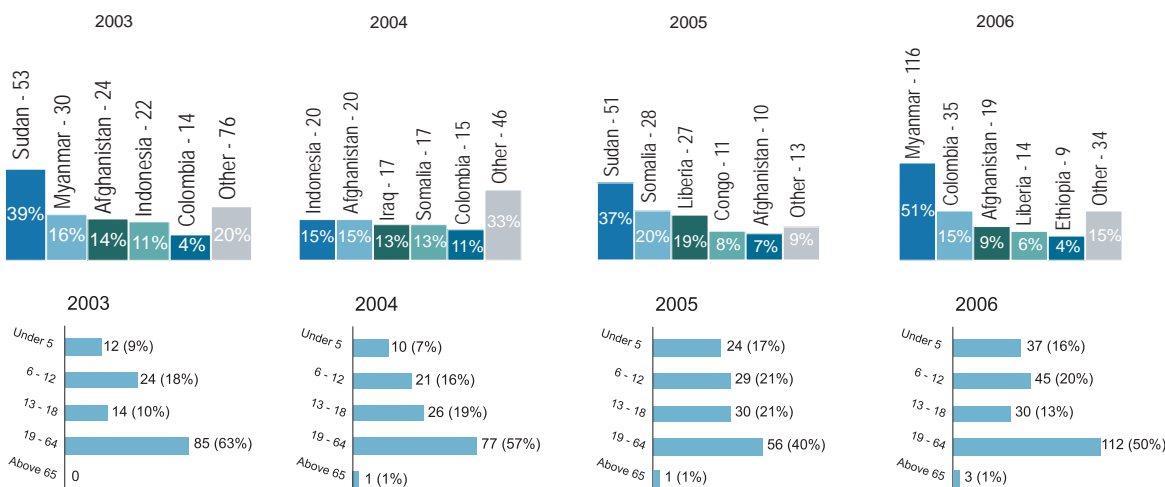
- Top 5 Source Countries**
1. Afghanistan - 440 (42%)
 2. Sudan - 114 (11%)
 3. Iran - 94 (8%)
 4. Ethiopia - 54 (5%)
 5. Indonesia - 50 (5%)

Age

- 5 and under - 121 (11%)
- 6 to 12 yrs - 183 (17%)
- 13 to 18 yrs - 157 (16%)
- 19 to 64 yrs - 582 (55%)
- 65 and older - 15 (1%)



Surrey



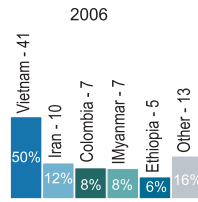
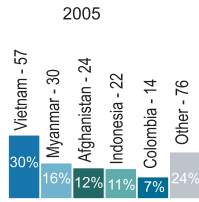
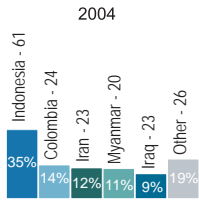
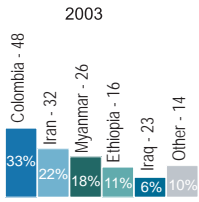
Total 2003 - 2006

- Top 5 Source Countries**
1. Sudan - 110 (17%)
 2. Afghanistan - 95 (15%)
 3. Somalia - 91 (14%)
 4. Liberia - 71 (11%)
 5. Colombia - 64 (10%)

Age

- 5 and under - 83 (13%)
- 6 to 12 yrs - 119 (19%)
- 13 to 18 yrs - 100 (16%)
- 19 to 64 yrs - 330 (52%)
- 65 and older - 5 (1%)

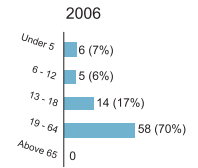
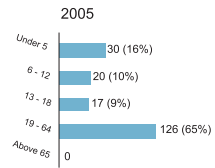
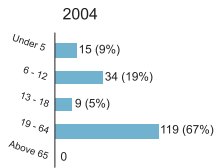
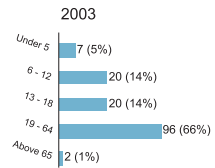
Vancouver



Total 2003 - 2006

Top 5 Source Countries

1. Vietnam - 98 (16%)
2. Colombia - 93 (15%)
3. Indonesia - 85 (14%)
4. Myanmar - 83 (14%)
5. Iran - 66 (11%)

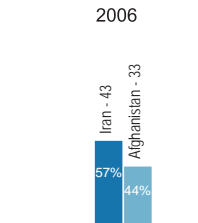
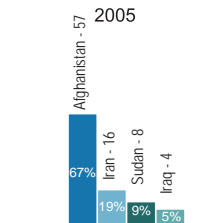
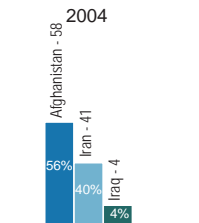
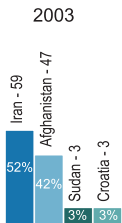


Age

- 5 and under - 58 (10%)
- 6 to 12 yrs - 79 (13%)
- 13 to 18 yrs - 60 (10%)
- 19 to 64 yrs - 399 (67%)
- 65 and older - 2 (1%)



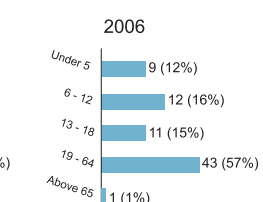
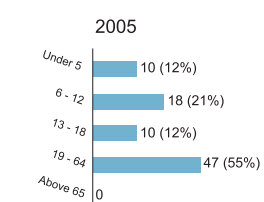
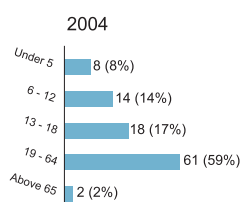
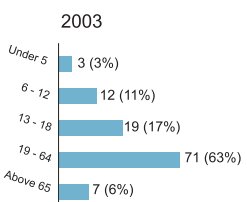
Tri-Cities



Total 2003 - 2006

Top 5 Source Countries

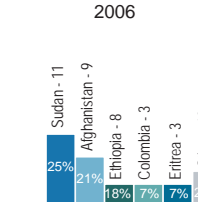
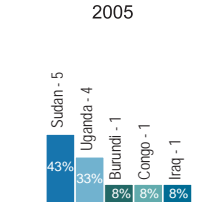
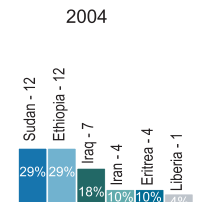
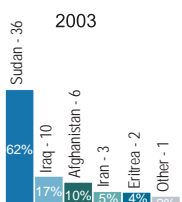
1. Afghanistan - 195 (52%)
2. Iran - 159 (43%)
3. Sudan - 11 (3%)
4. Iraq - 8 (2%)
5. Croatia - 3 (1%)



Age

- 5 and under - 30 (8%)
- 6 to 12 yrs - 56 (15%)
- 13 to 18 yrs - 58 (15%)
- 19 to 64 yrs - 222 (59%)
- 65 and older - 10 (3%)

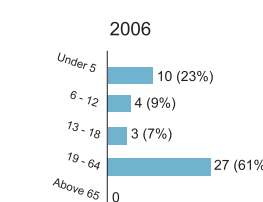
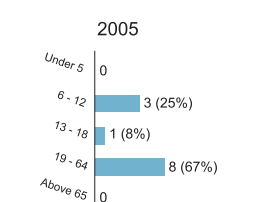
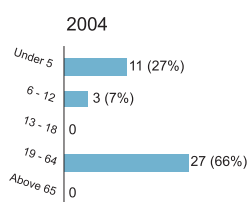
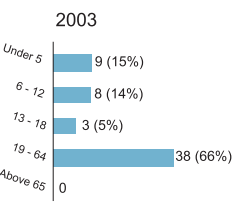
New Westminster



Total 2003 - 2006

Top 5 Source Countries

1. Sudan - 64 (41%)
2. Ethiopia - 19 (12%)
3. Iraq - 18 (12%)
4. Afghanistan - 16 (10%)
5. Eritrea - 9 (6%)

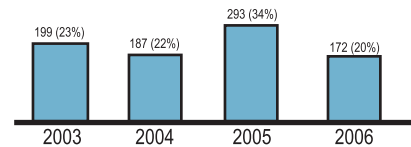


Age

- 5 and under - 30 (19%)
- 6 to 12 yrs - 18 (12%)
- 13 to 18 yrs - 7 (5%)
- 19 to 64 yrs - 100 (65%)
- 65 and older - 0

Top 5 Refugee Source Countries

1. Afghanistan - 851 Arrivals (26%)



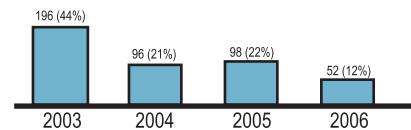
Afghanistan has been the number one source country over the past three years at 851 individuals or 26% of all government-assisted refugees settling in BC. Most families fled Afghanistan and lived for several years in neighbouring countries (such as Pakistan or India) before resettling in Canada.

The Afghan families that are settling in BC tend to be large by Canadian standards. It's not uncommon to find 4 to 8 children within a household.

Based on this report, this group has mostly settled in Burnaby and the Tri-City area.



2. Sudan - 442 Arrivals (14%)

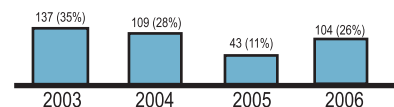


According to community leaders, the estimated Sudanese population in the Lower Mainland is 5,000. The prolonged conflict in Sudan has resulted in mass internal displacement for Sudanese citizens. Most Sudanese arrive in BC emotionally scarred by the traumatic experiences in their country as well as the

poverty and hardship endured after spending years in refugee camps.

Sudanese refugees tend to settle in Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey.

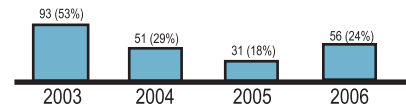
3. Iran - 393 Arrivals (12%)



Most Iranians have sought resettlement in Canada due to religious persecution. Most are of the Bahai faith and over 95% come to Canada via Turkey where they spend 1 - 2 years on average.

From 2003 - 2006, the majority of Iranian government-assisted refugees have settled in Burnaby and the Tri-City area.

4. Colombia - 231 Arrivals (7%)



Since the late 1990's Colombians have arrived in BC in larger numbers. Sixty-seven percent came to BC as internally displaced people from within Colombia while the remaining came from refugee camps in Ecuador.

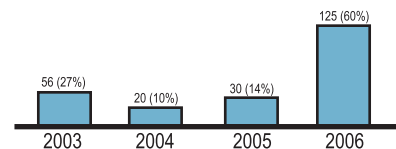
In general, Colombian newcomers have higher levels of post-secondary education and were professionals (lawyers, doctors, union leaders,

professors) residing in larger urban centres. Approximately 15 - 20% are illiterate and come from rural, mainly farming areas.

Most Colombians have settled in Burnaby, Vancouver and Surrey.



5. Myanmar - 209 Arrivals (6%)



Myanmar refugees are a relatively new group to settle in British Columbia. In the past year, 125 Karen (a minority ethnic group in Myanmar) arrived in Vancouver after spending years in refugee camps in Thailand. It is estimated that 140,000 Myanmar refugees have been living in Thai refugee camps for the past 20 years due to a major offensive by the Myanmar government against the Karen ethnic group.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has identified Karen refugees in Thailand as a distinct group with

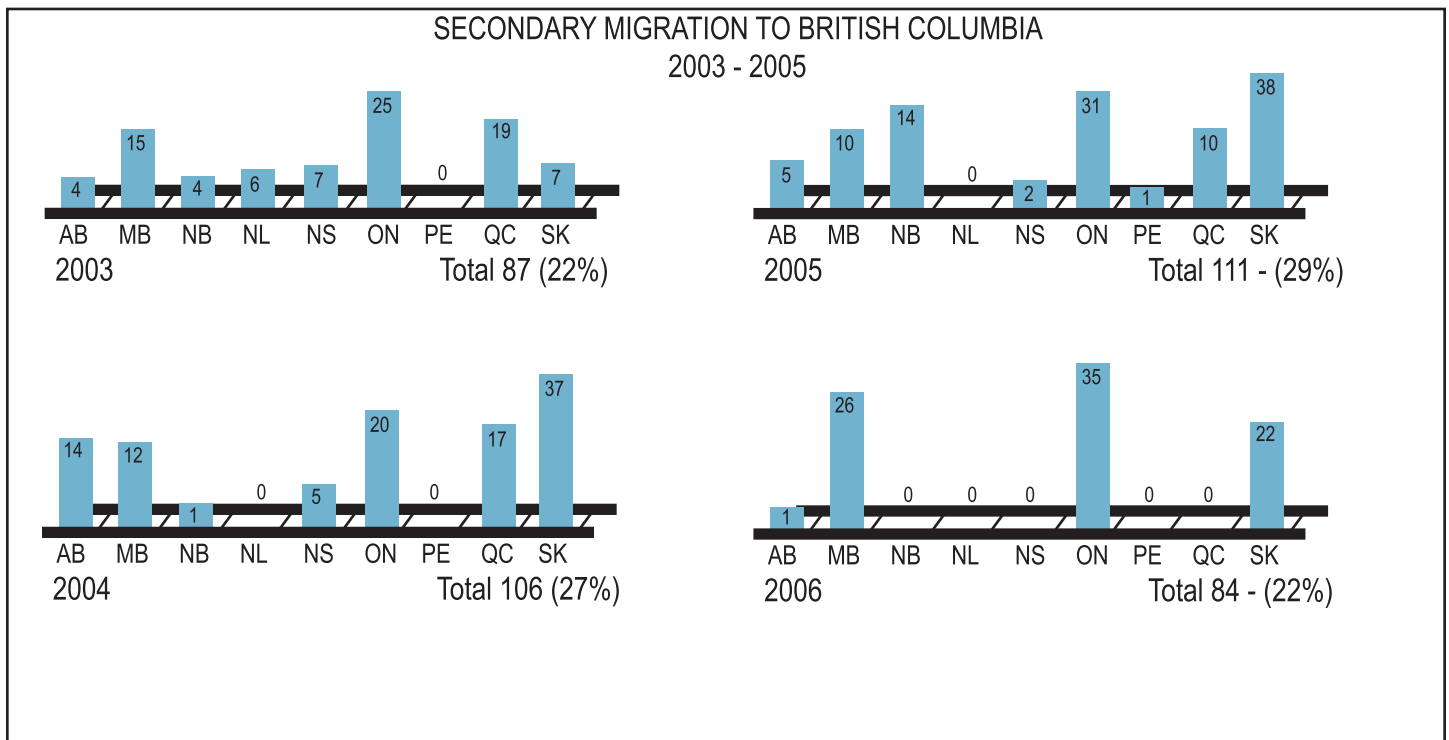
particular protection needs and vulnerabilities and has called upon the international community to help in resettling them.

The majority of recent Myanmar refugees have settled in Surrey and Vancouver. Most speak one of two dialects - Po and S'Dua.

Secondary Migration Movements

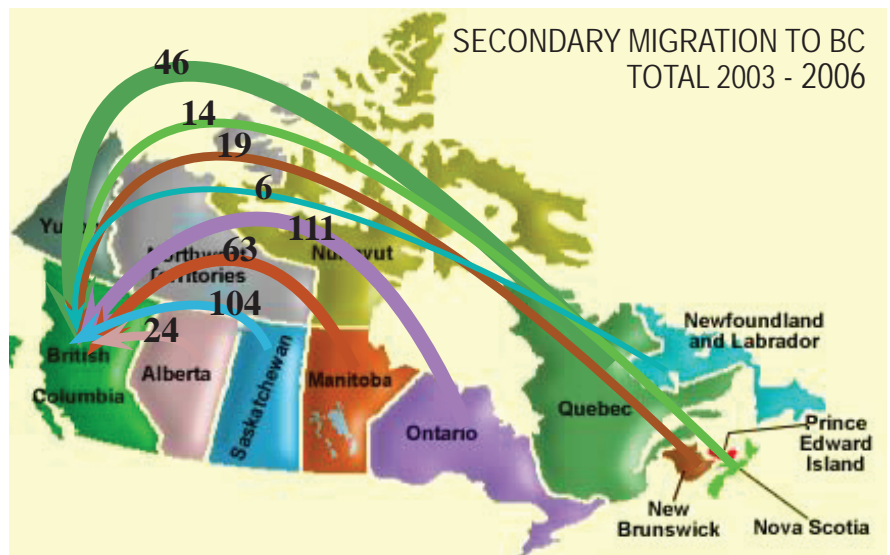
Many government-assisted refugees, not originally destined to BC, make their way to the Greater Vancouver area from other provinces during their first few months of arrival in Canada. Between 2003 - 2006, 388 GAR's self-transferred to BC.

There has been a 28% increase in self-transfers to BC during this period. In addition, approximately 45 GARs annually leave BC for other provinces in Canada. The estimated net migration total for 2003 - 2006 is 204.



SECONDARY MIGRATION
PROVINCE OF ORIGIN
2003 - 2006

Alberta	24	(6%)
Manitoba	63	(16%)
New Brunswick	19	(5%)
Newfoundland	6	(2%)
Ontario	111	(29%)
Prince Edward Island	14	(4%)
Quebec	46	(12%)
Saskatchewan	104	(26%)
Total	388	



Government-Assisted Refugee Entitlements

ISS is contracted by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to administer the resettlement assistance program orientation services (RAP) as well as provide temporary accommodation (15 nights) for all government-assisted refugees destined to BC. RAP orientation services can be described as 30 hours of first language information and orientation sessions within a 6 week period from the refugees first arrival in Canada. These orientation sessions include the provision of child minding services for children 13 years of age and younger. RAP service outcomes include applying for a Social Insurance Number, Care Card, Child Tax Benefit, Permanent Residence card, opening a bank account, assistance in locating permanent rental accommodation and a primary health care screening through the Bridge Community Health Clinic.

Once the client leaves ISS' temporary accommodation facility (Welcome House), they move into permanent rental accommodation. After having resided in Canada for more than six weeks, the GAR becomes eligible for immigrant related settlement services available to all newcomers and provided by various service providers in the community.

CIC provides GARs with financial assistance for up to one year or until they become self-sufficient, whichever comes first. GARs are also entitled to a one-time only basic household goods and furniture package. The tables below list the household goods packages as well as the basic income support allowances (shelter, food and basic needs). Assistance received is proportionate to family size.

MONTHLY SHELTER, FOOD AND BASIC NEEDS

	Shelter Maximum	Food	Total
Individual	\$400	\$235	\$635
Family of 2	\$620	\$307	\$927
Family of 3	\$655	\$508	\$1,163
Family of 4	\$690	\$615	\$1,305
Family of 5	\$725	\$722	\$1,447
Family of 6	\$760	\$829	\$1,589
Family of 7	\$795	\$936	\$1,731

FURNITURE PACKAGE - SINGLE PERSON

Items	Approx. Value
Single bed	\$150
Table	\$103
Chest of drawers	\$70
Table lamp - bedroom	\$16
Table lamp - living room	\$16
Clock radio	\$10
Sofa	\$226
TV	\$86
End table	\$30
Package total	\$707

HOUSEHOLD GOODS - SINGLE PERSON

Items	Approx. Value
Sheet set	\$12
Blanket	\$9
Comforter	\$18
Pillow	\$8
Towels	\$12
Dish towels/cloths	\$4
Iron	\$16
Broom/dust pan	\$6
Pots and Pans	\$33
Cutlery	\$4
Kitchen utensils	\$10
Kettle	\$16
Mixing bowls	\$4
Glasses	\$2
Dishes	\$5
Umbrella	\$5
Wastepaper basket	\$3
Teapot	\$3
Can opener	\$2
Dish towels	\$1
Various other small items	\$20
Package total	\$193

Government-Assisted Refugee Entitlements: Case Studies

The following case studies, based on actual individuals / families, provide insight into refugee monetary support including government loans.

Case Study 1 - Single Person



Amount of Government Transportation Loan: \$1,534

Loan consists of \$1,257 for transportation to Canada (\$112 for medical costs and \$165 service fee). Loan recipient must begin repayment 12 months after arrival.

Start-up Allowance: \$1,362

Start-up allowance includes financial aid for clothing, telephone installation, first month costs (food, rent, transportation). A repayable rent security deposit loan of \$163 is included in the total.

Monthly Support Allowance - Food: \$185

- Rent: \$325

One-zone Bus Pass Allowance: \$69

Case Study 2 - Family of Five - Single Mother



Amount of Government Transportation Loan: \$6,161.52

Loan consists of \$4,605 for transportation to Canada (\$728 for medical costs, \$660 service fee and \$168 for other costs). Loan recipient must begin repayment 12 months after arrival.

Start-up Allowance: \$4,505

Start-up allowance includes financial aid for clothing, telephone installation, school start-up, first month costs (food, rent, transportation, child allowance). A repayable rent security deposit loan of \$330 is included in the total.

Monthly Support Allowance - Food: \$326

- Rent: \$660

One-zone Bus Pass Allowance: \$69

Case Study 3 - Family of Ten



Amount of Government Transportation Loan: \$9,565

Loan consists of \$7,795 for transportation to Canada (\$1,110 for medical costs and \$660 service fee). Loan recipient must begin repayment 12 months after arrival.

Start-up Allowance: \$5,034

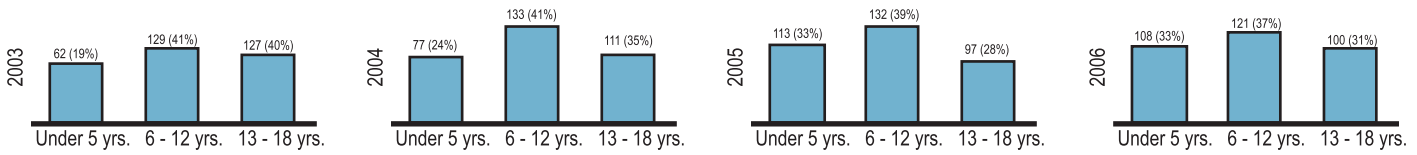
Start-up allowance includes financial aid for clothing, telephone installation, school start-up, first month costs (food, rent, transportation, child allowance). A repayable rent security deposit loan of \$400 is included in the total.

Monthly Support Allowance - Food: \$401

- Rent: \$800

One-zone Bus Pass Allowance: \$138 (two adults)

Implications - Education



Arrival flows into BC indicate that approximately 48-50% of all government-assisted refugees annually arrive between mid-September to mid-December. The result is that student numbers submitted to the Ministry of Education by school districts in September do not take into consideration arrivals of additional special needs, at-risk refugee students throughout the school year.

Refugee children and youth face numerous challenges and barriers during their integration process. In addition to the difficulties associated with being a teenager, they may also struggle with issues such as racism, discrimination, culture shock, language barriers, health issues, unemployment, socio-economic difficulties, and disruptions in their family structure. These challenges increase their vulnerability to abuse, affect their success in school and work, and limit their ability to contribute their unique gifts and assets to the communities in which they live.

Many refugee children and youth who have arrived between 2003 - 2006 have never had the opportunity to be in a formal classroom learning environment. Some youth have been severely traumatized by their migration experiences and in particular, lengthy stays in refugee camps. Others have arrived with incomplete families,

loss of a parent and/or family separation – a few have arrived as unaccompanied minors. For instance, most Muslim Afghan girls were unable to attend school under the Taliban unless their family could afford to pay for the schooling - in most cases the family could not.

According to school districts, refugee teenagers are being placed in age-appropriate classes. This student population in particular is extremely vulnerable and at risk of dropping out.

In June 2005, ISS implemented a Lower Mainland School District refugee student arrival notification system. With the consent of the family, a letter outlining potential special needs is provided to the principal/school secretary. A copy of the introductory letter is faxed by ISS to a corresponding school district representative. In addition, an ISS Refugee Arrival electronic bulletin with information for school district planning and resource purposes is periodically circulated.

Implications - Health

With the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), resettled refugees are no longer barred entry to Canada based on successive medical conditions. Although resettled refugees undergo a basic medical examination and chest x-ray, their health status can change significantly during the waiting period prior to entry into Canada.

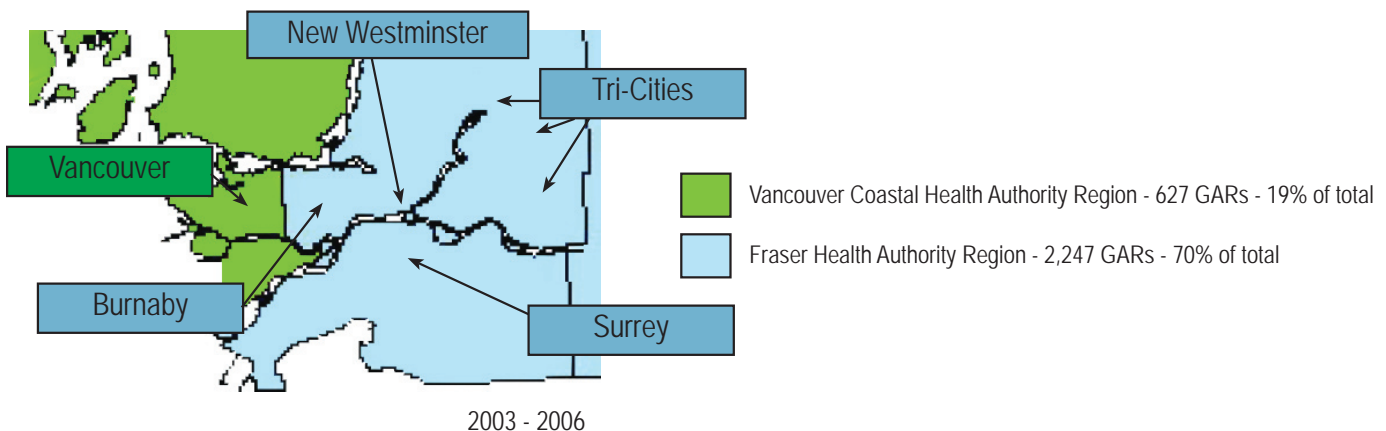
All government-assisted refugees undergo a primary health care screening at the Bridge Community Health Clinic located in Vancouver. This screening usually takes place within their first 10 days in BC while they reside at ISS' Welcome House. Over the years, the interdisciplinary team at the clinic has developed culturally appropriate first visit screening protocols.

The Bridge Community Health Clinic was established in September 1994 as a partnership between the BC Multicultural Health Services Society, Immigrant Services Society of BC, Providence Healthcare and

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to address the primary health care needs of refugees, with or without legal status. The Bridge Community Health Clinic is considered a promising practice in primary health care for marginalized populations in Canada.

Since the inception of IRPA, clinic staff have reported higher incidence of chronic disease management – diabetes, hypertension, upper respiratory infections, heart disease, mental health conditions (i.e. - chronic depression and post-traumatic stress disorder), and HIV infection. Although all government-assisted refugees access the Bridge Community Health Clinic for their initial primary health care, the majority of refugees tend to settle outside of the Vancouver Coastal Health boundaries. Over 70% of government-assisted refugees settle in the Fraser Health Region - usually within their first month in BC. The Fraser Health Authority currently does not provide a primary health care service specific to refugees.

BRIDGE COMMUNITY
HEALTH CLINIC





IMMIGRANT SERVICES SOCIETY
of British Columbia

1972-2007

Celebrating 35 years of working with immigrants in our communities



Our Locations

Vancouver

Language College and Career Services

501-333 Terminal Ave,
Vancouver, BC, V6A 2L7
Tel. 604-684-2561
Fax. 604-684-2266

Settlement Services and Welcome House

530 Drake Street
Vancouver, BC, V6B 2H3
Tel. 604-684-7498
Fax. 604-684-5683

Richmond

Richmond Career Centre

150-8400 Alexandra Rd.
Richmond, BC
Tel. 604-233-7031
Fax. 604-233-7036

English Language Services for Adults - Richmond

150-8400 Alexandra Rd.
Richmond, BC
Tel. 604-233-7077
Fax. 604-233-7040

Tri-Cities

English Language Services for Adults - Coquitlam

136-3030 Lincoln Ave.
Coquitlam, BC, V3B 6B4
Tel. 604-942-1777
Fax. 604-942-1730

Settlement Services

100B-3020 Lincoln Avenue
Coquitlam, BC, V3B 6B4
Tel. 778-284-7026
Fax. 604-942-1730

Surrey

Surrey Multilingual Employment Centre

201-7337 137th St.
Surrey, BC, V3W 1A4
Tel. 604-595-4021
Fax. 604-595-4028

New Westminister

Settlement Services

301-321 6th Street
New Westminister, BC V3L 3A7
Tel. 604-525-9144
Fax. 604-524-9455

Burnaby

Settlement Services

207-7355 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V3N 4Z6
Tel. 604-395-8000
Fax. 604-395-8003

visit www.issbc.org

