Team members in Toronto

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Study Methods

We combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to meet the research objectives.

• 220 structured, in-person interviews allowed for a cross-sectional analysis of diverse settlement and health-related issues in a dispersed population.

• Languages of interviews: Arabic 50%, English 28%, Arabic Juba, Dinka and Nuer 6% each, Bari 3%.

Highlights of Study Findings

One-third of survey respondents were displaced inside Sudan before coming to Canada due to conflict-induced migration; 70% of government-assisted refugees (GARs) came directly from a refugee camp.

- Refugees reported the highest level of needs on arrival; specifically they needed help with housing, job search, learning where to go for help, and daily living, as well as continuing education, satisfactory employment and living on a low budget.

- The greatest sources of social support for Sudanese upon arrival in Canada were friends and other Sudanese, followed by reception house workers, family members and settlement workers.

- The two initial challenges during the first 6-12 months reported in greatest proportions were worry about family not in Canada (68%) and finding a satisfactory job (67%). More women than men reported difficulties with getting around and communicating.

- High rates of unemployment and under-employment continue to be great concerns, even though survey respondents have been in Canada over two years on average.

- The majority (77%) of survey respondents who received government support felt that it was inadequate to meet their needs; 70% reported difficulty paying back the government transportation fare; 32% reported worrying about having enough money for food or prescribed medicine.

- The majority (75%) reported that Canada is not the way they thought it would be. Most survey respondents expected to be able to pursue opportunities for work and study; 85% did not expect difficulties in finding employment; 76% did not expect the high cost of living.

- High proportions of respondents (especially GARs) reported experiencing recent stress such as trouble at work or school, financial or housing problems and concerns with children.

- Family separation and family reunification challenges due to low-income have created ongoing emotional stress for individuals and extended families.

- Gender role changes in Canada have profoundly, and sometimes adversely, affected Sudanese men, women and families.

- Survey respondents rated their overall health as good. However, there is some evidence of persistent mental stress during settlement, including possible signs of depression and trauma.

- Coping strategies included obtaining help from friends and hoping for a better life in Canada. Some refugees noted that hope of returning to Sudan helped them to cope.

- Barriers to settlement service use include lack of awareness of services among Sudanese and perceived lack of cultural awareness among settlement service providers.

- The most frequently offered recommendation by respondents was to involve Sudanese community members directly in settlement service delivery.

For more Information: The full report is online at http://settlement.org/downloads/atwork/Study_of_Sudanese_Settlement_in_Ontario.pdf

Other publications:
