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## Laurier-led study explores the role of 'Local Immigration Partnerships' in the Syrian refugee resettlement process

WATERLOO – A study led by Wilfrid Laurier University Professor **Margaret Walton-Roberts** will begin evaluating the role of Local Immigrant Partnerships in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in Waterloo, Hamilton and Ottawa.

Local Immigration Partnerships are community-wide, multi-sectoral partnerships working to strengthen a community's capacity to welcome immigrants and improve integration outcomes through enhanced economic, social, political and civic participation.

The research project, entitled "A comparative evaluation of Local Immigrant Partnerships (LIPs) and their role in the Syrian refugee resettlement process in three Ontario reception centres," received \$24,944 in funding from a joint initiative between the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The funding was announced recently by John McCallum, minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and Kirsty Duncan, minister of Science.

Also participating in the study are Associate Professor Luisa Veronis and colleagues from the University of Ottawa; Sarah Wayland of the City of Hamilton; and Laurier Geography and Environmental Studies PhD student Blair Cullen.

"The Laurier research community is deeply engaged in bringing their expertise to refugee resettlement efforts," said **Robert Gordon**, vice-president: research. "This funding recognizes our commitment to the success of effective, evidence-based resettlement efforts in our community."

Walton-Roberts is a recognized expert in the area of immigration and immigrant diasporas. She is the associate director of the International Migration Research Centre, located at the Balsillie School of International Affairs and Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research encompasses the cross-connected issues of gender and migration, immigrant settlement, and international student migration. She is an expert on international migration to Canada, especially internationally educated nurses, as well as immigrant and refugee settlement in second-tier cities.

"The arrival of over 26,000 Syrian refugees presents a unique and urgent opportunity to evaluate the success of LIPs in coordinating complex refugee resettlement services and responses," said Walton-Roberts. "The results of this work will contribute to enhancing the refugee resettlement process and outcomes in Hamilton, Waterloo and Ottawa and beyond."

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Waterloo, Hamilton and Ottawa are all officially designated reception communities for Syrian refugees. All three cities have formal refugee resettlement steering committees to coordinate the settlement of refugees with municipal governments and community partners.

"I'm excited to be developing recommendations based on identifying key features of these LIP case studies in these three cities," said Walton-Roberts. "I will also be working with Balsillie School of International Affairs masters students in the development of a policy brief based on this research that will explore how we can scale up the LIPs model across Canada and internationally."

With 55,800 refugees expected to arrive in Canada by the end of 2016, Walton-Roberts' work is urgently needed. The researcher team will present the preliminary results of the project at the [National Metropolis Conference](#) in March 2017 in Montreal, Quebec. It is hoped that by sharing these findings widely, they will make a difference to how resettlement services are implemented both locally and nationally.

Read the [SSHRC funding announcement](#).

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