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4995E: Supporting Refugee Resettlement in Canada through Knowledge Translation

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Introduction

Over 200,000 refugees were welcomed into Canada over 2016–2021, with countries of origin including Syria and Afghanistan (Government of Canada, 2022). However, government resettlement support, such as the one-year financial assistance provided, has not kept pace with this rapidly growing population (Rabiah-Mohammed et al., 2022).

As such, refugees in Canada struggle with poor physical and mental health outcomes, inadequate housing, and face difficulties securing employment and credentials, among other challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and rising inflation rates have exacerbated these factors.

We collaborated with Dr. Oudshoorn's research group, which has been conducting community-based research on the long-term housing success of Syrian government-assisted refugees (GARs). They found that housing needs were largely unfulfilled. Moreover, additional research by the group revealed that isolation, unemployment, and lack of integration as well as access to social support are current barriers to successful refugee resettlement in Canada.

Our project focused on using knowledge translation in multimedia formats to encourage action by stakeholders based on these research findings.

Project Aims

- Knowledge translation to the public and stakeholders through:
  - Two visually appealing website pages on the group's studies
  - Three videos on provided themes related to research findings
  - Reports that persuasively convey provided recommendations intended for all levels of government and the settlement agency CCLC
- Generate a set of recommendations based on their research findings to better support refugees in an educational context

Methods

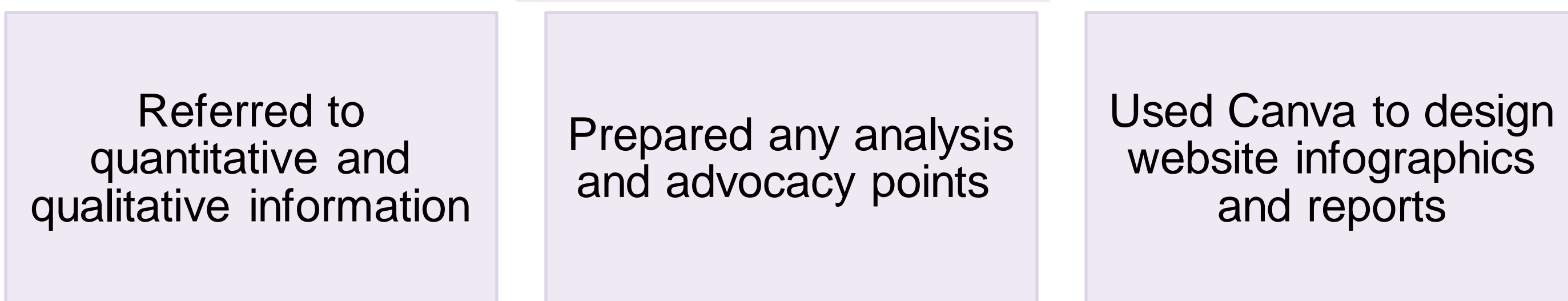| Referred to quantitative and qualitative information	Prepared any analysis and advocacy points	Used Canva to design website infographics and reports

Fig. 1. Examined group's research materials and performed a literature search. Generated recommendations based on qualitative findings, drafted persuasive background for stakeholders, and organized content. Also, designed multimedia content for the audience in question, as needed.
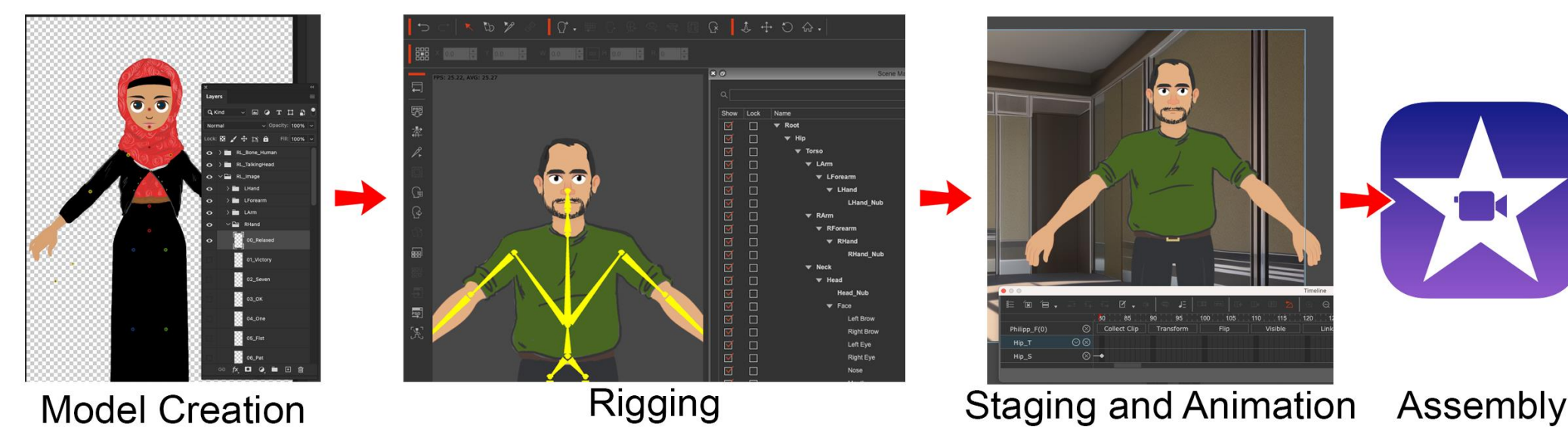
Model Creation → Rigging → Staging and Animation → Assembly

Fig. 2. For the animation, used Adobe Photoshop to make the models and backgrounds. Then, rigged the models and animated them in the Cartoon Animator 4. Finally, assembled the finished snippets in iMovie.

Deliverable

Scan the QR code to watch the video.

Fig. 3. Issues Pertaining To Obtaining Driving Licenses: a Video
Refugees have a difficult time obtaining a driver's license, even if they were licensed in their home country. This video describes their struggles and a possible solution.

Fig. 4. Access To English School Bridges The Way To Early Employment And Housing: a Video. Refugees often arrive with very few English or French skills, and often have difficulties immersing themselves in the language because of their access to language classes. This video dives into the need for better access to classes.
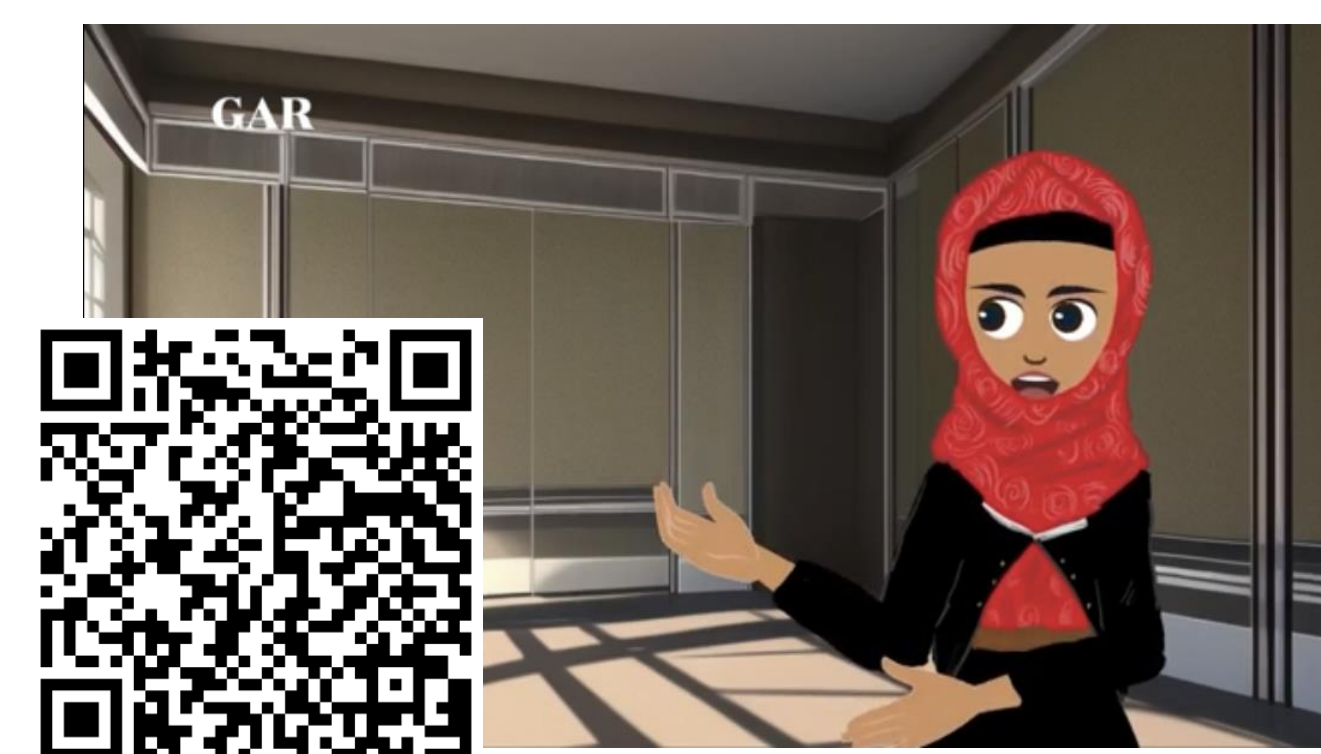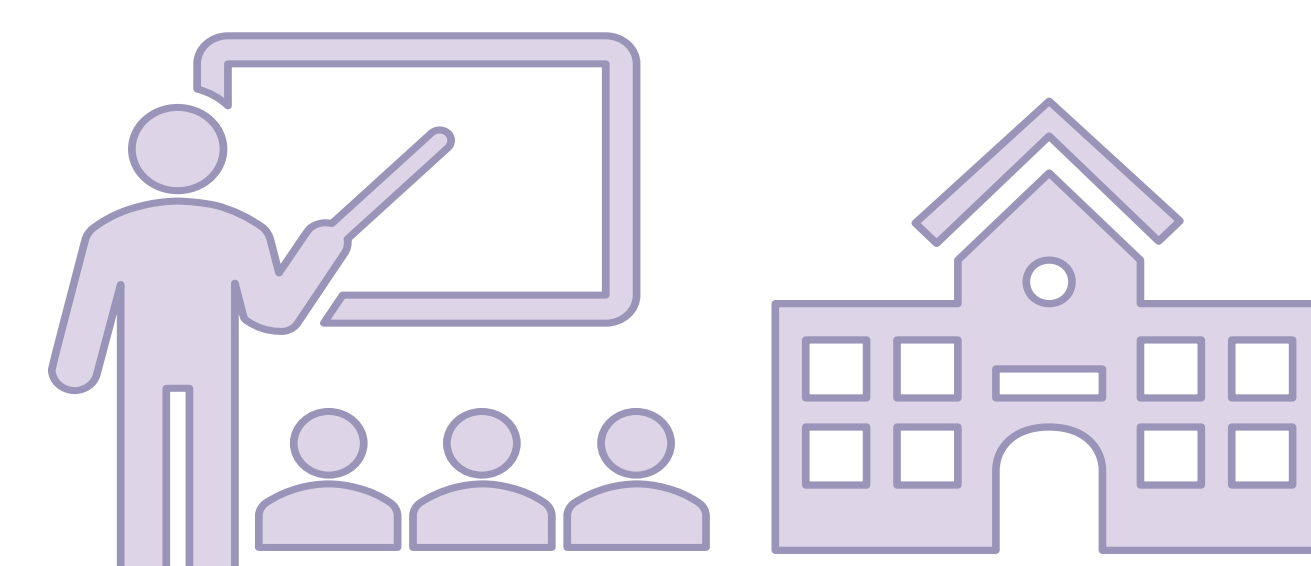
Fig. 5. Exposing The Gaps In The System: Settlement During A Pandemic: an Animation. This animation uses a human-centered approach to highlight the refugee experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is divided into different themes representing the struggles and resilience of the refugee population.

Scan the QR code to read all the reports.

Fig. 6. Supporting Refugees in Canada: Reports for the all levels of government and land the Settlement Agency Levels. These reports frame the issue at hand and communicate recommendations in a digestible manner with supporting evidence. The federal report was translated to French.

Supporting Refugee Students by Generating Recommendations for Local School Boards.
The recommendations are based on research findings related to integration, discrimination, and financial struggles.

Impact

Knowledge translation is all about applying academic knowledge to the real-world in a persuasive and understandable manner.
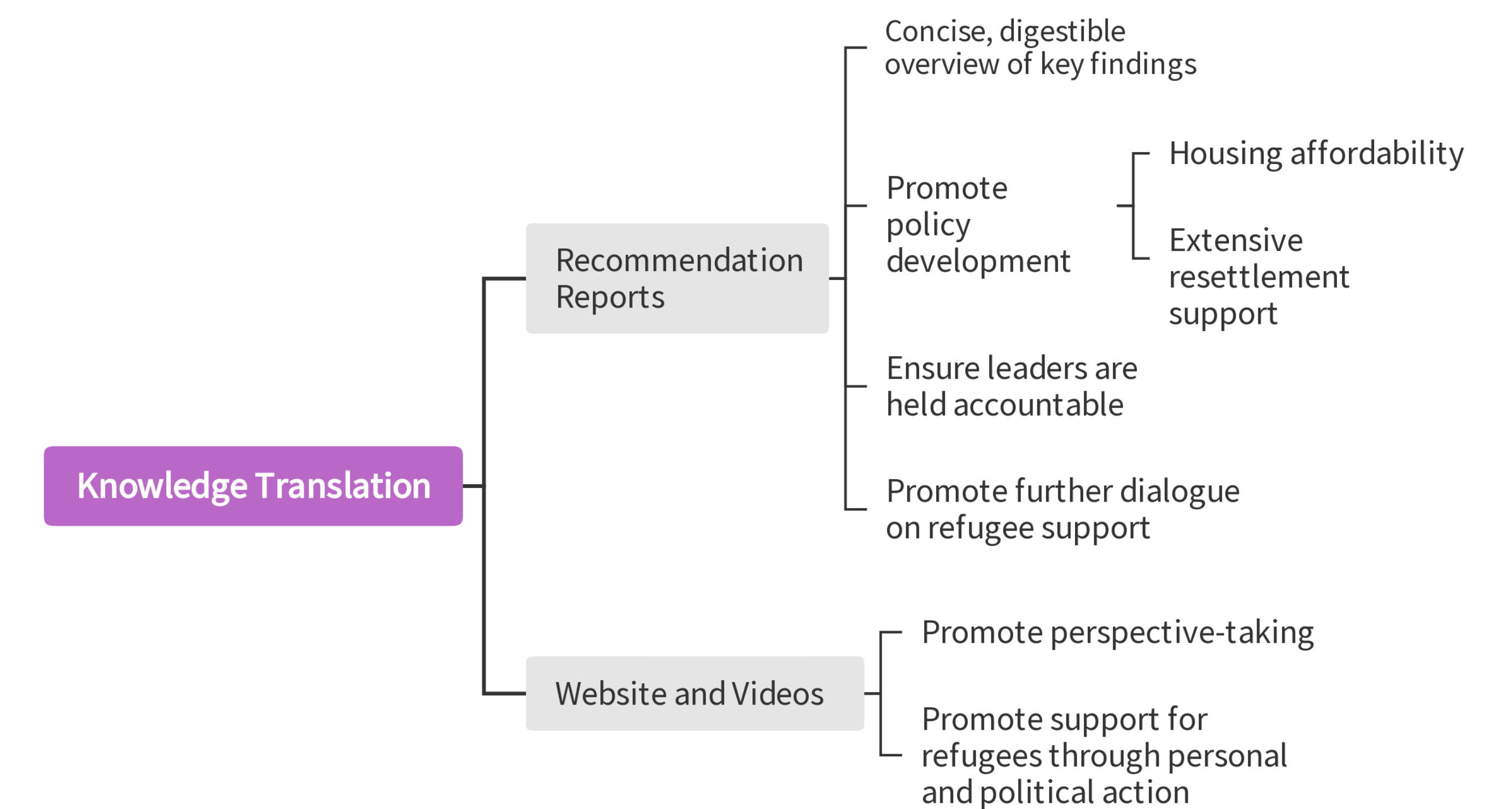
Knowledge Translation
- Recommendation Reports
  - Concise, digestible overview of key findings
  - Promote policy development
    - Housing affordability
    - Extensive resettlement support
  - Ensure leaders are held accountable
  - Promote further dialogue on refugee support
- Website and Videos
  - Promote perspective-taking
  - Promote support for refugees through personal and political action

Fig. 7. A mind map on the impact of the project.

Future Directions

Our project represents the initial stage of knowledge translation, but advocacy is a long and continual process.
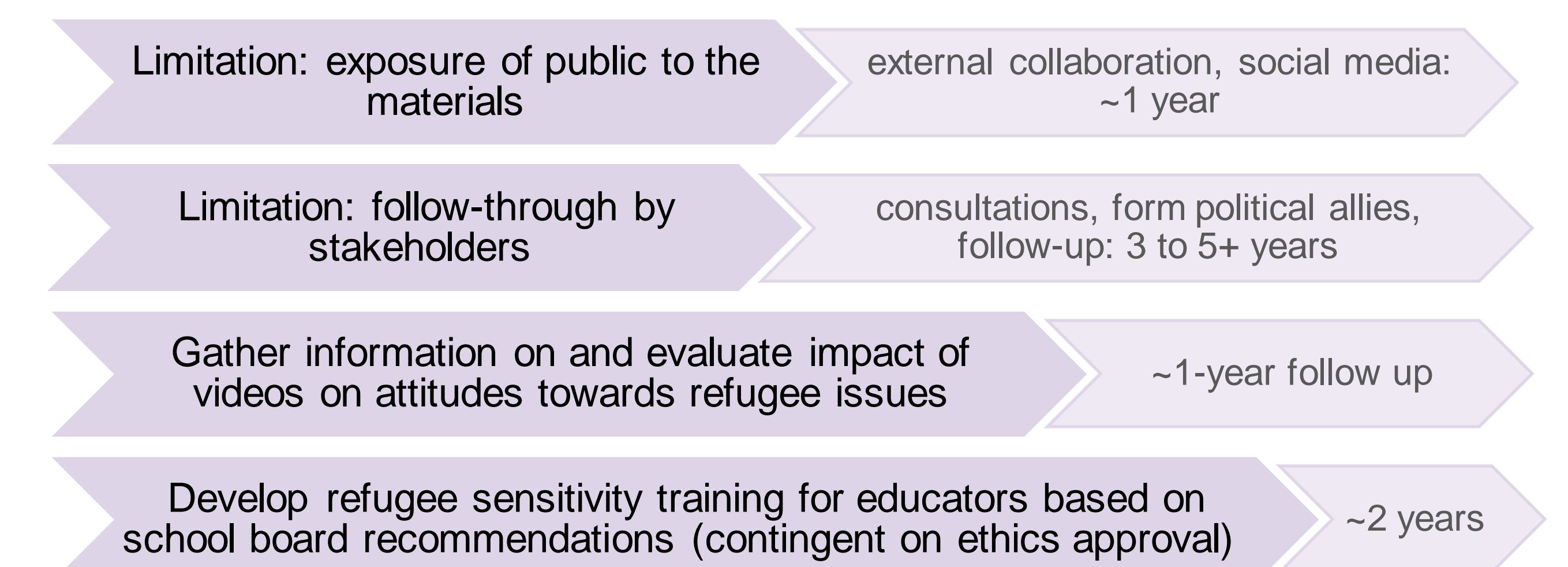
Limitation: exposure of public to the materials	external collaboration, social media: ~1 year
Limitation: follow-through by stakeholders	consultations, form political allies, follow-up: 3 to 5+ years
Gather information on and evaluate impact of videos on attitudes towards refugee issues	~1-year follow up
Develop refugee sensitivity training for educators based on school board recommendations (contingent on ethics approval)	~2 years

Fig. 8. Proposed future directions for the project.

Acknowledgements

References

Government of Canada, S. C. (2022). *Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221026/dq221026a-eng.htm

Rabiah-Mohammed, F., Oudshoorn, A., & Hussain, Y. (2022). *An exploration of integration journeys, identity and well-being with Syrian refugee youth.*