

Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

INTERIM REPORT

“The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to re-imagine human mobility for the benefit of all.”

--António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

[The Three-Year Strategy \(2019-2021\) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#) was called for in the Global Compact on Refugees. Following its development in collaboration with over 90 stakeholders, it was launched in June 2019 as “a blueprint and impetus for all interested stakeholders to take action to deliver on [the] ambition ...to realize expanded access to third country solutions for refugees.” The *Strategy* articulates three Goals to serve the vision that by the end of 2028 three million refugees benefit from effective protection and solutions: to grow resettlement; to advance complementary pathways; and to build the foundation by promoting welcoming and inclusive societies.

As a multi-stakeholder strategy rooted in the spirit of the Compact, the work of partners is central and foundational. It is guided by six principles:

- Protection: all pathways should safeguard rights and protection needs of refugees.
- Durable solutions: if initially temporary, paths enable progression to solutions.
- Responsibility-sharing to assist refugees and support host countries.
- Additionality of complementary pathways to increase third country solutions.
- Non-discrimination for access to all third country solutions.
- Family Unity: keeping family members together and providing legal avenues to reunite.

This interim report outlines progress, achievements and challenges *vis-à-vis* the *Strategy's* priorities and enabling actions to end-September 2020, as embodied in the ever-evolving global action plan, attached in Annex.

Key Dates

- December 2018: Global Compact on Refugees affirmed by the UN General Assembly
- June 2019: *Three-Year Strategy* launched at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Geneva
- December 2019: Global Refugee Forum, Geneva
- March 2020: Global Action Plan finalized
- May 2020: updates on the implementation at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement
- November 2020: Mid-Point Report on Progress
- December 2021: end date of *Three-Year Strategy*

The changing context

The global refugee protection situation at the time the *Three-Year Strategy* was being developed in early 2019 is laid out in some detail in the Global Compact and the Introduction to the *Strategy*. In brief, with the severe and growing gap between the need for durable solutions and their availability, combined with the vast majority of refugees being hosted in low-and-middle-income countries of first asylum facing their own economic and development challenges, the impetus grew to develop effective partnerships to enable many more safe pathways for third country solutions.

As the *Strategy* was being finalized, resettlement places had dropped from recent highs in 2016-17. Access to family reunification, labour mobility, education pathways, sponsorship pathways, humanitarian corridors and various hybrid programmes was needed on a much larger scale to provide safe homes for many more refugees and to show solidarity with countries of first asylum. However, potential complementary pathways were limited and a framework for UNHCR's work with partners to develop them had yet to be developed.

In that context, as the *Strategy* states, it was designed as “both a roadmap for expansion over the next three years (2019-21), and an ambitious blueprint for the further development of third country solutions over the next ten years (2019-2028).”

Unfortunately, the first full year of the *Strategy* was also the year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, whereby border closures and travel restrictions seriously impacted on the refugees' ability to avail themselves of third country solutions. Resettlement departures and complementary pathways movements were limited particularly in the second trimester of 2020, but the impact of the pandemic was considerable also on case processing activities for resettlement, family reunification and other complementary pathways, with many Embassies suspending visa services, in-person interviews and fingerprinting, and being unable to accept new applications.

At the same time the crisis laid bare, with rare force, the intersection of social *need for* and potential *mutual benefit from* the labour of undervalued workers. This led to new understandings which in turn compel UNHCR and partners to seize the moment, as demonstrated by the recent EU study (available [here](#)) showing that seven million positions in “COVID-vital” occupations -- most female dominated -- are currently filled by non-EU nationals, or the recognition that one in eight nurses globally work outside their home country. Enabling refugees unable to work in the countries of first asylum to fill even a small portion of these positions could greatly increase third country solutions and protection space.

UNHCR and partners should invest now in sustained high level advocacy to build on this momentum and catalyze both short-term pilots and the longer-term multi-stakeholder policy and operational infrastructure, safeguarding rights and protection needs, to move 250-300,000 refugees per year to safe homes by mid-decade—a system built to last, integrated into communities, cities and regions, supported by employers, unions and education providers, and less dependent on any single State.

The situation at the end of 2019

According to government statistics, 26 countries admitted 107,800 refugees for resettlement during 2019. More than 63,000 refugees were resettled based on a UNHCR resettlement submission, marking a 14% increase on 2018 and surpassing the target of 60,000. According to the [Global Trends in Forced Displacement](#) in 2019 UNHCR submitted 81,671 refugees to 29 States for resettlement consideration.

Resettlement capacity was enhanced via the global deployment scheme, utilizing the equivalent of 1,650 months of resettlement expertise, also assisting field operations in child protection, registration, and refugee status determination. Deployees specializing in complementary pathways were placed in thirteen operations around the world for the first time, and their presence has vastly improved identification and facilitation of family reunification, as well as building systems and partnerships to allow for complementary pathways' expansion.

The UNHCR-OECD Study on Third Country Solutions update in December 2019 showed that fewer first time residence permits were issued to individuals from the surveyed source countries¹ for family, work or education reasons in 2018 compared to 2017. However, with 106,400 first-time permits issued, it did exceed the average of 71,800 over the period of 2010-2017.

Strengthening the capabilities of communities and individuals, institutions and infrastructure is critical to the success of the Strategy. For its part, UNHCR has developed together with IOM the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP) 2020-2022² which aims to support States and key stakeholders to establish, expand or renew resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways. It will achieve this through providing targeted capacity building in partnership with other initiatives to complement and coordinate ongoing efforts. The CRISP draws and builds on lessons from past experiences and initiatives, such as the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM) implemented between 2016-2019.

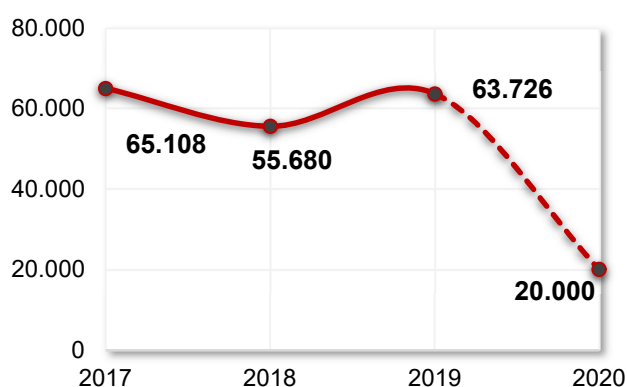
At the Global Refugee Forum, of 190 pledges related to durable solutions, almost 80 contained commitments related to resettlement, family reunification and other complementary pathways.

The situation in 2020

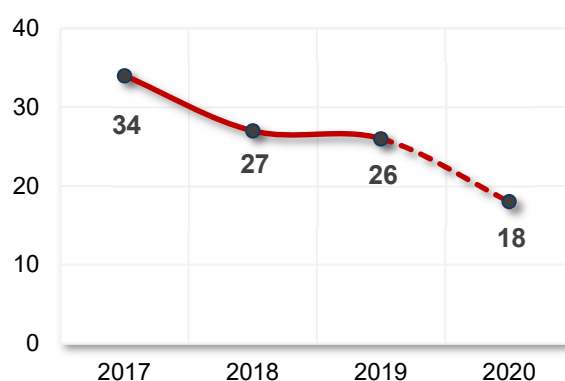
In 2020, progress on immediate third country solutions for refugees across all pathways suffered a significant setback that is ongoing at the time of drafting this report and will —although to an unknown degree— continue into 2021. Travel restrictions led to the suspension of most resettlement movements from March to June with slow and partial re-openings, from July onwards. Resettlement States cancelled selection missions, and both UNHCR and its partners had to significantly scale back resettlement activities.

The *Strategy*'s objective of resettling 70,000 refugees would not have been met even in the absence of COVID, as reductions in targets from some resettlement countries, especially the United States, were not fully offset by growth in other destination countries; given COVID, the shortfall will be much greater, with only 31,008 submissions by UNHCR made under the available resettlement targets and 15,425 departures as of 30 September. Departures for pathways for family reunification, education and employment in third countries were delayed or halted. While data in these areas are incomplete, it is certain that the goal of 140,000 admissions in 2020 will not be achieved.

Refugees departed on resettlement upon UNHCR submission



Resettlement countries per year



Data for 2020 are based on an estimate

¹ Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia and Syria

² The CRISP was a direct outcome and recommendation by stakeholders resulting from the Strategy consultation process.

In the context of Covid-19, in Europe, the EU resettlement pledge for 2020 was changed into a two-year scheme, and total resettlement in 2020/2021 will be significantly lower than previously hoped. The issuance of the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration, with strong support for growth in resettlement post-2021 -- and Commission funding support in 2019 and 2020 for resettlement, community sponsorship, family reunification, humanitarian admissions, education and employment pathways -- will be central to the *Strategy's* success or failure in Europe over coming years.

Despite the challenges, the pandemic did prompt actors to adapt, introducing operational innovations such as remote resettlement interviews and selection missions; convening new and vigorous advocacy platforms and communities of practice; building global virtual networks to find ways to sustain and improve programming. The crisis also focused efforts to lay the foundations of powerful partnerships for the later years of the 10-year map that lies at the core of the *Strategy's* ambition for many more safe homes. Those activities are central to the sections of this report that follow.

Establishing the Global Action Plan

An early and foundational deliverable for the *Strategy* was to develop a concrete plan of actions. Consultations with several dozen major partners were conducted through the latter part of 2019, culminating in an all-day virtual workshop in March 2020.

The Global Action Plan is hosted and coordinated by UNHCR but belongs to all partners and actors. While the plan was formalized and distributed in March, it is not "finished": it is considered a living document that is updated and adjusted regularly, and is hosted on the Global Compact on Refugees' website ([here](#)).

We are, as a community, dependent on those partners working toward the objectives of the *Three-Year Strategy* to advise us of activities; it is unlikely to capture all the efforts seeking to find more safe homes in third countries, so it should be considered only "as comprehensive as possible."

At this time, the Plan incorporates 104 actions planned by 21 partners. In the spirit of the Global Compact and the *Three-Year Strategy* it is heartening to see that each action almost invariably engages multiple actors. The longer term role of the Action Plan will continue to be discussed with partners as 2021 proceeds.

Breakdown by status as of 30 September 2020	
Actions on track	60
Actions completed	21
Actions delayed	15
Actions not yet started	5
Actions whose status is 'other' or 'not available'	3

The following section highlights some completed objectives of note under each of the three pillars along with several actions in progress or to be completed soon. For a more comprehensive listing, please see the table of Global Action Plan activities on the Global Compact on Refugees' website.

Updates on Goal 1 - Grow Resettlement

Growing resettlement programmes

Despite the constraints imposed by COVID-19, some States have increased their resettlement targets.

- In 2021 **Canada** will increase its resettlement programs targets from an overall 2020 target of 31,700 to 36,000 in 2021, and the same levels will be maintained for 2022 and 2023.
- **Finland** increased its target for 2020 to 850. Implementation is going well despite COVID by utilizing decision-making on a dossier basis and remote interviews. The 2021 objective has been further increased to 1,050, fulfilling their pledge at the Global Refugee Forum.
- **Iceland** is resettling 85 individuals in 2020, and will increase its target again, as pledged at the GRF, to 100 next year. Iceland will also relocate vulnerable refugee families from the Greek islands using slot additional to resettlement.
- As part of the Global Refugee Forum pledging process, the government of **Ireland** announced in December 2019 that it was expanding its resettlement programme, with a new multi-year objective of welcoming 2,900 refugees in 2020-23.
- **Norway** committed to resettling 3,000 refugees in 2019 and 2020, an increase from 2018, and updated resettlement guidelines to reaffirm the importance of protection criteria.

Other actions implemented

Launch of the CRISP

Enabling Action 1

UNHCR/IOM's joint *Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative* (CRISP), funded by the USA and Portugal, serves as an implementation platform in support of the *Strategy*. The CRISP website (www.resettle.org) launched in mid-2020 serves key stakeholders who are involved in expanding relevant programmes, supporting them with information on resettlement and complementary pathways programmes, training materials, useful statistics, and a space for networking. A targeted and tailored training is being developed for States and key stakeholders consisting of three courses. The first is for government officials; the second is for practitioners and civil servants; with the third for key stakeholders including civil society involved in reception and integration. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is assisting on the design and content for the third training on integration. With support from the CRISP, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI Europe) and the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub are carrying out a UNHCR-commissioned research to map global opportunities to grow third country solutions, to generate evidence to guide the work of stakeholders. Findings are expected in February 2021.

New data sharing

Enabling Action 2

A data sharing agreement with the United States was finalized in July 2020 to allow for secure sharing of personal data and biometrics. UNHCR is pursuing agreements with several resettlement States and IOM. The Population Registration and Identity Management Eco-System (PRIMES) Data Transfer Platform (<https://www.unhcr.org/registration.html>) and the piloting of the use of Sharepoint's Secure File Sharing (SFS)

promise to further ensure the protection of personal data of persons of concern to UNHCR, in accordance with the *UNHCR Data Protection Policy*, available [here](#).

Meaningful refugee participation in the ATCR

Enabling Action 3

The Refugee Steering Group (RSG), convened in January 2020, includes representatives from national, regional and global refugee-led networks which contributed to the Global Refugee Forum, as well as those with lived refugee experience who now deliver services to newly resettled refugees or engage in advocacy in local communities. The RSG will have an important advisory role in the planning cycle of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), liaising between the Chair and the refugee community, coordinating refugee participation and statements at the ATCR and the Working Group on Resettlement, creating spaces for refugees to engage in discussions on matters of their own concern and actively supporting the inclusion of refugees in a representative and non-discriminatory manner. The RSG will lead sessions at the ATCR and Working Group on Resettlement, which will strengthen the role of refugee leadership, advocacy and partnership.

Research and policy guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation

Enabling Action 5

As the research lead in the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through a New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project, MPI Europe conducted a series of workshops on monitoring and evaluation in collaboration with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and EU-FRANK and provided practical support in this area to the Netherlands, Ireland and Italy. More information available [here](#).

EASO Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Network

Given the growing importance of resettlement and complementary pathways in the EU's agenda, the Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network was established to respond to the needs expressed by EU+ States for a platform to exchange on operational implementation and EU-specific issues related to resettlement and humanitarian admissions. The Network, which also offers a forum for practical cooperation and peer learning, is led by EASO, with other key stakeholders such as UNHCR and IOM joining as appropriate. The Network's first meeting was held in January 2020 in Malta, with the participation of representatives from 18 EU+ countries as well as from DG HOME, the EU Delegation in Ankara, EU-FRANK and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI Europe).

Updates on Goal 2 – Advance Complementary Pathways

Updated OECD-UNHCR Study on Third Country Solutions for Refugees

In the absence of comprehensive data on past access to third country solutions via family reunification, education or labour pathways, in developing the objectives for the *Strategy* the OECD and UNHCR collaborated on a study covering the years 2010-2017 (available [here](#)). A key planned action was to update these data in 2019 and in 2020.

Similar to the initial report, the 2019 update focused on nationals of five countries (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia and Syria) entering OECD countries with regular visas or permits linked to complementary pathways. The update added data for the year 2018 to the initial study, thereby establishing a baseline against which to measure progress under the *Strategy*. The 2019 *Safe Pathways for Refugees, UNHCR-OECD Study on third-country solutions for refugees: family reunification, study programmes and labour mobility* report can be found [here](#).

The updated report found that over the period 2010-18, at least **680,700** first-time residence permits were granted in OECD countries to nationals of the five reference countries, 89% being family permits. Compared to 2017, permits for work increased by 10% in 2018, those for education remained stable, and permits for family reunification decreased by 24% resulting in an overall decrease year-on-year. However, overall permits in 2018, at **106,400**, represented a significantly higher level than the average for 2010-17 (71,800). Due to data limitations, these findings are to be considered as indicative.

A full update, incorporating data for 2019, will be finalized at the end of 2020. A review of the methodology is underway to inform this next report, which will cover the decade 2010-19. The report will feature additional destination countries, including some non-OECD States.

Other actions implemented

European Union political and financial support for Humanitarian Admission, Family Reunification and other Complementary Pathways

Enabling Action 5

The European Commission is promoting complementary pathways to the EU in addition to resettlement. The political frame of this policy development is provided by the Commission Recommendation of 23 September 2020 on legal pathways to protection in the EU: promoting resettlement, humanitarian admission and other complementary pathways.

In October 2020, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Call for Proposals on Transnational Actions on Asylum, Migration and Integration was issued. One of the topics of the call, *Promoting complementary pathways for people in need of protection and their further integration*, supports pathways additional to State sponsored resettlement, in favor of persons in need of international protection. The objective of the call is to fund the design and implementation of complementary pathway programmes which would facilitate enrolment in European universities; access to employment-based residence permits for those with needed skills in the EU labour market or enable family members of beneficiaries of international protection to join them safely and legally. Projects eligible for funding will be selected in 2021.

Humanitarian admissions and visas

With the modest number of resettlement places and other safe and legal pathways available globally, refugees in need of protection are often driven to embarking on perilous journeys and resorting to using the services of smugglers and criminal groups. Increased use of humanitarian admission and humanitarian visas has shown the potential to offer a safe pathway for persons in need of international protection, complementing States' resettlement programmes in the provision of protection and solutions.³

Humanitarian Corridors arrivals as of 30 September 2020

Andorra	8
Belgium	150
France	420
Italy	2649

Other actions implemented

2019 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award to Humanitarian Corridors programme

In 2019, the Humanitarian Corridors programme won the UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Award for Europe for sponsoring the relocation of over 2,000 persons in need of international protection to Italy in less than four years. The Italian Humanitarian Corridors programme is based on an agreement between a consortium of religious organizations (Sant'Egidio Community; Caritas Italiana; the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and the Waldensian Table) together with the foreign and interior ministries. The Italian programme, currently engaged in Ethiopia, Jordan, Lebanon and Niger, has been expanded to several other European countries, including Andorra, Belgium and France.

Family Reunification

Norway reduces fees for family reunification

As pledged at the Global Refugee Forum, from 1 April 2020, Norway reduced its relatively high fees for applications for family immigration, including for family reunification with recognized refugees with a temporary residence permit, from 10,500 NOK to 7,800.

Other actions implemented

States-led Network on Family Reunification

Enabling Action 1

UNHCR with a number of partners is working to launch the States-led Network on Family Reunification that will work as a forum for experience exchange, collaboration and advocacy to promote family unity of refugees globally. The inaugural meeting of the Network is planned for 17 December 2020.

³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Complementary Pathways for Admission of Refugees to Third Countries: Key Considerations*, April 2019, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5cebf3fc4.html>

Family reunification across the Mediterranean

Enabling Action 5

A model of partnership in action, the Family Reunification Project was conducted by UNHCR, the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), RefugePoint, DLA Piper and Miles4Migrants. In the first nine months of 2020, 243 individual children in Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and the Sudan underwent best interest procedures facilitated by the RefugePoint experts for the purpose of family reunification. Additionally, 396 individuals benefitted from significant punctual interventions including facilitation for travel documents, key documentation, logistics, rapid profiling and counselling. The average age of persons referred to IRAP was 14 years old, most often of Eritrean nationality. Most cases referred for legal representation were for reunification with family members in Germany, France and Sweden. In 2020 thus far, IRAP has facilitated departures for 17 individuals.

Third Country Employment Pathways

Concrete actions to make safe labour pathways for refugees real

In February 2020 **Australia** announced that it would roll out a pilot program over the next 2 years to offer employment for up to 100 skilled refugees, including in regional areas.

In June 2020 **Canada** announced that it would dramatically expand its Economic Mobility Pathways Project, which was launched in 2018, to bring 500 refugees to Canada in partnership with employers, communities, provinces and territories, and non-government organizations over two years. Canada has also committed to help lead the development of a global Task Force on employment pathways. An official launch of the Task Force is anticipated later in 2021.

The **UK** government committed to engaging with NGOs over the next 12 months on identifying ways to improve access to labour market mobility for displaced persons.

In developing these initiatives, states worked closely with innovative partners Talent Beyond Boundaries and RefugePoint and with UNHCR.

Other actions implemented

New Project Will Bring Refugees on Labour Pathways to Safe Home

Enabling Action 1

RefugePoint's newly confirmed project, funded by the Shapiro Foundation and as part of the Canada commitments on labour mobility pathways, will cover 125 refugees as immigration visa principal applicants for employment opportunities, primarily in Pictou County in Canada. RefugePoint's programme will be developed using a strong labour market demand-based perspective, whereby recruitment will be done in a batch-system, based on pre-identified job profiles, with a view to creating an efficient pipeline that can be utilized over time. The 125 refugees, mostly living in Kenya, will be able to travel to Canada together with their family members.

Third Country Education Pathways

Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways Established

Enabling Action 1

As a first step toward the establishment of the Task Force, in November 2019 UNESCO, UNHCR and the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) organized an international conference in Paris, *Education Opportunities as Complementary Pathways for Admission*, to explore country- and region-specific needs and barriers for refugees to access education pathways, and to identify emerging good practices. The Task Force itself was launched on 28 May 2020 at the *Briefing on Education Opportunities as a Complementary Pathway for Admission to Third Countries* hosted by the Permanent Mission of Portugal in Geneva and announced a month later at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.

Co-chaired by WUSC and Open Societies University Network (OSUN), with UNHCR serving as technical advisor, the Task Force is currently composed of 12 members:

- Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)
- European Commission - DG Home
- Government of Canada
- Government of Portugal
- Institute of International Education (IIE)
- Japan ICU Foundation
- Open Society Foundations (OSF)
- Open Society University Network (OSUN)
- UNHCR
- Unione delle Università del Mediterraneo (UNIMED)
- World Education Services (WES)
- World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

The governance structure, currently under development, will ensure meaningful participation of refugee representatives who are interested, engaged in promoting or have had direct experience of third country education pathways.

For its initial two-year term, the Task Force will promote and support the expansion of education (particularly, tertiary education) as a complementary pathway for admission of refugees to third countries, to help meet both the *15by30* target to increase tertiary education for refugees to 15% by 2030, as set forth in the *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion*, and the goals of *The Three-Year Strategy*.

Background information:

UNHCR, UNESCO, World University Services of Canada, *Doubling our Impact, Third Country Higher Education Pathways for Refugees*, February 2020 (available [here](#))

UNHCR, *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion* (available [here](#))

Other actions implemented

Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Higher Education Pathways

Enabling Action 1

Originally envisaged - and pledged at the Global Refugee Forum - as an in-person regional conference focused on higher education pathways in the Asia-Pacific region, the event was carried out by JICUF and UNHCR as a series of virtual sessions. The objective of the initiative was to share information about existing scholarship programs, and to build a consortium of Asia-Pacific universities, funding agencies and civil society groups that will work together to develop a major scholarship program. As one of the outcomes of the series a group of interested parties willing to work on expansion of education complementary pathways in Asia has been formed.

University Corridors for Refugees in Italy implemented!

Enabling Action 1

In September 2020, twenty refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, South Sudan and Sudan arrived in Italy as part of the University Corridors for Refugees Project. After the required quarantine period, the students began the integration process at the eleven participating universities. The project is run by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, UNHCR, Caritas Italiana and Diaconia Valdese, with support from the University of Bologna where the first pilot was carried out in 2019, as well as a network of partners in Ethiopia (Ghandi Charity) and in Italy who will support the refugee students throughout their education experience.

Scholarship Opportunities for Refugees platform

Enabling Action 4

The UNHCR [Scholarship Opportunities for Refugees](#) platform is an important infrastructure for the *Strategy* and is in service of the foundational principle of refugee self-agency. Launched in September 2020, it is a first-of-its kind platform providing UNHCR-verified information on higher education programs available to refugees worldwide. The site intends to provide a global database of reliable, up-to-date information on refugee-eligible scholarships both in countries of first asylum and third countries. The site will be expanded in the future to include information on labour pathways and is complemented by the revision of help.unhcr.org, hosting, amongst other things, family reunification information for refugees.

WUSC champions education pathways through capacity building

Enabling Action 5

Building on forty years of experience with the Student Refugee Program, which provides permanent residence for refugee students via Canada's Private Sponsorship program, the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) has been supporting solutions and growing durable solutions for refugee students globally. In 2019, WUSC finalized support for Proyecto Habesha in Mexico as part of a project funded by the government of Canada. WUSC shared technical expertise and resources to support Proyecto Habesha to build capacity, increase sustainability, and identify and strengthen those elements critical to scaling up this education pathway.

Expanding the PEER Program

Enabling Action 5

The Institute of International Education (IIE) Platform for Education in Emergencies Response (PEER) program is based in Thailand, working with refugee youth from Myanmar living at the border. Although not a third-country education pathway in and of itself, it focuses on the preparatory stage that is an essential component of third country education pathways: readying refugee youth for university through assistance with documentation, administration and obtaining tuition waivers. IIE has now begun work to expand this program to Mexico, working with Habesha to help students, primarily from Venezuela, prepare for and apply to universities.

Updates on Goal 3 – Building the Foundation

New community sponsorship programmes implemented

Community sponsorship programs seek to increase the overall quantity and quality of integration capacity, provide a warm and welcoming support environment, and deepen community engagement. They can support resettlement programs via UNHCR referrals, serve as complementary pathways in and of themselves, or serve as a tool to support refugees admitted through other pathways. A strength of these programmes has been the cooperation between civil society, UNHCR and government in the design and implementation phase.

- At the Global Refugee Forum, **Spain** pledged to expand its community sponsorship programme in the Basque country and to examine implementing it in other regions. A new programme was developed in Valencia; in spite of COVID, the first 5 refugee families arrived under that new programme in October 2020.
- As part of its Global Refugee Forum pledge on Resettlement, **Belgium** committed to considering a community sponsorship programme; a decision was taken to proceed and in October 2020, their new programme had already received its first new refugee arrivals.
- In 2019 **Germany** started a pilot project called "Newstart in team - NesT", inspired by the private sponsorship programmes in Germany (in place since 2013) and elsewhere, and the humanitarian corridors programme in Italy, with AMIF funding and support from the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI), Canada and the UK.
- In December 2019, the government of **Ireland**, as part of an announcement expanding the size of its overall Resettlement efforts, converted its community sponsorship pilot to a permanent programme.

Additionally, in **Portugal** the High Commission for Migration is working on its pilot project and will liaise with the Portuguese Council for Refugees in order to join forces for implementation in 2021. In **New Zealand** decided to renew their community sponsorship pilot and increase from 25 places in 2018 to up to 150 places across 2021-2023.

Other actions implemented

GRSI support to community sponsorship programmes around the world

Enabling Action 3

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) partnership, formed by Open Society Foundations; Ottawa Refugee Hub; UNHCR; the government of Canada; the Giustra Foundation; and the Shapiro Foundation, promotes community sponsorship programs globally. Many activities were undertaken in 2020, particularly to support the sponsorship community during the COVID-19 pandemic (convening a number of virtual community calls and workshops to share strategies and tools to welcome refugees in lockdown contexts); to maintain momentum through advocacy for new programmes and strategies to help new programmes grow and be sustainable (including a High-Level Panel at Minister / EC Commissioner / UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner level); to grow the sponsor base (Germany, Argentina, UK) support policy design and re-design (Portugal, UK); and to provide training for new programmes (Valencia, Spain, and Belgium).

Increasing engagement of municipalities

Enabling Action 1

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe-led SHARE Network provides a platform for exchange and learning amongst local and regional actors on resettlement and complementary pathways, promoting partnerships for solidarity and inclusive welcoming and integration. In 2019 the programme focused on building the capacity of smaller municipalities and rural areas to welcome and support the integration of refugees, and promoting their increasingly crucial contribution to EU efforts in this context (more information [here](#)).

In June 2020, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) jointly organized a webinar with Eurocities on how cities can become more involved in community sponsorship programmes. Participants had an opportunity to hear experiences and challenges from the ground—both from city authorities and sponsors themselves. Similarly, in November 2020, GRSI coordinated presentations and a workshop at a meeting of the Intercultural Cities network of the Council of Europe to promote sponsorship. The network heard both from advocates at UNHCR and the government of Canada as well as passionate new sponsoring groups in the UK and Valencia, Spain.

New integration programme in Iceland

Enabling Action 1

Iceland is establishing a new integration programme which will be accessible by recognized refugees. The programme lasts for three years. It is based on three pillars: municipalities; the directorate for labour (for integration and language training) and the multicultural centre (for information and capacity building).

Participatory and co-creation approaches for refugee integration

Enabling Action 2

Refugees are experts of their own experience, with a central role to play in formulating integration policies and programmes that effectively meet their needs and aspirations. While participatory and co-creation approaches are increasingly implemented with citizens in sectors such as social services, healthcare and urban development, they are less common in relation to refugees and integration. In 2020, the SHARE Network led by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe began a new programme of work to develop, pilot, evaluate and promote participatory and co-creation approaches for refugee integration (more information [here](#)).

Streamline processes for trusted sponsors piloted in the UK

Enabling Action 3

Following a process review and a number of “design sprints” facilitated by the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) partners in September 2020 a six-month pilot was launched for a two-stage ‘Principal Sponsor Application Process.’ This new process recognizes the credibility, strengths and experience that trusted sponsors have demonstrated, enabling UK authorities to refer anonymized details about the coming refugee family at an earlier stage in the sponsorship application process.

Integration technical assistance

Enabling Action 1

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) led European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance (EURITA) project seeks to improve the integration of refugees resettled in EU States. The project focuses on strengthening the capacity of integration practitioners to deliver post-arrival Cultural Orientation, and to engage their communities through; in person and online trainings, the development and sharing of resource materials via EURITA.org and collaboration on promising practices through a community of practice. The project has engaged a diverse group of 527 practitioners in 26 European countries since 2019 and included a delegation from ten countries visiting US resettlement programmes in November 2019.

Research and policy guidance for Pre-Departure Orientation

Enabling Action 2

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI Europe) research on effective pre-departure orientation for the Swedish resettlement context, which included focus group discussions with resettled refugees, formed the basis of tailored recommendations shared in April 2020 with the Swedish Migration Agency for future programme improvements.

Meta-research study on the impact of resettlement in receiving societies

Enabling Action 4

To enhance the evidence base for resettlement, UNHCR contracted the IRC to review the available evidence on the impact of government-led resettlement programs across six receiving countries in three regions (Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, United States). The study covers the observable outcomes, both positive and negative, intended and unintended, and in relation to costs and benefits. The final report, providing evidence for advocacy efforts and policy design for the growth of resettlement, will be available by the end of 2020.

Next steps

At the time of writing the Strategy, the importance of both to greater quantity and higher quality of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes was much discussed. Despite the challenges of 2020, many meaningful initiatives have taken place that focused on quality. While Covid-19 will still be affecting durable solutions in the course of 2021, the innovative processes and tools that were introduced in the past months to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic should be maintained wherever they add ongoing value.

Challenges that we will continue to address are related to reception and integration, particularly housing and employment upon arrival to the third country, but we have observed that there is greater and greater interest in community-based reception and integration models. In different regions, countries and municipalities there are signs of enthusiasm and willingness of citizens to be engaged and contribute to the global protection space and to serve as bottom-up pressure on government to maintain and grow safe pathways.

More than ever, a positive evidence-based narrative on refugees and third country solutions needs to be refined, broadcast, repeated.

This mid-strategy report comes at a pivotal time. The global epidemic has set back outcomes—more safe homes in third countries for refugees—by many months. But that time has been used, making a virtue of necessity, to build global advocacy and expertise communities that did not exist before, and to inject the goals of the Strategy onto the agendas of scores of organizations, institutions, and processes for the first time, many of them new to us, and we to them. The pivot is toward opportunity. The pivot is toward action partnerships not simply consultation, in search of the recipe that turns good will into new programmes that open pathways to safer futures.

The pivot is between the lowest year of resettlement and related safe pathways in over 40 years, to an uncertain but steadily brightening 2021, to the growing likelihood that 2022 can be the largest single year for resettlement and safe homes in third countries in the history of UNHCR and its partners—and, this time, with stronger prospects that such numbers can be sustainable. We have momentum.