CRISP
SUSTAINABLE RESETTLEMENT & COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

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NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 1, NOVEMBER

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Syrian refugees watch the sun go down at Azraq refugee camp in Jordan. ©UNHCR/Ivor Prickett

UNHCR and IOM partner to expand third-country solutions

Refugee situations continue to increase in scope, scale, and complexity. The UNHCR Global Trends 2019 shows that displacement now affects more than one per cent of the global population, almost 80 million people. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) promotes responsibility sharing with host countries by focusing on solutions, both to expand opportunities to access third countries and strengthen the resilience of refugees and their host communities, particularly through greater development cooperation, and fostering the necessary conditions for refugees to return to their home countries in safety and dignity.

The need to expand refugees' access to third country solutions was formalized in the multi-stakeholder Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways. The Strategy is a key vehicle to increase the number of resettlement spaces, expand the number of resettlement countries, improve the availability and predictability of complementary pathways and promote welcoming and inclusive societies.

In January 2020, the support of the Governments of Portugal and the

Over 1.4 million refugees who are currently residing in 62 host countries will be in need of resettlement in 2021

United States of America, UNHCR and IOM launched the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP). The CRISP is a crucial tool for the implementation of the Strategy. It aims to provide a tangible way for States to support the expansion of third-country solutions and to help realize the contributions and pledges made towards the GCR's objective in this regard. The CRISP will achieve this through supporting States and key stakeholders to grow resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways through the provision of targeted capacity building in partnership with relevant actors, to achieve quality, scalable and sustainable programmes.

The CRISP builds on lessons from past experiences and initiatives, such as the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM) 2016-2019.

Despite the pandemic, community sponsors remain committed

At the beginning of 2020, community sponsors in seven different provinces in Argentina had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of 10 Syrian families from Lebanon. One family of four was fortunate to be able to travel from Beirut in March. However, shortly after, the travel restrictions and border closures implemented to curb the COVID-19 pandemic prompted a temporary halt to resettlement departures.

The restrictions around international air travel and border closures have meant that the remaining families are likely to spend another harsh winter in Lebanon. The sponsors are being supported by the Argentinean Network for Community Sponsorship of Refugees, which is comprised of nine faith-based and civil society organizations which encompass over 59 hosting communities and more than 250 sponsor groups.

Throughout the pandemic, UNHCR and IOM have continued to support online training sessions and group discussions with sponsors, organized by the Sponsorship Network. The sponsors have also participated in workshops and summits organized by the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) to support the development of tools and strategies on sponsor mobilisation, sponsorship engagement and training, in the context of COVID-19.

The global pandemic has put unforeseen pressure on sponsors and all other social structures needed to receive, welcome, and integrate resettled refugees. It has also placed an additional financial burden on sponsors. Despite these challenges community sponsors in Argentina continue to remain committed and motivated.

Training sessions before the pandemic. ©UNHCR/Sponsors Network, Augusto Policastro

Virtual meeting of community sponsors in Córdoba. ©UNHCR/Sponsor Group

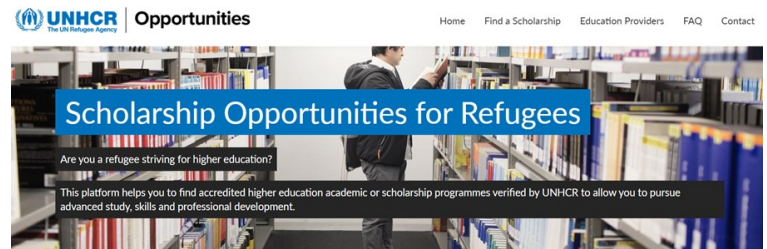## Amid the pandemic, a Syrian family rebuilds life in Argentina

In March, days before the COVID-19 pandemic caused the suspension of international flights and border closures in many countries, a Syrian refugee family was resettled from Lebanon to Argentina. This was the first resettlement arrival supported by the CRISP. The family of four was received by a group of 11 sponsors who are supported by *Manos Abiertas,* a faith-based foundation that is a member of the Sponsorship Network. A system of committees was set up to lead different aspects of the family's integration, from language learning, employment support, personal finance budgeting and access to services including healthcare.

Four days after their arrival, the government ordered a general lockdown due to COVID-19. For the first months, the family had to maintain social distancing and were unable to partake in social activities or walk in their new city. Despite these constraints, the sponsors found creative digital solutions to maintain contact with the family, make them feel welcome and ensure all their basic needs were covered. The family started remote Spanish classes offered by the British Council, the children were able to join a virtual classroom at the local school, and groceries were delivered to the family's doorstep.

A few months after their arrival and with the gradual easing of quarantine restrictions, the family was finally able to start exploring their new town. The father secured work in the construction sector whilst the mother set up a small-scale culinary business. The family have also benefited from the support of neighbours. While some quarantine restrictions are still in place the family remain excited about starting their new life in Argentina.

Addressing barriers to complementary pathways: the opportunities platform

Systems to facilitate refugee access to complementary pathways are less developed than those that support resettlement. Refugees face a multitude of legal, administrative and practical obstacles in accessing complementary pathways, including finding information on real opportunities. Supported by the CRISP, UNHCR has developed an online platform to assist refugees to search for higher education scholarships. During the initial phase, the platform will contain UNHCR-verified third-country education opportunities as well as opportunities to study in the country of asylum. The second

phase will launch next year and will feature third-country labour mobility opportunities for skilled refugees. The site was launched in October 2020 and is available at: https://services.unhcr.org/opportunities/

Global mapping of opportunities

Supported by the CRISP, UNHCR has commissioned research to map global opportunities to grow resettlement and advance complementary pathways. This project will generate evidence that helps to both guide and enhance the work of relevant stakeholders to expand access to third-country solutions for refugees. The research is being carried out by the Migration Policy Institute Europe and its partner, the University of Ottawa, Refugee Hub. The findings are expected to be presented in early 2021.

Resettlement statistics

For detailed statistical information on cases resettled under the ERCM and CRISP, see: https://resettle.org/data

For more comprehensive statistics, see the UNHCR resettlement data portal which provides detailed resettlement statistics from 2003 onwards, available at:

https://rsq.unhcr.org/

Launch of the CRISP website

The CRISP website was launched at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) in May 2020. The website is a resource platform for capacity building and partnerships. It also provides statistical data of refugees who have been resettled with the support of the ERCM and CRISP. The CRISP website is available at: https://resettle.org/

Global Refugee Forum: Third-country solutions pledges

In 2019, two key milestones were reached towards increasing third-country solutions for refugees, namely the launch of the Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways and the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), which generated some 78 pledges made by governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in support of resettlement and complementary pathways. These significant advances demonstrated a firm commitment to protecting refugees, particularly those at risk, by reaffirming resettlement as a critical protection tool and opening up other legal avenues for refugees to access education and employment opportunities in a third country. Resettlement and complementary pathways are tangible mechanisms for more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing.

Spotlight session at the GRF, Switzerland. © UNHCR/Markel Rendondo

For updates on the GCR/GRF see:

https://www.globalcompactrefugees.org/

State pledges made towards the CRISP at the GRF	
Argentina	Commitment to expand the community sponsorship programme to refugees of other nationalities; to expand the possibilities for family reunification; and to create complementary pathways for education.
Belgium	Provision of technical support for the establishment or expansion of resettlement programmes in other countries, including through existing or future capacity-building.
Brazil	Commitment to establish a community sponsorship programme for resettled refugees and to maintain and expand the current humanitarian visa policy.
Netherlands	Share knowledge and expertise on Pre-departure Orientation (PDO).
New Zealand	Provision of support to new and emerging resettlement countries in the Asia-Pacific region to develop and/or expand resettlement programmes.
Norway	Provision of technical support to the CRISP through experts.
Portugal	Financial contribution to the CRISP.
Sweden	Provision of technical support to the CRISP through experts.
Switzerland	Provision of technical support to new and emerging resettlement countries.
Uruguay	Commitment to expand the resettlement programme and to explore new complementary pathways for admission.