



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS **OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH**

By Susan Fratzke, Maria Belen Zanzuchi, Kate Hooper, Hanne Beirens,
Lena Kainz, Nathan Benson, Eliza Bateman, and Jessica Bolter

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CONTACT US

Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service

Division of International Protection, UNHCR

Email: hqdiprcps@unhcr.org

Migration Policy Institute Europe

Tel.: +32 (0) 2235 2113

Email: communications@migrationpolicy.org

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:

An Ethiopian resettled refugee mother and her son in the United States, where she works as a caseworker with other refugees. © UNHCR/Evelyn Hockstein

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List of Abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund
CRISP	Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil-society organisation
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DAFI	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EMPP	Economic Mobility Pathways Project
ERCM	Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism
EU	European Union
EU-FRANK	European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge
EURITA	European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance
FY	Fiscal year
G7	Group of Seven
HIRES	Hospitality Industry welcomes Refugee Employment
HOPES	Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians
IIE	Institute of International Education
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MIRPS	Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework
MPI Europe	Migration Policy Institute Europe
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
proGres	Profile Global Registration System
SPRING	Sustainable Practices of Integration
TBB	Talent Beyond Boundaries
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	The UN Refugee Agency
UNICORE	University Corridors for Refugees
WES	World Education Service
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

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*A Syrian refugee family that came to Germany via the country's Humanitarian Assistance Programme.
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Executive Summary

By the end of 2020, 20.7 million refugees had been displaced from their countries of origin and sought protection under the mandate of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. While some may eventually be able to return to their countries of origin or integrate locally into the society of their host country, for the most at risk, resettlement remains a critical tool for addressing their displacement by providing secure legal status and access to fundamental rights in a third country. Resettlement aims to assist, on a priority basis, those who are at risk in their country of refuge or who have particular needs or vulnerabilities that cannot be appropriately addressed there. This includes persons who are in danger of being forcibly returned to their countries or who are being seriously threatened by others. It may also include persons who have specific health needs that cannot be adequately treated in the country of refuge.

The number of resettlement places made available by third countries, however, has remained far below the level needed. UNHCR determined that 1.44 million refugees were in need of resettlement in 2020, but only 22,800 were able to depart to a third country following UNHCR referrals. These are the lowest refugee resettlement numbers the

agency has witnessed in almost two decades. The drop stems from low quotas put forward by states as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed departures and programmes. And while the number of refugees resettled in 2019, the last full year before the pandemic took hold, was higher, it was still far from sufficient to meet the needs identified by UNHCR.

The Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, launched following the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018, aims to achieve more resettlement opportunities for refugees who are at heightened risk, as well as better access for refugees to complementary pathways, for example third-country education and third-country employment opportunities. To support the goals of the Three-Year Strategy, the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP), led by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provides support to states and key stakeholders to establish, expand, or renew resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways of admission.

UNHCR commissioned the Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI Europe), together with the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, to conduct a global mapping exercise to equip the CRISP, UNHCR, and other stakeholders with knowledge of the potential areas where resettlement and complementary pathways could be scaled up and the barriers that will have to be overcome to do so. This report sets out the findings of the global mapping exercise, which focused on third-country resettlement and employment- and education-based complementary pathways. The analysis draws on more than 120 interviews conducted by MPI Europe and Refugee Hub researchers with the staff of UNHCR offices, government officials, members of civil society, representatives of higher education institutions, and employers across four regions: Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, and South America.

A. Strengthening and Diversifying Refugee Resettlement

While the number of resettlement countries globally has grown in recent years, many new programmes have remained relatively small in scale. Achieving the ambitious goals of the Three-Year Strategy will require both growing the number of countries engaged in resettlement as well as encouraging existing resettlement countries to build out their programmes to operate at a larger scale.

The mapping of the state of resettlement around the world identified several opportunities to support both of these objectives. First, cities and regions have been at the forefront of

advancing resettlement in many countries. In Germany, for example, regional governments have pushed to expand the national resettlement quota to reflect regional interest in welcoming more refugees. Empowering local communities to advocate for and directly contribute to resettlement efforts could catalyse growth in many geographies. Second, efforts to grow public support for and political commitment to growing resettlement have benefited from widening the network of stakeholders engaged in directly supporting and implementing resettlement beyond the traditional actors to include employers, civic associations, local government, faith-based groups, and others. Public-private partnership or community sponsorship models that give a wider network of stakeholders a sense of ownership in and exposure to resettlement can encourage a broader array of voices to support refugee admissions. Finally, growing resettlement programmes requires not just building public and political support, but also ensuring that programmes have the operational capacity to make—and follow through on—ambitious commitments. Well-targeted peer support between actors engaged in resettlement operations will remain crucial for establishing new programmes. Existing resettlement countries also benefit from opportunities to learn about one another's operations and exchange ideas and lessons learnt. As resettlement efforts grow, there may also be an argument for expanding operational coordination between resettlement states, for example coordinating more closely on planning selection missions to avoid overburdening local support structures in host countries or identifying ways to share certain resources, such as support staff or facilities.

To take these findings forward, UNHCR, states, and civil-society partners could consider the following actions:

- **Deepen understanding of public opinion on resettlement in specific target geographies and develop tailored, evidence-based strategies on how to shape it.** While local constituencies are one key to driving resettlement forward, a very granular understanding of people's views of resettlement and how they interact with or are activated by specific messages and policy approaches is missing in many countries or remains very basic. In areas where UNHCR or other relevant actors are working to grow resettlement programmes, it may be useful to invest in highly targeted research that explores what narratives and policy approaches are most effective in broadening public support for resettlement. These findings should then be applied to outreach efforts and used to inform programme design (for example, which stakeholders to involve) in these geographies.

- **Build flexibility into resettlement programmes through multiannual quotas and budgets, and adaptable operational models.** The COVID-19 pandemic has created impetus for programme and operational models that enable resettlement states to adapt to changing circumstances without losing sight of longer-term objectives. Programme-planning tools such as multiannual quotas and budgets have proven valuable for allowing flexibility for states to effectively plan and organise activities, while maintaining the ability to adjust how and when they implement their commitments according to changing circumstances. Flexible operational models are also critical, as the pandemic has proven. This can include the capability to employ video conferencing technology to interview refugees in hard-to-reach locations, or foregoing interviews and selecting refugees based on the referral (dossier) submitted by UNHCR. UNHCR should continue to promote and support states in adopting multiannual planning and flexible operational modalities where possible and appropriate.
- **Continue to invest in targeted peer support for new resettlement countries alongside opportunities for continuous learning among states.** Peer learning should continue to form a central component of the CRISP's work in support of new resettlement countries. To be effective, the objectives of peer support and training should be clearly defined and carefully matched to the needs of the target countries. In particular, peer matches should be made based on what a country wishes to learn and which models of practice would be most appropriate. Taking a regional approach to peer learning, where countries are matched with others in their region with similar governance or social welfare models may prove useful. Peer learning opportunities should also be extended to established resettlement countries to provide opportunities for them to update their practices and share emerging knowledge.
- **Create venues for states to exchange practical information on resettlement operations and identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration.** In host countries from which many states resettle refugees, there may be merit in establishing venues for states to better coordinate their selection missions and predeparture orientation operations. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network, for example, is creating a portal where EU Member States can post details of planned selection missions to avoid overbooking support facilities. And in Istanbul, EASO has piloted a joint facility that provides space and support resources for EU Member States to conduct interviews or predeparture training. Experiments such as EASO's coordination portal or joint resettlement facility may provide useful examples and lessons learnt that could inform

efforts to extend cooperation beyond the European Union. At a global level, the Priority Situations Core Group also provides a place for states to share selection mission and departure plans.

B. Developing Complementary Pathways

Creating opportunities for refugees to move to third countries for education and employment has also generated substantial interest in each of the regions examined in this study. Several pilot employment or education pathways have already been launched in each region. However, these have been small in scale and relatively resource intensive to operate. Most programmes currently use existing study or work visas for admission into the country, and while these have generally proven to be a useable tool, such visas often have documentation requirements, high fees, or other characteristics that can make them difficult for refugees to access, limiting the pool of individuals who can benefit from these pathways. Moreover, complementary pathways programmes often require an intensive casework model to match students and workers with universities and employers and to assist refugees with the visa process, which again limits scale.

For existing third-country education and employment pathways, a key priority is to identify ways to increase the scalability of programme models, particularly by decreasing the level of staff time and resources needed to operate the programme and by enabling refugees to more autonomously access opportunities. The creation of new programmes seems most feasible in countries where legal frameworks are already broadly amenable (e.g., student visa frameworks in many European countries) and where a government is open to exploring minor regulatory or operational changes (if not legislative changes) to mitigate remaining barriers.

To take these findings forward, UNHCR, states, and their civil-society, university, and employer partners could consider the following actions:

- **Identify and apply context-specific solutions to legal and regulatory barriers to enable refugees to access third-country employment and education opportunities.** Identifying existing flexibilities in the current visa framework to help refugees overcome barriers is a crucial first step when trying to expand third-country education and employment opportunities. Scaling opportunities for complementary pathways will require governments to find ways to apply these flexibilities for refugee applicants in a systematic way (e.g., enabling anyone recognised by UNHCR as a refugee to qualify for a fee waiver instead of applying such waivers on a case-by-case basis).

UNHCR, civil society, and university and business stakeholders should continue to advocate with governments for these changes. In the long term, it may also be worth exploring whether bespoke work or employment visas could be created for refugees that take into account their specific needs. Alternatively, private sponsorship could provide a flexible basis to facilitate admission for refugees accessing complementary pathways.

- **Continue to invest in raising awareness of complementary pathways with relevant stakeholders outside of the humanitarian and resettlement space.** While creating supportive and accessible legal conditions is critical, employment and education opportunities fundamentally require the involvement of higher education institutions and businesses to offer study places and jobs. Yet awareness and engagement of these communities in complementary pathways has been low in some countries, including in some that have relatively amenable visa policies. In some countries, employers and educational institutions have expressed doubts that refugees have the skills to study or work. Sharing success stories from refugees who have successfully participated in a pilot programme could help to counter this perception and build interest.
- **Build the capacity to map refugees' skills and experience in host countries, and support training to fill gaps.** Mapping and matching refugees' qualifications for individual third-country opportunities can be time and resource intensive, and redundant if it must be done every time an individual applies to a new programme. It may be worth identifying whether economies of scale can be found in these procedures by creating a common database of profiles of refugees interested in pursuing education or employment in third countries. It may also be useful to explore whether databases maintained by host countries (such as registration databases, school enrolment databases), UN partners (such as UNHCR's proGres database), or nonprofit agencies supporting livelihoods or educational programming in host countries could be used to identify refugees who might be qualified for complementary pathway opportunities. Efforts to map refugees' previous experience and education could also be paired with training programmes in host countries to help refugees fill language or skills gaps.
- **Create venues for coordination and peer learning among implementing actors within each country.** Platforms for coordinating the work of civil society, higher education or business partners, private donors, government, and UN agencies working to implement education and employment programmes in specific national

contexts can provide a valuable tool to streamline work, share learning, and coordinate advocacy and outreach.

- **Pilot, evaluate, and share sustainable funding models.** There is a critical need to identify sustainable funding models that can help third-country education and employment pathways achieve scale. UNHCR and its partners can also build on their work to pilot and test creative funding solutions to help refugees cover the costs of their applications, travel, and initial (or ongoing, in the case of education pathways) living costs.

The imperative to expand access to third-country solutions for refugees, including through resettlement and complementary pathways, is a cornerstone of the Global Compact on Refugees. UNHCR, states, civil society, higher education, the private sector, and other relevant actors have an opportunity under the Three-Year Strategy to support the continued growth of resettlement and complementary pathways for years to come. Partnerships with actors outside the humanitarian sphere will need to be at the centre of efforts to advance and scale resettlement and complementary pathway programmes. New and active partners among local governments, the private sector, higher education, and private philanthropy have critical roles to play in advocating for the development of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes, and in supporting their implementation and the development of welcoming societies, particularly at the local level. Ensuring that resettlement and complementary pathways truly become whole-of-society endeavours will thus be the central challenge going forward.



A Syrian student studying at a French university on a refugee scholarship scheme.
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1 Introduction

The global refugee protection regime has come under increasing pressure in recent years as the gap continues to widen between the number of people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes and the solutions available to address their displacement. The number of refugees under the mandate of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has also increased, reaching 20.7 million in 2020.¹

Global forced displacement remains at unprecedented levels. With opportunities for voluntary repatriation and local integration of refugees in the current global landscape increasingly limited, resettlement is becoming an even more important tool for protection and for finding solutions for refugees who are most at risk. Resettlement is a key instrument for ensuring the protection of refugees and for seeking durable solutions to their plight. The overriding consideration is to assist, on a priority basis, those who are at risk in their country of refuge or who have particular needs or vulnerabilities that cannot be appropriately addressed there. This includes persons who are in danger of being forcibly

¹ Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mid-Year Trends 2020* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2020).

returned to their countries, or who are being seriously threatened by others. It may also include persons who have specific health needs that cannot be adequately treated in the country of refuge.

Yet the number of resettlement places available has not kept pace, with both submissions and departures consistently far below the global needs for resettlement. While 1.44 million refugees were found to be in need of resettlement in 2020, and UNHCR submitted 39,534 refugees to resettlement countries for consideration, only 22,800 were resettled to a third country that year.² Though these figures reflect in part the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic—which led to the temporary suspension of resettlement departures around the world—the number of refugees resettled via UNHCR-referred channels in 2019 (63,726) similarly paled in comparison with needs.³

The global scarcity in resettlement places has, however, been paralleled by innovation. States have shown creativity in the design of resettlement programmes and in facilitating access to complementary pathways to aid people in need of protection, including through education and employment pathways. In 2016, the New York Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly, envisioned the development of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), including the commitment to develop and adopt a global compact for refugees. In the course of the two years that followed the adoption of the New York Declaration, extensive consultations were led by UNHCR with Member States, international organisations, refugees, civil society, the private sector, and experts, drawing lessons from the application of the CRRF. This process culminated in the Global Compact on Refugees, which was affirmed by the UN General Assembly in 2018. Charged by the compact, the Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (hereinafter referred to as the Three-Year Strategy)⁴ was developed by UNHCR in collaboration with more than 90 state and civil-society stakeholders who have a role in developing and delivering resettlement and complementary pathways. Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where their international protection needs are met. They are additional to resettlement.

The Three-Year Strategy offered an opportunity to capitalise on the energy and innovation that emerged in this period, to solidify the gains made in both existing and new

2 UNHCR, '[Resettlement at a Glance \(January – December 2020\)](#)' (fact sheet, 1 March 2021).

3 UNHCR, '[Resettlement at a Glance \(January – December 2019\)](#)' (fact sheet, 14 March 2020).

4 UNHCR, *The Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019).

resettlement countries, and to identify and expand new opportunities to provide protection to those in need. To support these goals, the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP),⁵ led by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), aims to support states and key stakeholders to establish, expand, or renew resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways of admission.

With the support of the CRISP, UNHCR commissioned the Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI Europe), together with the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, to conduct a global mapping exercise to equip the CRISP, UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders with knowledge of the potential areas where resettlement and complementary pathways could be scaled up, and the barriers that will have to be overcome to do so. The analysis draws on more than 120 interviews conducted by MPI Europe and Refugee Hub researchers with the staff of UNHCR offices, government officials, members of civil society, representatives of higher education institutions, and employers across countries with resettlement programmes and complementary pathways in four regions: Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, and South America. Insights collected from the interviews were paired with legal analysis to understand in detail the legal and regulatory barriers that stand in the way of the growth of resettlement and complementary pathways, with a special focus on third-country education and employment programmes, and to offer recommendations for addressing these obstacles. In addition, the research team conducted a deep dive analysis in five case study countries: Finland, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States. Further details on the methodology of this study are provided in Box 2.

This report presents the findings of this analysis. It begins by sharing cross-cutting findings on opportunities and good practices for growing resettlement and complementary pathways across countries. It then examines specific opportunities and gaps in the four study regions. The report concludes by offering a set of recommendations to UNHCR and other stakeholders on how to support the further development of resettlement and complementary pathways under the Three-Year Strategy.

5 See UNHCR and International Organization for Migration (IOM), 'CRISP', accessed 15 March 2021.

BOX 1

Key Terms

This study explores the following third-country solutions for refugees: resettlement, third-country employment as a complementary pathway, and third-country education as a complementary pathway. Key terms are defined as follows:

- **Resettlement** is defined in the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook as ‘the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third state which has agreed to admit them—as refugees—with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalised citizen of the resettlement country.’ Under the scope of this study, resettlement was considered to include resettlement cases that have been referred through UNHCR and in line with UNHCR’s submission categories. Submissions that occur outside of this framework were not defined as resettlement and were analysed as complementary pathways.
- **Complementary pathways** are legal admission programmes created or adjusted to allow refugees access for the purposes of eventually reaching a solution to their displacement. These programmes are additional and separate to UNHCR-referred resettlement programmes against state-set quotas. Eligibility of refugees for complementary pathways is based on criteria other than those for resettlement (such as vulnerability or protection needs of the refugees) and includes their education or employment qualifications, family composition, etc. Ideally, complementary pathways include progressive access to permanent residency or citizenship.
- **Third-country education opportunities**, per the *Key Considerations* report, include any programme that has education as its end goal, such as ‘private, community, or institution-based scholarships, apprenticeships and traineeships programmes’, regardless of the means of entry (e.g., student visa, humanitarian visa). Such initiatives ‘normally provide refugees with appropriate safeguards, notably proper travel documentation and legal entry and stay arrangements for the duration of their studies/traineeship, and clear post-graduation options, which may include permanent residency or postgraduate study or employment.’

BOX 1 (cont.)**Key Terms**

- **Third-country employment opportunities**, per the *Key Considerations* report, include ‘safe and regulated avenues for entry or stay in another country for the purpose of employment, with the right to either permanent or temporary residence’, regardless of the means of entry.
- **Humanitarian admission pathways** provide individuals in need of international protection with effective protection in a third country. Beneficiaries of these programmes are selected against broader eligibility criteria than those applicable in the resettlement context; they may include general humanitarian needs or existing links to the receiving country. Humanitarian admission pathways may include humanitarian corridors (as in Italy and France) and humanitarian evacuations from a current country of asylum to a destination country. Some of them may rely on a humanitarian visa issued prior to departure, which allows the beneficiaries to apply for asylum upon arrival. In other instances, these presume humanitarian status prior to departure.
- **Private (or nominated) sponsorship pathways** are a complementary admission pathway in which private entities or organisations (nomination sponsors) identify, support, provide financial and logistical support for the relocation and integration of refugees.

Sources: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011); UNHCR, *Complementary Pathways for Admission of Refugees to Third Countries: Key Considerations* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019).

BOX 2**About This Study**

The research was conducted over three phases: (1) a global mapping phase to assess the scope of opportunities for the relevant pathways broadly across four regions, as well as to identify barriers to the establishment and scaling up of these third-country solutions; (2) a case study phase involving in-depth research in five countries (Finland, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States); and (3) a synthesis phase in which the researchers brought together the findings of the global mapping and the case studies to generate a set of cross-national lessons learnt on how to support the growth of resettlement and complementary pathways. The study focuses on initiatives implemented from 2013 to the present—a period chosen in order to include innovations that have emerged since the onset of the Syrian crisis, though the research focuses on responses to displacement in a wide range of contexts.

The study utilised a qualitative methodology, drawing primarily on key informant interviews alongside an in-depth analysis of published and unpublished sources including media articles, academic and civil-society reports (including unpublished sources shared with the researchers), and public statements by governmental and nongovernmental entities. During the global mapping phase, 65 interviews were conducted with government officials, representatives of civil-society organisations (CSOs), staff of UNHCR country and regional offices, academic researchers, and other resettlement experts. An additional 62 interviews were carried out across the case study countries, and five additional responses were submitted via written questionnaire. In each case study country, the research team also undertook an assessment of the legal frameworks governing refugees' admission, legal status, and rights under resettlement and third-country education or employment pathways. In France, Japan, and the United States, the research team also circulated a questionnaire to refugee students to document their experiences coming to these countries on study visas. To validate the findings in each case study country, the research team coordinated with UNHCR country offices to organise a stakeholder workshop with representatives of civil society, higher education institutions, and government.



A French volunteer working with resettled refugees from Chad and Niger. © UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau

2 Creating the Conditions for Resettlement to Grow

The Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways has set an ambitious goal for the global resettlement community: enable 50 countries to resettle 1 million refugees between 2019 and 2028.⁶ Reaching this goal will require not just expanding the number of countries engaging in resettlement, but also persuading and helping more resettlement countries to build out their programmes so they can operate at scale. To date, the international system has been reliant on a small number of countries to provide the lion's share of resettlement places. And even as the number of resettlement countries has slowly grown, many of these programmes have remained small. This has historically left the scale and focus of global resettlement dependent on the ambitions of a

⁶ UNHCR, *The Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021)*, 6.

small group of top resettlement countries and vulnerable to significant year-to-year changes based on those countries' resettlement priorities and numerical commitments. A more diverse constellation of resettlement countries—and, in particular, a wider set of countries with larger-scale programmes—would create of a more resilient global resettlement system, one better able to meet growing protection needs.

Increasing both the number of resettlement countries and the scale of resettlement programmes will require generating a strong political commitment to resettlement, and specifically to building programmes capable of sustaining larger quotas with effective integration capacity. This section will examine the steps that long-standing and emerging resettlement countries, along with their partners, can take to accomplish these goals.

A. Build Political Will and Public Support

Generating the necessary political will to expand or launch resettlement activities was identified by numerous stakeholders in interviews conducted for this study as the most significant challenge to growing resettlement. In many countries, this was tied to increasing xenophobia and scepticism of immigration and refugee admissions more broadly. In some, for example, resettlement experts and civil-society leaders indicated that fear of provoking a backlash from a public believed to be sceptical towards immigration generally, and especially towards refugees, has made the government reluctant to draw public attention to resettlement by expanding the country's programme or advertising it too publicly. Reinforcing and widening public support for resettlement was thus a central concern for many civil-society, government, and UNHCR stakeholders interviewed, and it was seen as an essential step towards growing resettlement both within and across countries.

A critical prerequisite to fostering public support for resettlement is understanding—in very concrete terms—what drives existing concerns. Anxieties about immigration typically cluster around three areas (economics, culture, and security), and the relative importance of each may ebb and flow over time.⁷ Specific anxieties may also be activated by opportunistic politicians attempting to stoke fear for political gain or be amplified by messages people hear from neighbours or in the media. Thus, public opinion on migration and refugees is not a static metric; it must be understood as something that interacts with people's deeply held beliefs and anxieties as well as their environments, and that can

⁷ See, for example, Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *Understanding and Addressing Public Anxiety about Immigration (Transatlantic Council Statement)* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016); Helen Dempster, Amy Leach, and Karen Hargrave, *Public Attitudes towards Immigration and Immigrants: What People Think, Why, and How to Influence Them* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2020).

evolve over time as contexts shift. Developing a granular understanding of how different concerns are triggered in different contexts is the first step to building public support for resettlement.

Most efforts to measure levels of support or opposition, however, only scratch the surface of people’s attitudes or do not provide enough detail to understand perceptions about resettlement specifically. For example, information may be based on one-off surveys or episodic polling that combines questions about refugees with questions about other policy issues or with asylum or immigration more broadly.⁸ General surveys also provide limited information about how people’s identity and values may shape their opinions, even though understanding how people define themselves (and whether they are motivated more by messages of compassion or by law and order, for example) can be extremely important to determining how messages about refugees and resettlement are received.⁹ Undertaking more detailed and longitudinal surveys and public opinion analyses on views of refugees and resettlement in specific contexts would be extremely valuable to determining the most effective narratives for broadening public support and how these can be tailored to reach specific constituencies. Work by the public opinion research organisation More in Common¹⁰ has begun to unpack some of these nuances in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their methodology is beginning to be used in other parts of the world as well, and similarly detailed research could shed valuable light on the dynamics of public opinion in a much wider range of resettlement contexts.

Another crucial step to growing public support is widening the cast of actors engaged in and voicing support for resettlement. There are two key reasons for this. First, having a range of constituencies advocating on behalf of resettlement can help reinforce the message that public support extends beyond the ‘usual suspects’. In Germany, resettlement experts suggested that the wide base of support that has grown up around resettlement to include both traditional and new civil-society actors, faith-based groups, and state and local governments has played an important role in the growth of the

8 The structure of a survey and how questions are phrased are extremely important in shaping the answers that respondents give, meaning that careful consideration needs to be given to whether and how questions combine multiple themes. General surveys sometimes risk ‘priming’ respondents—that is, the structure of the survey or how questions are asked make respondents more likely to choose particular answers. For a detailed description of ‘priming’ in survey research, see: ‘Priming’, in *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, ed. Paul J. Lavrakas (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2008). One survey in Japan, for example, asked respondents about whether they were concerned that refugees would pose a security threat, directly after a series of questions about violent crime and capital punishment in Japan. See Japanese Cabinet Secretariat, ‘[Opinion Poll on Basic Legal System](#)’, accessed 16 March 2021.

9 Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, *When Facts Don’t Matter: How to Communicate More Effectively about Immigration’s Costs and Benefits* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2018).

10 See More in Common, ‘[We Are More in Common](#)’, accessed 15 March 2021.

country's resettlement programme; these stakeholders were described as contributing both through advocacy and by directly supporting programme implementation.¹¹ Expanding the network of support has another potential advantage as well. There is some research to suggest that people are more likely to believe messages delivered by actors they trust.¹² A more diverse range of partners engaged in supporting resettlement efforts—including, for example, employers who have partnered with resettlement service providers to hire refugee workers—adds more voices that can speak to the value of resettlement and potentially reach new and varied audiences.

Widening the network of stakeholders engaged in resettlement efforts can be done in several ways. For example, some resettlement experts and civil-society stakeholders have suggested moving their countries' resettlement programme towards a public-private partnership model that involves local governments, CSOs, and employers as partners in programme planning and delivery. Local partners could take on a role in designing integration and reception plans for arriving refugees, and be responsible for providing services and supports. Stakeholders have suggested that doing so would provide local actors with a stronger sense of ownership, and thus encourage them to speak on behalf of resettlement efforts, while also enabling more of the public to interact and become acquainted with the resettlement programme and their new refugee neighbours. Employers would be a key group for such efforts, as they are often important voices within their communities. Programmes that use community sponsorship as a tool to support the reception and integration of resettled refugees (also known as sponsored resettlement), such as those that have been introduced in Germany and elsewhere, inspired by the Canadian model, are another promising way to build bridges and involve a wider range of local stakeholders. In Finland, the government has also embarked on a study to examine the possibilities of engaging civil-society members more deeply in the resettlement programme, including through community sponsorship.¹³

B. Create Avenues for Leadership at the Local Level

Over the past years, advocacy on the part of civil society, international actors, and interested states to start or expand resettlement programmes has been predominantly targeted at national governments; as the ultimate gatekeepers of who enters, stays in, and

11 Author interview with Marcus Engler, Researcher, Deutsche Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM) Institut, 25 November 2020; Author interview with officials from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), 17 December 2020; Author interview with official from Caritas Germany, 2 September 2020.

12 Banulescu-Bogdan, *When Facts Don't Matter*.

13 Author interview with officials from the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 30 November 2020.

exits the national territory, securing their buy-in is essential. But in recent years, cities and regional governments have also emerged as strong supporters of resettlement in many countries. The national Save Me campaign (the umbrella campaign for local and city-led campaigns such as Save Me Munich) has played an important role in mobilising local governments in Germany to advocate for the expansion of the national resettlement programme.¹⁴ And in the United Kingdom, the City of Sanctuary¹⁵ movement has developed into an extensive network of cities, towns, and regions that advocate for refugees and commit to adopting welcoming policies. These examples point to the important role subnational actors can play as advocates for and supporters of resettlement.¹⁶

Capitalising on the resources that cities and regions have to offer requires first and foremost treating city and local actors as partners in resettlement efforts. A 2020 MPI Europe study drawing on interviews with local governments and CSOs in communities that have experienced resettlement across four countries (Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden) pointed to the fact that communities benefit when they are provided with timely and relevant information about refugee arrivals and given an opportunity to prepare service providers and share information with locals about the refugees and the resettlement process before the newcomers arrive.¹⁷ One promising practice reported in the Netherlands entailed officials from the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers briefing local service providers and officials about the refugee families their community would receive and any particular needs they might have. Engaging directly with cities and localities can have benefits in other ways as well. In Finland, since 2016, municipalities have pledged more places for resettlement than were made available in the national government's programme.¹⁸ Finnish local and national government officials have suggested that this strong support at the municipal level has been driven in part by the work of local economic development offices to raise awareness among city officials about the resettlement programme and persuade city governments of the value it would bring to

14 Save Me, Eine Stadt Sagt Ja, '[Save Me Kampagne & Tätigkeiten](#)', accessed 14 December 2020; Seebrücke, '[Alle Sicheren Häfen](#)', accessed 14 December 2020.

15 See City of Sanctuary UK, '[About](#)', accessed 15 March 2021.

16 Liam Patuzzi, Monica Andriescu, and Antonio Pietropolli, *Building Welcome from the Ground up: European Small and Rural Communities Engaging in Refugee Resettlement* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2020).

17 Patuzzi, Andriescu, and Pietropolli, *Building Welcome from the Ground up*.

18 Janina Stürner, '[Who Could Thrive Where? Imagining Resettlement as a Cooperative Mobility Strategy](#)', Rethinking Refuge, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 17 September 2020; Lauri Rautavuori, '[Moneen kuntaan ei riitä kiintiöpakolaisia, vaikka vastaanottohalua on – erikoinen tilanne voi johtaa kotouttamispalveluiden kuihtumiseen](#)', YLE Uutiset, 22 January 2019; Author interview with representative of a Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY Centre), 3 December 2020.

their communities.¹⁹ By working in partnership with local communities, national resettlement programmes can help to create a welcoming environment that will support the sustainable growth of resettlement efforts in the medium to long term.

For states that already have well-developed city or regional outreach efforts on behalf of resettlement, there may be more concrete ways for this advocacy to translate into additional resettlement capacity. One way to do so would be to adopt a quota-setting mechanism that reflects or incorporates pledges from local or regional authorities, with local resettlement pledges added to the national quota. Some regional governments in Germany have advocated for a similar approach to be adopted there. Other regional governments in Germany have gone a step further and, with the permission of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, launched their own resettlement programmes that are additional to the national quota.²⁰ The extent to which it may be possible to directly translate local commitments into a larger resettlement programme will vary based on the legal and regulatory framework in each country, and it may be easier in federal systems of government. But in countries with active local resettlement advocacy movements, it may be worth examining whether there are practical ways these pledges can be reflected and channelled through national quotas.

C. Address Practical Challenges That May Discourage Engagement by Emerging Resettlement Countries

Once political commitments have been made, they must be translated into well-run and sustainable resettlement schemes. To do so, states must develop a strong working relationship with UNHCR, a process for receiving resettlement submissions from the agency, and procedures and a legal framework for assessing cases and granting status for the refugees they choose to resettle. In addition, states must make arrangements to organise refugees' travel, conduct predeparture orientation (often in collaboration with IOM and other partners), and plan for how refugees will be welcomed after their arrival (see Section 2.E.). Much of this infrastructure must be adapted to some degree to the specificities of the countries from which refugees will be resettled. Growing this capacity

19 Author interview with representative of a ELY Centre, 3 December 2020; Helmi Nykänen, 'Pakolaiskriisi sai aikaan muutoksen: kunnat ottaisivat vastaan enemmän kiintiöpakolaisia kuin heitä tulee Suomeen', YLE Uutiset, 7 November 2018; Author interview with official from Lohja municipality, Finland, 10 December 2020.

20 Caritas Germany, 'Landtag in Schleswig-Holstein beschließt Landesaufnahmeprogramm', accessed 13 May 2021; Berlin Senate Department for Integration, Labour, and Social Affairs, 'Berlin entwickelt Landesaufnahmeprogramm für besonders schutzbedürftige Geflüchtete aus Syrien' (press release, 30 March 2021); Marie Schäffer, 'Landesaufnahmeprogramm: erste Weichen gestellt – Brandenburg zeigt sich solidarisch' (press release, 18 June 2020).

takes investment, but failing to adequately prepare these elements can delay or complicate admissions.

Initiatives such as CRISP, the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM),²¹ European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (the EU-FRANK project),²² and the European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance (EURITA) project²³ have worked since 2016 to provide training and technical assistance to new and emerging resettlement countries to help them overcome these barriers. In addition to training and sharing guidance documents and templates, a critical component of these initiatives has been peer support, whereby actors with similar professional profiles or duties provide each other with information, knowledge, and/or practical assistance. Peer-support programmes generally include activities such as informal conversations, study visits, repositories to collect good practices, conferences and seminars, mentoring and training sessions, twinning initiatives, and data-collection projects. These and similar projects have generated several lessons learnt on how to make the most of peer support between resettlement actors, which are presented in Box 3. Continued investment in these peer-to-peer networks—whether among national, regional, or local governments; programme designers; and/or implementing partners—is key to continuing to expand the community of resettlement states.

21 The Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM) was a joint endeavour by UNHCR and IOM that operated from 2016 to 2019. It aimed to support new and emerging resettlement countries in launching or expanding resettlement programmes through financial and technical assistance. See IOM and UNHCR, '[Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism \(ERCM\)](#)' (fact sheet, IOM and UNHCR, Geneva, 2016).

22 The European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (the EU-FRANK project) was an EU-funded, five-year project that supported peer learning between EU resettlement countries and developed a set of common templates and materials for states to use when developing their resettlement procedures. The project concluded in 2020. See Swedish Migration Agency, '[EU-FRANK](#)', accessed 15 March 2021.

23 The European Resettlement and Integration Technical Assistance (EURITA) project was operated by the International Rescue Committee to provide technical assistance to emerging resettlement countries in Europe. See International Rescue Committee, '[EURITA](#)', accessed 15 March 2021.

BOX 3**Guiding Principles for Building Strong Peer-Support Programmes**

Drawing on interviews with resettlement officials in several EU Member States, Canada, and the United States, a 2018 report by MPI Europe identified the following lessons about how to operate effective peer-support programmes, with the aim of expanding refugee resettlement.

1. The programme must have clearly defined goals that are set in consultation with participants. Without specific goals and support from key resettlement actors, it is difficult to meet participants' expectations and needs in an efficient manner. The absence of clear goals also makes it difficult to set the benchmarks for success needed to track progress and conduct objective evaluations.

2. Activities should be carefully designed to meet these goals. Programme designers should consider what set of activities will help participants meet the goals of the initiative and maximise its chances of success. This should include thinking about the timing and duration of activities, who needs to participate in each activity, what resources are required (and what their costs are), which outcomes can be reasonably expected, and what follow-up activities might be useful. For instance, the SHARE City Exchange Visit Programme (2012–15) asked participants to report their aims and areas of interest in advance, then arranged a set of tailored study visits accordingly. Assignments also depended on participants' preselected thematic interests, allowing participants to acquire the specific knowledge and experience they needed.

3. Participants should be chosen on the basis of their affiliations and expertise, and then matched with one another according to relevant criteria. Peer-support initiatives typically match participants based on a general assessment of who is judged to be a new/emerging resettlement actor and who is considered more experienced. However, mapping knowledge and expertise across a more nuanced range of resettlement programme characteristics and technical fields could encourage actors with different types of knowledge to learn from one another. In the Dutch-led Durable Solutions in Practice project, for example, mentee-country actors (e.g., the Belgian reception agency, Fedasil) were matched with their institutional counterparts in the Netherlands based on affiliation and skill set. Actors in the two countries' chains of command were matched first, with these relationships serving as the basis for and informing future activities. The most experienced resettlement countries, or those most eager to export their model, are not always the best mentors, if their experience does not fit the needs of partner countries. Additional matching criteria to consider include:

BOX 3 (cont.)**Guiding Principles for Building Strong Peer-Support Programmes**

- **Contextual factors that inform the design of a resettlement programme.**
Regardless of what is typically considered a resettlement best practice, contextual factors such as social welfare systems, governance structures, and the availability of resources often determine what is and is not feasible in a country. By considering these factors when selecting and matching participants, peer-support initiatives can increase the applicability of the information that will be exchanged.
- **The level and type of actors.** While it may seem most logical to match like with like (for example, officials of similar political levels from different countries), there are also benefits to pairing actors with mixed experiences and characteristics (e.g., mixing civil-society, administrative, and political actors). For example, in early efforts to expand community sponsorship in Europe, government actors reported benefiting from the opportunity to speak with civil-society representatives from other countries, who shared candid perspectives on the needs and interests of sponsors and civil-society partners in sponsorship programmes. Ultimately, the decision should reflect the goals and desired outcomes of the programme.
- **The type of activity planned.** The level and type of resettlement expertise varies not just between countries, but also within countries, depending on which aspect of resettlement a peer-support programme targets. One country may have recently revised its predeparture programme and thus have relevant expertise to share, and another might have particular expertise in conducting remote interviews. The choice of appropriate partner countries will thus also depend on the specific focus of a peer-support activity.

4. Peer-support activities must be critically assessed. Monitoring and evaluation are essential for building effective peer-support projects. While peer-support activities are often recycled without clear evidence of whether they are effective (and in which contexts), taking steps to document their outcomes and impacts can enable the designers of new projects to integrate concrete lessons learnt into their initiatives. For example, based on past experiences with sharing information about its resettlement and private sponsorship schemes with interested EU Member States, Canada adjusted its approach to peer support and now starts with a preliminary exploration of system compatibility and government commitment before offering a study visit.

Source: Hanne Beirens and Aliyyah Ahad, *Scaling up Refugee Resettlement in Europe: The Role of Institutional Peer Support* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018).

While peer support and technical assistance have been essential to expanding refugee resettlement to date, there may be value in taking support for resettlement countries one step further by exploring ways to expand operational cooperation between states. EU Member States participating in the EU-FRANK project, for example, reported a desire to have an ongoing exchange of information at the operational level among EU resettlement states, particularly on topics such as planning selection missions and predeparture operations.²⁴ The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has taken forward many of EU-FRANK's recommendations under the Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network, which provides a platform for ongoing exchange among programme officers implementing resettlement programmes in different countries. In addition to organising regular meetings to exchange good practices on specific topics (such as predeparture orientation, security and identity screening, and operations in specific departure country contexts), the network is also launching an online portal that will house templates to help programme designers plan aspects of the resettlement process (e.g., interview checklists) and practical examples from other Member States.²⁵

However, the potential for building up cross-national, regional, or even global platforms for exchange and coordination of resettlement activities at the operational level so far remains largely untapped, apart from the Priority Situations Core Group.²⁶ Participants in the EU-FRANK project, for example, reported that they found the project's activities useful because they addressed some practical issues that are not addressed in other forums such as the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and the Working Group on Resettlement, which tend to focus on strategic and policy issues.²⁷ Making such regional knowledge hubs available to resettlement actors in other parts of the world could not only

24 EU-FRANK Project, *Final Recommendations to EASO from the EU-FRANK Project* (Stockholm: Swedish Migration Agency, 2020).

25 The platform will also share information on when and where states have planned selection missions to help avoid a 'rush period' in departure countries that would strain local capacity (such as interpreters or venue rentals for selection interviews). In addition, the network is exploring the possibility of providing training for new resettlement staff in Member States that would orient them to specific aspects of the resettlement process. Author interview with Andre Baas, Head of the Resettlement Sector, European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 22 February 2021.

26 The Priority Situations Core Group is a state-led working group established to share knowledge and technical expertise on resettlement, expand resettlement and complementary pathways opportunities, and build sustainable resettlement programmes in target regions. The group currently focuses on responses in the Syrian region and the Central Mediterranean. See UNHCR, '[How We Do Resettlement](#)', accessed 7 May 2021.

27 EU-FRANK Project, *Final Recommendations to EASO*.

help to sustain existing resettlement programmes but also enable them to become a driver of interest and engagement in resettlement elsewhere.²⁸

A potential addition to greater cooperation at the operational level could be the development of regional, or even cross-regional, resettlement infrastructure such as joint facilities that provide space and support resources for states to conduct their interviews or predeparture training in countries from which large numbers of refugees are resettled. EASO has piloted one such facility in Istanbul. While an evaluation of the facility is still underway, feedback from EU Member States that have used it has been positive, and the European Union is exploring setting up a second facility in another major departure country.²⁹ Joint facilities such as this have the potential to facilitate resettlement processing for new resettlement countries by reducing the amount of planning needed to arrange selection missions and/or predeparture activities, because states could use existing facilities or interpreters to conduct their missions. They may also create logistical efficiencies for existing resettlement countries and provide an opportunity for informal peer learning as states work alongside each other in close proximity.

D. Design Resilient and Responsive Resettlement Programmes

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for resettlement programmes to be flexible and able to adapt rapidly to changes in needs or operational conditions. Travel restrictions and social-distancing measures put in place to slow the spread of disease further demonstrated that innovative and alternative methods for processing resettlement cases can be a valuable addition to the resettlement processing toolkit. Over the course of 2020 and early 2021, more states have experimented with dossier selection,³⁰ virtual meetings, remote interviews, and online predeparture orientation to enable resettlement processing and departures to continue.

States that have experimented with these modalities during the pandemic have reported broader benefits for processing the cases of refugees otherwise stuck in remote or unreachable localities (e.g., due to a public-health quarantine or security concerns), but

²⁸ Katherine Rehberg, *The Future of Refugee Resettlement and Complementary Pathways: Strengthening Sustainable and Strategic Humanitarian Solutions for Refugees* (New York: Church World Service, 2020).

²⁹ Author interview with Andre Baas, Head of the Resettlement Sector, EASO, 22 February 2021.

³⁰ Dossier selection is a selection procedure in which states make a decision regarding whether to select a case for resettlement based on written information provided by UNHCR, foregoing an interview with the individual.

also in terms of cost savings (e.g., due to the differing costs of remote versus in-country selection missions).³¹ There are tradeoffs to using remote processing techniques, and these approaches will not be appropriate for all cases. Internet connectivity does not allow for remote interviewing in all locations, for example, and states sometimes limit the types of cases they will accept for dossier processing or report higher rejection rates for dossier cases. Some states have also found it challenging to meet security clearance requirements with remote processing approaches. But building these capabilities into the structure of resettlement programmes as an option alongside traditional selection and interview techniques could not only improve resilience to future shocks but also strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of resettlement operations.

Multiyear quotas have also long been recognised as a good practice, as they enable programme partners to develop longer-term planning strategies. They also allow space for adaptation in the face of shocks (e.g., allowing states to carry over resettlement pledges that could not be fulfilled in one year to the next). Multiannual quotas must, however, be accompanied by the ability of programmes to set multiyear and flexible budgets to be effective. In Germany, for example, government officials reported difficulties because budgets are set one and a half years before the resettlement quota is decided, meaning that the resources allocated to the programme are not always sufficient to meet the pledges made. A multiyear quota and budget would make it easier to align a programme's implementation with the goals set for it.³²

On the UNHCR side, if state quotas grow, parallel investments will be needed in enhancing resettlement processing capacity to meet quotas. A sudden change in the number of state requests for submissions or in the geographic priorities set by states can pose challenges. Delays in submitting cases to states can lead to bottlenecks in referral pipelines, delay refugees' travel to their resettlement countries, and make it more difficult to fulfil national quotas. Processing backlogs at the state level can also contribute to disruptions, however, when they require UNHCR staff resources to be diverted to manage refugee expectations, respond to follow-up queries, or update cases that have been delayed. Stakeholders in Germany and the United States and actors at the EU level, for example, have expressed concerns regarding whether UNHCR will be able to quickly scale up resettlement submissions to meet all designated resettlement quotas given the steep increase in submissions to the United States—with the new administration stating that it plans to set a

31 Comments by participants at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Working Group on Resettlement breakout session 'Thinking out of the Box: Turning Adaptations to COVID into Innovation', 25 February 2021. See also Rehberg, *The Future of Refugee Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*.

32 Author interview with officials from BAMF, 17 December 2021.

refugee admissions ceiling of 125,000 for U.S. fiscal year (FY) 2022³³—while also keeping pace with demand for resettlement submissions in Europe.³⁴ Some stakeholders have suggested expanding financial support for UNHCR submissions and registration operations as well as for resettlement deployment schemes, whereby nongovernmental organisation (NGO) staff are deployed to support UNHCR in specific countries as is currently done. Changes could also be made to how donors fund UNHCR operations to provide more multiyear funding or funding that is based on resettlement needs to enable UNHCR to scale up operations and maintain capacity.³⁵ Investments in expanding UNHCR’s capacity will also need to be accompanied by efforts on the part of states to ensure that cases are processed in a timely manner.

E. Invest in Robust Reception and Integration Support

Effective reception and integration support is essential to creating a sustainable resettlement programme that both serves the needs of refugees and maintains public and political support. Assisting national and local governments and communities in building strategies to support the long-term integration of refugees is one of the goals of the Three-Year Strategy. Yet building holistic and effective integration programmes is a work in progress in most resettlement countries, as highlighted in interviews with resettlement experts and global and regional stakeholders. The need to rethink and improve integration supports was also raised as a priority by stakeholders in most of the resettlement case studies. The exact needs of refugees and receiving communities differ in each context, but there are some commonalities.

First, there is a need to balance economic integration with broader social integration objectives. In some countries, integration programmes have focused heavily on ensuring that refugees achieve self-sufficiency through employment quickly after arrival.³⁶ Some of

33 See White House, ‘Remarks by President Biden on America’s Place in the World’ (news release, 4 February 2021).

34 Rehberg, *The Future of Refugee Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*; National Conference on Citizenship and the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, *A Roadmap to Rebuilding the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program* (Washington, DC: National Conference on Citizenship and the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, 2020); Author interview with officials from BAME, 17 December 2021; Author interview with Andre Baas, Head of the Resettlement Sector, EASO, 22 February 2021.

35 Rehberg, *The Future of Refugee Resettlement and Complementary Pathways*.

36 See, for example, Randy Capps and Kathleen Newland et al., *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015); Mark Greenberg, Julia Gelatt, Jessica Bolter, Essey Workie, and Isabelle Charo, *Promoting Refugee Integration in Challenging Times: The Potential of Two-Generation Strategies* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2018); Barbara Trevianus and Sayaka Osanami Törngren, *A Socio-Economic Review of Japan’s Resettlement Pilot Project* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015).

these programmes have been extremely effective at achieving this goal, and self-sufficiency is viewed as critical to maintaining public and political support for the programmes. However, according to resettlement experts and civil-society representatives, programmes that place high emphasis on self-sufficiency may underinvest in other forms of support for refugees, including psychosocial support, community-level integration, language learning, and opportunities for career development. Strategies that invest in children and approach service delivery to families in a holistic way are also missing in many contexts.³⁷ By contrast, in Finland, some local and national government stakeholders have expressed the view that the country's approach to integration support, which emphasises classroom-based cultural orientation and language learning for several years after arrival, unnecessarily delays refugees' entry into the labour market and creates a perception at the local level that refugees are struggling to integrate.³⁸

These experiences suggest that many states could benefit from assistance in building robust integration programmes that can support refugees in a number of ways—from connecting them to the labour market and providing opportunities for continuous language learning and career development, to helping them access psychosocial support and building community connections. Collecting data that measure not simply entry into employment but also retention and advancement can help policymakers understand whether their integration policies are striking the right balance. Stakeholders in all of the case study countries also suggested that it would be valuable to find ways to make integration support more flexible and able to be tailored to individual needs and ambitions.

In Europe, conversations on how to build more flexible, holistic, and evidence-based approaches to integration are advancing. UNHCR is collaborating with the Brussels-based think tank the Migration Policy Group to design practical tools (including a handbook and workbook) to help practitioners create effective integration supports for refugees.³⁹ And the Sustainable Practices of Integration (SPRING) project, funded by the EU Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF), is working to develop a toolbox of effective integration practices that can be deployed at the national, regional, and local levels.⁴⁰

37 See, for example, Greenberg, Gelatt, Bolter, Workie, and Charo, *Promoting Refugee Integration*.

38 Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe and the Refugee Hub, 'Global Mapping of Opportunities for Growth of Resettlement and Advancement of Complementary Pathways: Case Study Report on Finland' (unpublished working paper, revised March 2021).

39 Migration Policy Group, '[Practitioners' Tool for Refugee Integration in Europe](#)', accessed 28 March 2021.

40 Fondazione ISMU – Initiatives and Studies on Multi-Ethnicity, '[Sustainable Practices of Integration – Spring](#)', accessed 28 March 2021.

While some changes can be carried out at the programmatic level, others require changes at the policy level to how integration support is provided, who provides it, or how programmes are funded. In Finland, the government recently launched a review of the country's integration programme that considers, among other things, how to make the programme more flexible and ways to combine language learning with other forms of training or work experience.⁴¹

41 Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, *Selonteko kotoutumisen edistämisen uudistamistarpeista* (Helsinki: Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2021).



A Syrian refugee tech professional in Canada as part of the Talent Beyond Borders initiative.
© UNHCR/Annie Sakkab

3 Expanding Complementary Pathways

Interest in complementary pathways globally—and specifically education and employment pathways—has grown rapidly in recent years. The Syrian conflict in particular inspired a surge of interest among private actors and governments alike in identifying additional avenues to provide refuge to people displaced by the crisis. Following on this surge of interest, states expressed their commitment in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to considering the implementation or expansion of ‘complementary pathways for admission of refugees’ including through ‘opportunities for skilled migration, labour mobility, and education.’⁴² This commitment has since been solidified in the 2018

⁴² UN General Assembly, ‘[Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016](#)’, 3 October 2016.

Global Compact on Refugees⁴³ and in the Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways.

When the New York Declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016, there were relatively few examples of coherent programmes that specifically targeted refugees to facilitate their mobility in pursuit of labour or education opportunities. The most well-established education pathway has been the Student Refugee Program run by the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), which has operated since 1978.⁴⁴ Efforts to launch or grow third-country education and employment pathways for refugees have proliferated since 2016. There are currently scholarship programmes in 22 countries across Europe, North and South America, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa that specifically aim to provide opportunities for refugees to travel to third countries for study.⁴⁵ Two programmes exist to facilitate refugees' labour mobility to Australia and Canada, and efforts are underway to facilitate entry for displaced persons to the United Kingdom.⁴⁶ To date, almost all of these programmes rely on existing employment or study visa pathways to admit refugees.⁴⁷

Data on how many refugees travel on their own for education or employment purposes are extremely scarce. While data on the number of employment- or study-related visas or work permits issued may capture an applicant's nationality, they typically do not capture whether the applicant is a refugee. A 2021 study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNHCR that looked at first-time permits issued by OECD countries to nationals of several refugee-producing countries as a proxy found that these

43 UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Part II Global Compact on Refugees* (New York: United Nations, 2018).

44 While some scholarship programmes such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)'s Leadership for Syria programme in Germany and the Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies (known as the Global Platform for Syrian Students before August 2020) in Portugal had begun operations in June 2015 and March 2014, respectively, there was not yet a wide acknowledgement that programmes such as these could provide a pathway to durable solutions to displacement for refugees beyond the immediate possibility to continue their studies.

45 The countries identified are Benin, Canada, Costa Rica, Czechia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mexico, Portugal, Rwanda, Slovakia, Spain, South Africa, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Argentina also has a programme framework in place, but its programme has not been implemented.

46 Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), '*Displaced Workers: An Untapped Talent Source for Australian Employers*' (submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Migration inquiry into Migration in Regional Australia, Canberra, September 2019); Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), '*The Economic Mobility Pathways Project: Exploring Labour Mobility as a Complementary Pathway for Refugees*', updated July 2020; Priti Patel, '*Home Secretary Opening Speech for Nationality & Borders Bill*' (oral statement to Parliament, 19 July 2021).

47 One exception is the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Student Refugee Program, which uses Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program as the entry pathway for participants.

nationals received small shares of nonhumanitarian visas (13 per cent of employment visas and 18 per cent of study visas) between 2010 and 2019.⁴⁸ Moreover, numerous legal and practical barriers prevent refugees from accessing existing study or work visas independently (see Section 3.B.). The number of refugees able to access these visas outside of specific programmes is thus likely to be very small.⁴⁹

While interest in third-country employment and education pathways has grown, the programmes launched to date remain small in scale. The most ambitious of these is the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) in Canada, which aims to bring in up to 500 refugee principal applicants and their dependent family members through labour pathways over a two-year period, although this target may be affected by COVID-19-related delays.⁵⁰ For education, one of the largest programmes to date has been the Leadership for Syria programme run by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which provided a total of 221 study places to Syrian refugees over the programme's five-year duration.⁵¹ Most education and employment pathways programmes have been much smaller in their ambitions, however. A central question for growing complementary pathways is thus how to increase the scale of individual programmes as well as encourage new countries to consider launching them.

Stakeholders in civil society, universities, and government who have been closely involved in implementing these programmes report encountering several challenges that will need to be overcome in order to scale up existing programmes and expand them to new countries:

- **Barriers inherent in existing legal frameworks.** Most programmes to date have relied on existing study and work visa pathways. But refugees' situation of displacement often makes it extremely difficult for them to meet the qualification requirements for these visas (see Box 4). Most work and study visas lack specific

48 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNHCR, *Safe Pathways for Refugees II: OECD-UNHCR Study on Third-Country Solutions for Refugees: Admissions for Family Reunification, Education, and Employment Purposes between 2010 and 2019* (Paris and Geneva: OECD Publishing and UNHCR, 2021).

49 Author interview with official from the Institute of International Education (IIE), 30 September 2020; Author interview with official at l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, 22 September 2020; Author interview with official from Refuge Point, 2 October 2020.

50 The task force was announced in June 2020 and will be launched in September 2021. See IRCC, 'Canada Continues to Explore Innovative Solutions for Refugees' (news release, 25 June 2020).

51 All 221 students arrived in Germany in 2015 and started their studies in the winter term 2015/2016. The programme financed their studies until 2019. See DAAD, 'Leadership for Syria' (fact sheet, DAAD, Bonn, 2019).

waivers or measures to remove these barriers for refugees, and as a result, refugees have not been able to access these visas in large numbers in most countries.

- **Lack of familiarity with complementary pathways.** Familiarity with the concept of complementary pathways—or indeed the idea that refugees may have the skills and experience to qualify for these opportunities—and how these pathways could work in different contexts remains limited in many countries outside of traditional resettlement and humanitarian stakeholders. Moreover, in many countries, advocacy on opening education and employment opportunities for refugees who are qualified to undertake such them has been primarily focused on those already in the country, with less awareness of or engagement on opportunities for refugees to travel for study or work to a third country.
- **Need for more coordination and collaboration.** Implementing education and employment pathways programmes requires the involvement of an extensive network of actors, many of which have limited experience working together. In countries where efforts to establish complementary pathways have emerged organically and through grassroots efforts, such as France and the United States, there is also a risk that some programmes duplicate infrastructure, such as outreach to potential beneficiaries, or fundraising efforts.
- **Insufficient mechanisms and data to connect refugees with universities and employers in third countries.** There are no comprehensive data at present that map the skills and experience of refugees and enable targeted outreach to refugees with the appropriate skills and educational background to make them aware of jobs and scholarship opportunities in third countries. Such data would also be a valuable resource in increasing awareness among employers and higher education institutions of refugees' talents and skills. More linkages between training and education programmes in host countries and employers and higher education institutions in third countries could also facilitate recruitment, but relatively few such collaborations exist at present.
- **Uncertain funding environments.** Alongside the costs of assessing the feasibility and optimal structure of complementary pathways (which may require legal advice) and scoping government buy-in and employer demand, these programmes come with a number of other costs: setting up the infrastructure to identify candidates in host countries, connect them with potential employers and universities, and support refugees as they go through the interview, application, and relocation process. Yet

many programmes, particularly those that rely on private funding, have indicated that they lack predictable, long-term sources of funding.

- **Need for additional capacity to provide integration and social support.** Refugees and their families entering a third country through employment and education pathways do not typically qualify for the same level of support as those who enter through humanitarian pathways, placing them at a disadvantage for successful integration. Moreover, the entities most engaged in supporting their arrival, such as higher education institutions and private businesses, typically have little familiarity with the specific concerns and support needs that some refugees might have, from questions about legal status to language support to the need for psychosocial counselling.

The experiences of existing third-country education and employment programmes suggest that the best approach to overcoming these challenges is most likely a mix of formal changes to legal and regulatory frameworks, soft policy measures, individual case work, and the creation of strong working relationships to facilitate coordination. Many of these measures, and particularly those that open legal frameworks, have the potential to improve refugees' access to multiple types of complementary pathways. Other strategies for facilitating refugee mobility through complementary pathways could include introducing visa fee waivers on humanitarian grounds, ensuring alternative travel documents can be issued to refugees who lack passports, or providing officials with guidance on how to issue visas to refugee applicants; such changes would benefit refugees seeking to travel through either education or employment pathways as well as, in some cases, family reunification. It may thus be valuable to approach the expansion of complementary pathways from a holistic perspective, thinking carefully about investments that may open multiple mobility options for refugees, in addition to pursuing the growth of specific pathways.

This section explores key elements of expanding complementary pathways. In doing so, it acknowledges that the structure of educational and employment systems and the relevant actors vary tremendously across contexts. It is not possible to take a one-size-fits-all approach. Efforts to grow education and employment pathways for refugees must invest in understanding how the relevant sectors are structured if they are to succeed.

A. Build Coalitions across Sectors within and outside of Government

The experiences of actors who have worked to establish and grow complementary pathways in Australia, Canada, Italy, Portugal, and elsewhere suggest that action is needed on several fronts to engage the right set of partners—a diverse array of organisations in the education and employment fields, many of which may not have experience working with refugees.

First, it is essential to identify influential actors who can mobilise support within critical sectors. In Australia and Canada, Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), a nonprofit organisation that has worked to build employment pathways for refugees in several countries, began by mapping shortage sectors and then working with a mix of private-sector, local, and civil-society actors to reach out to employers within those sectors. In Canada, TBB works with economic development groups linked to specific regions and/or sectors, such as the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network and the Construction Foundation of British Columbia, and with a civil-society partner, Jumpstart Refugee Talent, to tap into its network of businesses interested in hiring refugee workers, as well as recruiting and referring refugee candidates from Jordan and Lebanon.⁵² In the United States, the Institute of International Education (IIE), a nonprofit that assists universities and scholarship providers with managing international exchange programmes, was able to leverage its extensive networks with U.S. institutions of higher education to obtain pledges by universities to offer scholarships or tuition waivers to support its scholarship programme for Syrian students.⁵³ In France, the NGO Démocratie & Entraide en Syrie, Ghosn Zeitoun has been able to mobilise resources from local governments to support education pathways for international refugee students.⁵⁴ And in Portugal, the Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies (previously known as the Global Platform for Syrian Students), a nonprofit

52 Jumpstart Refugee Talent is a refugee-led nonprofit organisation in Canada that helped TBB connect with local employers. See TBB, *Global Evaluation: Labour Mobility Pathways Pilot 2016-2019* (N.p.: TBB, 2020); Jumpstart Refugee Talent, ‘What We Do’, accessed 25 March 2021. Another organisation, the nonprofit RefugePoint, worked with IRCC to identify and screen applicants in Kenya and support successful candidates through the recruitment and immigration process from there. At the time of writing, the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) had admitted 12 refugees (and 17 family members) with another 23 refugees (and 46 dependents) awaiting their visas, and the government plans to scale up the programme significantly. IRCC, ‘The Economic Mobility Pathways Project’; data provided to the authors by TBB, 26 March 2021.

53 Author interview with official at IIE, 30 September 2020; Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies, *Higher Education in Emergencies: On the Road to 2030* (Lisbon: Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies, 2020); IIE, ‘Scholarship Opportunities’, accessed 22 March 2021.

54 MPI Europe and the Refugee Hub, ‘Global Mapping of Opportunities for Growth of Resettlement and Advancement of Complementary Pathways: Case Study Report on France’ (unpublished working paper, revised February 2021).

multistakeholder organisation founded in November 2013, has created a sustainable programme by connecting efforts from various stakeholders (including government, international and regional organisations, donor agencies, universities, foundations, and NGOs).⁵⁵

Identifying actors who can build bridges and foster cooperative relationships across sectors is also critical. In Europe, the European Commission may have the potential to play this role, given its strong networks across ministries in EU Member States. Since October 2020, the Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs has been convening meetings between key resettlement and immigration actors within Member States to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, with the aim of growing complementary pathways programmes in Europe.⁵⁶ In many countries, UNHCR has played this coordinating role, facilitating connections and exchange between universities, CSOs, and government authorities in the third country as well as in refugees' host countries.

Finding the right narrative and language to build support for these programmes is also critical. In interviews conducted for this study, resettlement stakeholders, business representatives, and universities suggested that the language of 'complementary pathways' can often be confusing and unfamiliar for stakeholders who are not already deeply engaged in discussions about refugee protection.⁵⁷ Instead, outreach around these pathways may benefit from adopting language that will be accessible to and resonate with actors in target sectors, though the use of common terminology among the actors coordinating and implementing programmes remains important to ensure a shared understanding of the goals and requirements of complementary pathways programmes. For employment pathways, interviewees suggested that the CSO and government partners designing and implementing programmes at the national level will need to build a compelling economic case for how and where refugees could help to meet labour and skills needs and target outreach to employers in sectors and regions struggling to recruit and retain workers. When engaging with government partners, interviewees suggested framing outreach in terms of how admissions would help to meet broader policy goals, such as providing economic benefits and meeting employer needs.⁵⁸ And for universities, programmes have targeted their outreach to universities with well-developed

55 Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies, '[The Global Platform at a Glance](#)', accessed 23 April 2021.

56 Author interview with official from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 30 September 2021.

57 Author interviews with officials from the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 10 December 2020, 12 January 2021, and 13 January 2021; Author interview with official at Rutgers University-Newark, School of Public Affairs and Administration, University Alliance for Refugees and At-Risk Migrants, 17 September 2020.

58 Author interview with official from IRCC, 6 October 2020.

internationalisation strategies (strategies adopted by universities, sometimes developed with the support of government, to expand recruitment of international students, encourage a more globally focused curriculum, or develop partnerships with institutions abroad) or those with a stated commitment to international efforts such as the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁹ One programme implementing partner suggested that demonstrating that individual scholarships were a contribution to a larger global effort to support refugee education, rather than an individual act of charity, was motivating for universities. UNHCR could play an important role by engaging with university partners in this manner,⁶⁰ perhaps linked to UNHCR's Refugee Education 2030 Strategy and universities' role in these efforts.⁶¹

Finally, developing a 'proof of concept' is important to gain the support of actors who might otherwise be sceptical. Some business and economic immigration actors, for example, expressed scepticism during interviews about whether refugees have the right skills to qualify for employer-sponsored labour visas.⁶² TBB has assisted refugees with accessing labour visas to take up work in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, in part to demonstrate that refugees can qualify for and succeed in these positions. In Australia and Canada these efforts succeeded in gaining the interest of the government in creating a more formalised work visa pathway for refugees, and in the case of the United Kingdom, for displaced persons more broadly.

B. Create Supportive Legal Frameworks through Short-, Medium-, and Long-Term Solutions

In most countries, the standard requirements for legal entry and stay pose the greatest structural challenges to initiating and scaling up education and employment pathways (see Box 4). There are several options for expanding these pathways, and they vary in terms of the degree of change that would be needed to existing legal frameworks: (1) using or adapting an existing study or work visa to facilitate use by refugees, (2) establishing a

59 Author interview with official from Rutgers University-Newark, School of Public Affairs and Administration, University Alliance for Refugees and At-Risk Migrants, 17 September 2020; Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020. The University Global Coalition, for example, has more than 100 members. See University Global Coalition, 'Signatories', accessed 29 April 2021.

60 In Italy, for example, UNHCR convened a meeting with Italian universities in October 2019 to engage them in efforts to integrate refugees in higher education. The University Corridors project was presented in this meeting, after which several additional universities joined the initiative. Author interview with official from UNHCR Italy, 9 October 2020. See also UNHCR, *Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019).

61 UNHCR, *Refugee Education 2030*.

62 MPI Europe and the Refugee Hub, 'Global Mapping: Case Study Report on Finland'.

refugee-specific work or study visa, or (3) using or creating a broader humanitarian entry category that allows for refugee sponsorship by a university or an employer, additional and separate from resettlement. Each option has different advantages and drawbacks with regard to accessibility, legal and administrative complexity, the rights granted to refugees, and protection from refoulement. Ultimately, the most suitable option will vary according to the prevailing legal and political context in each country.

BOX 4

Common Legal Barriers to Refugees' Entry and Stay on Study and Work Visas

The procedures and requirements for study and work visas are often complex, even for traditional applicants. These measures often pose particular barriers to access for refugees.

- **Travel documentation.** Study and work visas often require applicants to present a valid, unexpired passport, which refugees often lack and are unable to acquire, though some countries also allow another valid travel document, such as a Convention Travel Document issued to refugees by states. Some visas, including Finland's work visas and France's study visas, also require applicants to prove they are legally staying in the country where they submit the application. As refugees often lack legal residence in their host country, this may be difficult or impossible to provide. Others, such as Ireland's study visas, require full copies of previous passports.
- **Proof of qualifications or previous experience.** Work visas often require applicants, especially for high-skilled positions, to present evidence of relevant degrees and professional registrations, which refugees may have left behind when fleeing or may not be able to retrieve from their country of origin. Similarly, study visas sometimes request applicants to submit proof of previous study at the necessary level. Some visas require these credentials to have been recognised in the destination country. Germany, for example, requires work visa applicants to have either German qualifications or a certificate of equivalence from the relevant professional or regulatory body. In addition, work visas can set minimum paid work experience requirements. For example, Canada's Atlantic Immigration Pilot requires paid work experience in the last three years for its intermediate- and high-skilled streams, and it excludes any period of self-employment. But some host countries prevent refugees from working legally, making it difficult to obtain the necessary work experience or formal documentation of previous employment (e.g., attestation, contract).

BOX 4 (cont.)**Common Legal Barriers to Refugees' Entry and Stay on Study and Work Visas**

- **Language requirements.** Work visas often set minimum language requirements that must be met either with proof of education in the destination-country language (e.g., a university degree) or by passing a language test, which can be expensive to obtain. Refugees also may not have access to training to develop the necessary language skills. For example, Germany's work visa requires applicants to speak German at the B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Some study visas also require proof of language skills. In the United Kingdom, visa applicants for bachelor's programmes must demonstrate English skills at the B2 level.
- **Costs.** The costs of applying for a study or work visa can quickly add up. Refugees may need to pay exit permit fees on departing (as is the case in Jordan and Lebanon, for example). The costs of the application itself can be high: the UK Skilled Worker visa (formerly Tier 2 general work visa), for example, charges an application fee of GBP 610 for visas lasting up to three years and GBP 1,220 for those lasting for more than three years.
- **Proof of financial means.** International students must also generally provide proof of their ability to support themselves throughout the duration of their studies. In Ireland, for example, study visa applicants must demonstrate immediate access to at least 7,000 euros (the estimated cost of living in Ireland for a student for one academic year) and ready access to at least 7,000 euros for each subsequent year of the degree, over and above course fees for each of those years, with bank statements documenting these funds. Applicants for work visas may need to demonstrate that they have sufficient funds in a bank account to support themselves and their family members on arrival. Refugees who have not been able to work legally in their host country may lack the financial means to meet these requirements. In some countries, refugees are also unable to open bank accounts, which would make access to financial resources difficult to prove.
- **Proof of intention to return.** In some countries, applicants for nonimmigrant visas, including study visas, must declare or prove they intend to return to their country of origin or last residence once their visa expires. The U.S., Canadian, and Irish study visas include some form of this requirement. However, refugees often lack the ability to return to their host country once they leave it and thus cannot meet this requirement.

BOX 4 (cont.)**Common Legal Barriers to Refugees' Entry and Stay on Study and Work Visas**

Consular officers often have a great deal of discretion in how these requirements are applied and when waivers are granted (when possible). Often, it is the responsibility of individual consular officers to use their judgement regarding whether applicants' statements are truthful, if they will use a visa for its intended purpose, or whether the supporting evidence they submit is valid; officers can often also choose to request additional documentation from particular applicants. Yet officers may not always be familiar with the types of documentation presented by refugees or the possibility to grant waivers. Moreover, visa applications often require interviews at consular offices; this may be far from where refugees live and require travel within (or even outside) the host country, which can be costly and may also run afoul of restrictions on movement by refugees.

A final difficulty can be access to permanent status. For refugee students, the clearest pathway to permanence, aside from claiming asylum, is to find employment and transition to a work visa after graduation. But many countries issue temporary work visas that link the holder to a specific employer, meaning that if refugees were to lose their job they could be required to leave the country if they are unable to secure new employment within the allocated transition period. Most employment-based admissions come first in the form of a temporary work visa, which may include requirements such as a labour market test or that the visa holder leave the country in order to renew the visa, with a pathway for permanent residence usually opening up after several years. And such employment pathways to permanence are often restricted to high-skilled workers.

Sources: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), '[Apply for a Visa](#)', accessed 8 October 2020; INIS, '[Financial Requirements for Study Visas](#)', accessed 8 October 2020; International Refugee Assistance Project, *Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugees and Displaced Persons: A Blueprint for the U.S. Government* (New York: International Refugee Assistance Project, 2020); UK Government, '[Skilled Worker Visa](#)', accessed 15 March 2021; UK Government, *Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules* (London: UK House of Commons, 2020), ST 13.1; Make It in Germany, '[Working in Germany as an IT Specialist](#)', accessed 7 October 2020; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, '[Student Visa](#)', accessed 4 March 2021; Government of Canada, '[Eligibility Criteria for High-Skilled Workers – Atlantic Immigration Pilot](#)', updated 21 January 2020; Government of Canada, '[Eligibility Criteria for Intermediate-Skilled Workers – Atlantic Immigration Pilot](#)', updated 21 January 2020; Make It in Germany, '[Who Needs Recognition?](#)', accessed 16 October 2020.

Use or Adapt Existing Work or Study Visas

Building a third-country education or employment pathway within an existing visa structure may be an appealing option for many reasons. First, because a legal framework for entry already exists, legislative changes to create a new visa category or class are not required and, beyond ensuring that applicants meet the general visa requirements, no additional buy-in is needed from the national government to continue to support the admissions process. Further, study or work visas in many countries are either not subject to caps on admission or have admission caps that are much higher than those applied to humanitarian programmes. In the long term, pathways that are underpinned by accessible visa frameworks may also allow for pathways to operate somewhat autonomously, with applicants able to manage the visa process with relatively little support, reducing the resources needed to sustain these programmes. For these reasons, most third-country education and employment pathways in operation to date have used existing visa programmes to facilitate refugees' entry and stay in destination countries. Existing pathways also provide a ready opportunity to develop a 'proof of concept' to demonstrate to higher education institutions and potential employers that refugees are able and qualified to take up study and work opportunities, and perhaps incentivise investments in more targeted programmes.

However, in practice refugees often face numerous barriers to qualifying for and obtaining mainstream study and work visas (see Box 4). These visas may also restrict refugees' rights in ways that are problematic. For example, temporary study or work visas do not always allow holders to bring dependent family members with them. For this reason, CSOs, universities, employers, and governments that have sought to use existing visa frameworks to admit refugee students and workers have often found it necessary to seek out areas of flexibility or pursue changes to adapt these frameworks for use by refugees. There are several options for adaptation, depending on the level of engagement and support from the visa-issuing country's government.

Approaches to finding flexibility within existing visa structures adopted by CSOs, universities, employers, and UNHCR. There are often flexibilities in existing visa frameworks that allow for visas to be issued to applicants without passports using alternative forms of documentation or for the granting of waivers to certain visa-related fees or requirements. In Germany, for example, an individual embassy or mission can choose to waive a study visa fee for a specific case for humanitarian reasons, and the

requirement to produce a passport can also be waived.⁶³ In the United States, regulations also allow for nonimmigrant visas to be issued without a passport, though there are no provisions for fee waivers.

In many cases, programme partners have assisted applicants with navigating these flexibilities or coordinated with the national authorities to facilitate any missing documentation. Universities can, for example, provide evidence of financial support for a study visa. The Syrian Scholars Initiative⁶⁴ in Japan, for example, relies on universities to issue a proof of financial support that Syrian refugees can present with their visa application.⁶⁵ In Canada, TBB is working with the World Education Service (WES) to issue Educational Credential Assessments as needed for the EMPP.⁶⁶ Partners involved in refugee student programmes also reported in interviews that programmes implemented by well-known organisations or universities, or where scholarship providers have an existing relationship with consular offices, find it easier to help their students receive visas.⁶⁷ For work visas, focusing on shortage occupations could also ease some of the barriers refugees usually encounter when they apply, such as language requirements (see Box 4). In Germany, for example, IT specialists are not required to provide proof of German language skills, as other applicants for work visas are.⁶⁸

Study and work visa holders may have opportunities to eventually transition to some form of long-term residence, though navigating them may also take some creativity and assistance. For study visa holders, scholarship providers sometimes offer job-search assistance and soft-skills training to help refugees transition to work permits at the end of their studies.⁶⁹ But identifying and exploiting areas of flexibility to overcome visa and

63 *Residence Act* in the version promulgated on 25 February 2008 (*Federal Law Gazette* I p. 162), most recently amended by Article 4b of the Act of 17 February 2020 (*Federal Law Gazette* I p. 166), s. 3(2). *Residence Act*, s. 3(2); inquiries about waivers need to be directed on a case-by-case basis to the German mission responsible for processing the application. Applications—along with all the required additional documents—then need to be submitted in person at a German mission and meet the specific documentation and application procedures set out by each mission, which can vary.

64 Japan ICU Foundation, ‘[Syrian Scholars Initiative](#)’, accessed 25 March 2021.

65 Author interview with official from the Japan ICU Foundation, 10 September 2020.

66 TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

67 MPI Europe and the Refugee Hub, ‘Global Mapping of Opportunities for Growth of Resettlement and Advancement of Complementary Pathways: Case Study Report on the United States’ (unpublished working paper, revised March 2021); MPI Europe and the Refugee Hub, ‘Global Mapping of Opportunities for Growth of Resettlement and Advancement of Complementary Pathways: Case Study Report on Germany’ (unpublished working paper, revised March 2021).

68 Make It in Germany, ‘[Working in Germany as an IT Specialist](#)’, accessed 7 October 2020.

69 The Japan ICU Foundation, for example, has supported refugee students with resume writing and interview prep. Author interview with official from the Japan ICU Foundation, 10 September 2020.

residency barriers for each individual applicant can be time consuming and resource intensive. This has been the case for the EMPP pilot in Canada, for example. Documentation issues, waivers, and additional security checks can also lead to significant delays and unpredictable processing times for applicants, which partners in the EMPP pilot have indicated can be a deterrent for employers looking to fill a vacancy swiftly.⁷⁰

Existing visa channels also at times leave refugee beneficiaries with some measure of uncertainty about the future. For refugee students looking to transition from a study visa to another status, work visas can be difficult to obtain, even for graduates of destination-country universities, and some work visa programmes are already severely oversubscribed. This would be an issue for any future third-country education programme in the United States, for example, where restrictions on the primary high-skilled visa (H-1B) that were implemented in 2004 have limited the success rates of student applicants for these visas,⁷¹ and the number of students transitioning to work visas has fallen in recent years.⁷² Seeking asylum in the third country is not always a reliable fallback. A positive outcome to an asylum application is not guaranteed—see, for example, the United Kingdom,⁷³ where entering on a nonimmigrant visa status and then claiming asylum can prejudice an asylum application, and the United States where asylum applications are generally not accepted more than a year after entry.⁷⁴ For others, applying for asylum can lead to long periods without the ability to work while the applications are processed. The lack of certainty about whether refugee students will receive visas or be able to stay in the country long term can also deter potential university partners or private funders; this has reportedly been the case in the United States, where an extremely challenging study visa framework has made it difficult for scholarship programmes to admit refugee students from abroad.⁷⁵

Nonlegislative or nonregulatory options that can be deployed by governments. At the most basic level, governments could train consular officers working in host countries on topics such as the procedures for issuing visas to applicants without passports, how to

⁷⁰ TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

⁷¹ James McKivigan, 'Effect of Federal Policy Changes on International Students Pursuing Higher Education Studies in the United States', *Higher Education Research* 5, no. 2 (2020): 60–67; C. Amuedo-Dorantes and D. Furtado, 'Settling for Academia? H-1B Visas and the Career Choices of International Students in the United States', *Journal of Human Resources* 54, no. 2 (2019): 401–429.

⁷² Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, 'International Students in the United States in 2017', *Migration Information Source*, 9 May 2018.

⁷³ Author interview with official from UNHCR UK, 30 September 2020.

⁷⁴ Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020.

⁷⁵ Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020.

recognise a Convention Travel Document, and the possibilities to waive visa fees or other requirements. Foreign ministries could also share information with consular offices about specific refugee scholarship or employment programmes so that officers are able to recognise visa applications from refugees participating in these programmes. In Germany, DAAD worked with the Federal Foreign Office to share a list of all students accepted to the Leadership for Syria programme with consular offices in the relevant countries. Consular officers could then check visa applicants against this list.⁷⁶ Contact information for scholarship coordinators, employment programme recruiters, or UNHCR country offices could also be shared with consular officers to enable them to raise questions or verify applicants' participation in specific programmes.

There may be other nonlegislative steps governments can take to lower the barriers refugees face to moving within existing visa frameworks. In some countries, it may be possible to formalise some waivers for refugee applicants without amending regulations. In Australia, there are plans for TBB to enter into a labour agreement with the national government.⁷⁷ Labour agreements typically last for up to five years and allow approved entities to sponsor skilled workers where there is a demonstrated need—and, crucially, they allow the government to provide alternative means to satisfy certain visa conditions, such as issuing temporary travel permits as an alternative to the passport requirement.⁷⁸ On a more informal level, governments could adjust internal procedures to prioritise visa or residence applications from refugee students or workers participating in recognised programmes. In Germany, the Federal Foreign Office agreed to expedite the visa applications of students on the DAAD Leadership for Syria programme; DAAD reported that its students were able to receive visa appointments within four weeks of filing an application, a process that normally takes eight to nine months.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, in Japan, the government has in practice been providing humanitarian visas to all refugee graduate students who are not able to enter work immediately upon graduating, similarly to all other Syrian individuals who cannot return to Syria on humanitarian grounds.⁸⁰ The extent to which such nonlegislative solutions are available, however, will depend heavily on the legal frameworks that govern the granting of visas and residency in each country and the extent to which these flexibilities already exist in law. Such approaches also depend on the continued willingness of governments and nongovernmental partners to facilitate

⁷⁶ Author interview with officials from DAAD, 4 January 2021.

⁷⁷ Author call with representative of TBB, 30 September 2020.

⁷⁸ Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, '[Nominating a Position](#)', updated 27 July 2020.

⁷⁹ Author interview with officials from DAAD, 4 January 2021.

⁸⁰ Author interview with official from Japan ICU Foundation, 10 September 2020.

applications for refugees and ensure that existing waivers and nonlegislative solutions are applied. The number of refugees who are able to benefit is likely to be limited by the funding made available to support facilitation. Sustained funding for staff to provide this facilitation and sustained political commitment are both needed to maintain the accessibility of existing pathways to refugees, without further legal or regulatory changes.

Formally adapting visa and residency legal and regulatory frameworks to provide additional waivers or rights for refugees. To provide a sustained pathway that is independently accessible by refugees, more extensive adjustments are likely to be needed to regulatory and legal frameworks to remove barriers. A first step would be for governments to review existing regulatory and legal frameworks to determine where waivers already exist to requirements that could pose barriers to refugees (e.g., waivers for visa fees) and where additional flexibilities are needed. Regulations governing visa issuance could then be amended to clarify how existing waivers should be applied to refugees on a systemic basis and to introduce new waivers where needed. In some cases, the underlying visa laws themselves will need to be changed and will require a legislative proposal to do so by the government.

While making permanent changes to visa and residency rules may be the most direct and effective means of fixing visa access barriers, in practice doing so often requires extensive political buy-in to the idea of creating complementary pathways. Another way to achieve the same effect could be to pursue broader changes to visa frameworks that make study and work visas simpler and more accessible to all applicants. A law under consideration in the United States as part of a wider immigration reform package would allow study visa applicants to have ‘dual intent’, meaning they would not have to prove they intend to return after their studies are over—a change that would remove a major barrier for both immigrant and refugee students.⁸¹

Create New, Dedicated Study and Work Visas for Refugees

Given the challenges inherent in using existing visa pathways, some organisations have pursued alternative models, including the creation of bespoke study and work visas for refugees. In the United States, the International Refugee Assistance Project has proposed creating a new refugee study visa.⁸² Refugee-specific study and work visas may be able to address some of the barriers identified above, for example by providing greater protection

⁸¹ *U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021*, HR 1177, 117th Cong., 1st sess. (introduced 18 February 2021).

⁸² International Refugee Assistance Project, *Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugees and Displaced Persons: A Blueprint for the U.S. Government* (New York: International Refugee Assistance Project, 2020).

from refoulement or by providing more complete access to services. They may be useful in countries, such as the United States, where extensive legislative changes would be needed to make existing visas work well for refugee students, or where there is a clear openness on the part of the legislature to consider large-scale changes to immigration or refugee frameworks. TBB and other actors that have been heavily involved in implementing pathways programmes to date have also suggested that standalone visas may be a more viable way of scaling up programmes in some contexts, as they can reduce the amount of time that must be spent helping individual applicants obtain waivers and alternative documentation to satisfy standard visa requirements.⁸³

Pursue Flexible Refugee Admission Streams

A final option is to create a flexible refugee sponsorship stream to admit refugees on third-country employment or education pathways. This is the model that has been used by WUSC in Canada, for example, which uses the country's private sponsorship programme to admit refugee students for study on scholarship at Canadian universities. Private refugee sponsorship does not exist in most countries, however, and would need to be introduced via legislation. In countries where they exist, humanitarian visas, such as those used by the Humanitarian Corridors in France, which admit applicants on humanitarian grounds with the possibility of applying for asylum after arrival, might also be used for this purpose.

Private refugee sponsorship or humanitarian visa programmes would have several advantages. As with refugee-specific study or work visas, these streams could be designed to avoid the documentation and cost barriers associated with most existing visa streams. They could also provide an expedited pathway to permanent residence for beneficiaries, and they could potentially benefit refugees at a wider range of skill levels. Finally, unlike bespoke study or work visas, which would only benefit refugees entering specifically for study or work, refugee sponsorship programmes could be designed flexibly to allow a wide range of organisations or individuals—universities, employers, or even extended family members—to sponsor refugees under the same visa framework, making these streams a potentially efficient investment of political capital.

C. Develop a Pipeline of Eligible Applicants

Once programmes are operational, they need to attract a steady stream of qualified beneficiaries to keep the pathway open or even expand it. While the ultimate goal is for

⁸³ Author interview with official from TBB, 29 September 2020.

these programmes to become self-referring, targeted outreach will still be needed to raise awareness among prospective beneficiaries about the opportunities available. For education programmes, this requires connecting with potential beneficiaries who are likely to meet higher education institutions' admissions requirements, including language skills. Scaling up bridging or preparatory programmes to help ensure applicants' eligibility and provide a more centralised approach to recruitment could also be beneficial. And for employment programmes, this requires creating avenues for employers to connect with qualified refugee candidates.

An additional consideration is the qualifications required to enter a degree programme or perform a job. Globally, most international students study at the graduate level. This is particularly the case for international students in English-language degree programmes, which are primarily offered at the master's or PhD level.⁸⁴ Most programmes benefiting refugee students have thus also been at the graduate level, meaning that refugee students must have already acquired a bachelor's degree, or equivalent, in their country of origin or another country. Similarly, work visas with a pathway to permanence tend to be most readily available to highly qualified individuals, which has meant that, to date, the third-country employment pathways in Canada and in Australia have primarily benefited refugees with a postsecondary education. These structural factors mean that programmes will need to connect with potential applicants who have very specific education or employment backgrounds—traits that are not captured in any detail in traditional refugee or host-country registration databases, which could hinder outreach efforts.⁸⁵ It may also be useful to explore whether databases maintained by host countries (such as school enrolment databases), UN partners, or nonprofit agencies supporting livelihoods or educational programming in host countries could be used to identify refugees who might be qualified for complementary pathway opportunities.

To overcome language barriers, most existing education or employment programmes have opted to either target refugee populations that already speak the language of the destination country, or they have recruited English speakers, with plans to provide training in the destination-country language after arrival. The Middle East Scholars Programme in Lithuania and the Japan ICU Foundation scholarship for Syrians, for example, have both recruited students for English-language degree programmes.⁸⁶

84 OECD, *Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020).

85 IRCC, 'The Economic Mobility Pathways Project'.

86 Author interview with official from Japan ICU Foundation, 10 September 2020.

To date, complementary pathways programmes have often relied on partnerships with organisations operating on the ground in host countries to identify possible applicants. WUSC disseminates information about its Student Refugee Program through local WUSC offices in some countries and collaborates with partners such as UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee to do so elsewhere. UNHCR country offices have also played a critical role in disseminating information about scholarship programmes, particularly those such as the Columbia University Scholarship that are offered by individual universities and not affiliated with a larger programme or platform, such as WUSC or the University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE) in Italy. UNHCR also recently launched the Opportunities platform,⁸⁷ an online database of information about in-country and third-country scholarship opportunities available to refugee students.⁸⁸ The platform will eventually be expanded to include labour mobility opportunities. And TBB's Talent Catalog has provided an opportunity for more than 20,000 refugees to register their interest in labour mobility opportunities and submit their CVs for potential employers to review.⁸⁹

Local partners also play a critical role in providing individual case management and application assistance to applicants, and often conduct prescreening and vetting for university and business partners. RefugePoint, a nonprofit with an office located in Kenya, for example, prescreened 1,200 applications for the EMPP, eventually creating a shortlist of 24 candidates for Canadian employers to then review and interview.⁹⁰ IIE and DAAD similarly conducted an initial screening of applicants to the Syrian Scholarships and Leadership for Syria programmes, reviewing applications and interviewing candidates before matching them with offers of admission from universities. According to programme administrators, these case management and screening services are a critical element of ensuring programmes result in actual job offers and university admissions offers, a prerequisite to scaling programmes up, and helpful in making sure that placements are successful. A representative of DAAD, for example, attributed the success of the Leadership for Syria programme in part to the screening process, as well as to the organisation's efforts to match students with higher education institutions that were well suited to each student's interests and would provide a supportive environment.⁹¹ For new programmes, identifying local partners that can help with the identification of refugee

87 This platform was developed with the support of the CRISP. See UNHCR, '[Scholarship Opportunities for Refugees](#)', accessed 9 May 2021.

88 UNHCR, '[UNHCR Launches New Portal with Verified Higher Education Opportunities for Refugees](#)' (news release, 2 October 2020).

89 TBB, '[The Talent Catalog](#)', accessed 25 March 2021.

90 Author interview with representative of RefugePoint, Kenya, 2 October 2020.

91 Author interview with officials from DAAD, 4 January 2021.

students and job seekers and with the processing of their applications is thus a critical step.

Such individual case work is extremely resource intensive, however, and particularly when it is paired with extensive support to help applicants navigate complex visa processes. Maintaining individualised support may be difficult if complementary pathways programmes are to reach larger numbers of beneficiaries and to become accessible to refugees without extensive facilitation. There is thus a need to think through both who pays for these recruitment services (see Section 3.E.) and whether there are ways to enable complementary pathways' identification and referral processes to operate more autonomously and begin to achieve economies of scale. Removing some of the policy barriers that inhibit refugees from accessing visas or creating more inclusive university admissions processes could also help to achieve this aim in the longer term by removing the need for specific immigration assistance for each beneficiary. Initiatives such as UNHCR's Opportunities platform and TBB's Talent Catalog may also help refugees and higher education institutions, scholarship providers, and employers to connect more autonomously. Qualification recognition pilots such as the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, supported by the Council of Europe,⁹² and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants⁹³ may also provide a way in the future for employers and higher education institutions to independently assess the suitability of refugees' qualifications, without the intermediation of a case worker.

The screening requirements of some programmes can also limit the pool of potential beneficiaries and add to the administrative burden. Many current programmes require applicants to have undergone a refugee status determination either by UNHCR or by a host-country government. This can exclude applicants who have not had the opportunity to undergo a full status determination process, particularly as refugees in many host countries are primarily given status on a prima facie basis. Requiring applicants to undergo a recognition procedure also places additional demands on UNHCR and can delay applicants' access to pathways programmes.

92 Council of Europe, '[European Qualifications Passport for Refugees](#)', accessed 25 February 2021.

93 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), '[UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants](#)', accessed 25 April 2021.

D. Cultivate a Welcoming Environment

Refugees entering a third country through employment and education pathways do not typically qualify for the same level of support as those who enter through resettlement. This can include lesser access to public health care and mental health services, free language services, and support with finding housing or navigating other services (such as enrolling family members in school or finding affordable child care). Moreover, many of the entities most engaged in supporting their arrival, such as higher education institutions and private businesses, will likely have limited familiarity with common concerns and support needs among refugees. Yet these post-arrival supports are critical. Opportunities for refugees to develop language skills are particularly essential, as students may need to rely on their language skills to obtain work and thus residency after graduation, and many permanent residency programmes require applicants to demonstrate a certain level of language proficiency.

One approach that can enable refugees to access these integration services is to use humanitarian channels, such as refugee private sponsorship (for example, in Canada) or a special humanitarian programme (as in Australia), to facilitate their entry. This would ensure that, upon arrival, refugee students or workers receive refugee status in the destination country and the benefits it entails, such as access to public health insurance or lower tuition fees.

For example, during the third-country employment pathway pilot in Australia, the government agreed to issue a small number of special humanitarian visas to participants in the programme, who thus had access to the additional social and integration supports provided to humanitarian entrants, and found that this was associated with better outcomes, particularly for accompanying family members.⁹⁴ Some scholarship providers in France have also advocated for refugees arriving through scholarship programmes to be given refugee status.⁹⁵ Such programmes would need to ensure that such places were additional to existing humanitarian and resettlement commitments to avoid a net reduction in government support for resettlement or substituting government resettlement programmes.

In addition, there is value in cultivating a welcoming environment within the universities and businesses where refugees arriving on pathways programmes will spend most of their

⁹⁴ TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

⁹⁵ Author interview with official from l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, 22 September 2020.

time. In the United States, for example, several groups including the University Alliance for Refugees and At-Risk Migrants and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers have led an effort to adapt university admissions practices to be more open to refugees and other vulnerable students. In Germany, DAAD has funded (using financing that stems from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research) the Integra and Welcome programmes at approximately 150 higher education institutions to build language courses, introductory programmes, and academic counselling services to support refugee students.⁹⁶ In France, l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie has played a similar role by channelling funding to universities that offer opportunities for in-country refugees (mainly), and Réseau MEnS has supported them with guidelines to adapt campuses and staffing to address refugees' needs.⁹⁷ To this end, UNHCR has launched University Staff for Refugees, a pilot training course for university staff working with refugee students.⁹⁸ And in Italy, UNHCR has worked with the University Corridors programme to provide university staff with training on how to help refugee students deal with trauma and on these students' legal status situation.⁹⁹ Coordination platforms to support the implementation of education and employment programmes could do the same, providing guidance and training to individual employers and higher education institutions or distributing funding to provide language classes or counselling services.

Sponsorship initiatives could be an additional way to provide support to refugee students and workers, in addition to existing CSO and nongovernmental welcome and integration initiatives, and they could be particularly useful in fulfilling the need for guidance and mentorship support in the first few months or year after arrival. Some programmes have already experimented with blending refugee sponsorship and complementary pathways models. In Italy, the UNICORE programme has matched some students with Italian host families.¹⁰⁰ TBB and the Reset network, which coordinates the UK community sponsorship programme, have developed a pilot project to engage sponsorship groups to help settle displaced persons including refugees arriving in the United Kingdom on Skilled Worker Visas.¹⁰¹ A final, and perhaps longer-term option, is to work to change immigration policies

96 DAAD, “Welcome” – Students Helping Refugees’, accessed 22 March 2021; DAAD, ‘Integrating Refugees in Higher Education – The “Integra” Funding Programme’, accessed 22 March 2021.

97 Author interview with official from l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, 22 September 2020; Author interview with official from Réseau MEnS, 25 November 2020; Campus France, ‘The AIMES Programme Run by the AUF Aiming to Facilitate the Integration of Migrant Students’, accessed 22 March 2021.

98 University Staff for Refugees (UNISTAR), ‘Welcome to the UNISTAR Course’, accessed 23 April 2021.

99 Author interview with official from UNHCR Italy, 9 October 2020.

100 Author interview with official from UNHCR Italy, 9 October 2020.

101 Kate Brown, ‘Exploring New Forms of Community-Led Welcome: What Else Can the Power of Community Sponsorship Enable?’, Reset, 5 January 2021.

more broadly to provide better access to integration services and social supports for refugees traveling on work and study visas.

E. Pursue Flexible and Diverse Funding Models

As most complementary pathways programmes operate as public-private partnerships, maintaining a stable source of funding that allows the programme to grow is critical. In order to support refugee applicants and, at times, their family members, programmes generally need funds to cover:

- visa fees, testing, and credential recognition procedures necessary for job and scholarship applications and visa applications;
- international travel costs, as well as predeparture costs associated with international travel and conducting a job or scholarship interview;
- initial housing and settlement expenses, such as obtaining basic home furnishings;
- for education programmes, tuition fees and living expenses for the duration of the programme;
- support for language learning, health insurance, and other forms of integration assistance; and
- programme operations, including the work of coordinating with partner organisations as well as recruitment and screening operations in host countries.

The funding context is complicated by the fact that refugees who travel on a study or work visa will typically not qualify for any kind of social assistance. Refugees on study visas, for example, are charged the full tuition that is applied to any other international student, which can be substantial, unless they have been awarded a scholarship.¹⁰² Study and work

¹⁰² Universities often rely on high fees charged to international students to raise funds, and in countries where refugee students must pay the tuition rate for international students, these fees can be prohibitively expensive. In Ireland, for example, international student tuition costs are estimated to be between 10,000 and 15,000 euros per year. In the Netherlands, fees for a master's programme can be as high as 20,000 euros. See Irish Refugee Council, *Education in Ireland: A Guide for Protection Applicants, Those with Refugee Status, Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain* (Dublin: Irish Refugee Council, 2019); Study in Holland, 'Tuition Fees', accessed 8 October 2020.

visa holders are also often barred from accessing public health insurance¹⁰³ and, as noted in the previous subsection, most cannot benefit from the language or integration programmes that are typically offered to resettled refugees. Most student visa programmes also require students to study full time and prohibit working more than part time (usually up to 20 hours per week),¹⁰⁴ making it difficult for students to be self-supporting if they do not already have the necessary financial resources.

Existing third-country employment and education programmes have tapped into a variety of sources of funding:

- **Regional, national, and local government support.** In some countries, such as Japan and Germany, national governments have so far been a primary funder of complementary pathways programmes, particularly scholarship programmes (although in the Japanese case, only for government-led programmes).¹⁰⁵ Regional governments have also provided some funding. For example, in Australia, funding for the Regional Ready Pilot Program came from the Government of Victoria.¹⁰⁶ In Spain, the government of Catalonia provides a stipend for living costs to refugees who are selected for the region's scholarship programme.¹⁰⁷
- **Universities and employers.** Universities themselves have proven to be important funding partners, often by providing tuition and fee waivers or by leading independent fundraising efforts. The Syria Scholarship programme administered by IIE, for example, relied in part on tuition waivers granted by participating U.S. colleges and universities.¹⁰⁸ Some employers participating in complementary pathways programmes have also covered refugees' visa and relocation costs, but the amount of support varies widely depending on the employer.¹⁰⁹

103 This is the case for work visa holders in Finland, and for study visa holders in Ireland and the Netherlands.

104 In Ireland, for example, international students are authorised to work full time during the months of June, July, August, and September and from 15 December to 15 January. At all other times, they may not work more than 20 hours per week. See Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), '[Note to Employers](#)', accessed 8 October 2020.

105 And in Canada, some funding for the EMPP (via TBB) came from IRCC's International Migration Capacity Building Program. See TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

106 TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

107 European Commission, '[Catalan Scholarship for Refugees](#)', updated 2 December 2019.

108 Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020.

109 TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

- **In-kind contributions.** In the United States, the IIE's Syria Scholarship programme was able to coordinate free language testing with the Educational Testing Service for their applicants.¹¹⁰ Programmes such as Miles4Migrants that collect donations of airline miles could be another source of in-kind contributions.
- **Foundations and private donors.** Foundations and private donors have played a critical role, particularly in supporting operational and coordination costs. The Shapiro Foundation, for example, has been a primary funder of the EMPP pilot in Canada.
- **Student levies.** Some education scholarships and pathways programmes have also relied on contributions from small donors, including student levies. This model, pioneered by WUSC in Canada, has been adopted by the Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies, which is in the process of launching a student fundraising campaign; the Yes! Fund plans to ask students to contribute USD 1 as part of their registration fees to support scholarships for refugee students. The fund will launch first in Portugal, with the aim of raising funds at higher education institutions globally.¹¹¹
- **Loans.** TBB has extended zero-interest loans to a small number of refugees who were unable to cover immigration costs, and it has connected others with government- and nonprofit-led microloan schemes (such as Canada's Immigration Loan Program).¹¹² TBB is also working with a lending institution in Canada (Windmill Microlending) to pilot a programme that would allow refugees to access loans while in their host country and repay them after they arrive and start work in Canada. UNHCR is developing a transborder loan mechanism that would allow for access to similar loans on a wider scale.
- **Social enterprises and impact investing.** The Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies has also been exploring the launch of a social business, the proceeds of which could support scholarship programmes. In addition, the platform has launched an impact investing service with BlueCrow Capital, which will donate one-third of its proceeds to support the platform's work.¹¹³

The most promising approaches have tended to rely on a blend of funding models that share costs across partners. For education pathways in particular, the costs of tuition, living

¹¹⁰ Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020.

¹¹¹ Global Platform for Syrian Students, *2019 Annual Report: Proud of Our Students* (Lisbon: Global Platform for Syrian Students, 2020).

¹¹² TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

¹¹³ RRM, 'BlueCrow Dynamic Investment Fund', accessed 25 March 2021.

expenses, medical coverage, and various other supports are likely to be too high for a single donor. WUSC sponsored students, for example, start working during their second year to cover their living expenses. A U.S.-based programme provider also indicated in an interview that cost-sharing was beneficial for fundraising, with universities more willing to contribute tuition waivers where funding is also available to support students' living expenses.¹¹⁴ Some programmes, such as the DAAD Leadership for Syria and Leadership for Africa initiatives, have relied almost entirely on government funding to date. Purely government-led efforts are likely to come up against the constraints of public budgets, which could limit further growth. Engaging a variety of funding partners, thus spreading out the financial risk, may be a particularly smart strategy as governments and broader economies continue to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, while the government of Canada has partially funded the EMPP, private donors such as the Shapiro Foundation have helped cover a significant share of the programme's operational costs. Ultimately, funding models will depend heavily on context, including the constraints imposed by legal frameworks, the structure of the higher education sector (for education pathways), and the interests and capabilities of the partners involved (particularly employers and higher education institutions).

114 Author interview with official from IIE, 30 September 2020.



A refugee man at a Rohingya cultural centre he established in the United States. © UNHCR/Joshua Lott

4 Regional State of Play and Opportunities for Growth

The landscape of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes varies enormously across countries, as do opportunities to launch new programmes and expand those that already exist. This section presents a regional analysis of good practices and opportunities for growth in Asia and the Pacific, Europe, North America, and South America. It is based on the global mapping conducted for this study, and it also presents highlights from the in-depth analysis of case study countries.

A. Asia and the Pacific

Resettlement

In Asia and the Pacific, refugee resettlement has, to date, been limited to Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea. Elsewhere in the region, reception and integration systems for refugees remain nascent and protection conditions are relatively weak.

Australia and New Zealand have traditionally operated the largest resettlement programmes in the region, though these programmes have recently taken opposite trajectories. While Australia has historically been the largest contributor to resettlement in the region and one of the largest resettlement countries globally, it cut its refugee intake in October 2020 by 5,000 people per year due to pandemic-related budget cuts, and the share of resettlement that is based on UNHCR referrals has decreased in recent years.¹¹⁵ An election is due in 2022, and its outcomes will shape the potential for growth and the future direction of the Australian resettlement programme.¹¹⁶ By contrast, New Zealand reaffirmed its commitment to resettlement following the October 2020 election. This followed on a move in July 2020 to increase New Zealand's annual refugee quota to 1,500 places, although this target will not be met in 2020–21 due to the pandemic.¹¹⁷ Another opportunity to grow the programme may come when the government conducts the next three-year review of the national resettlement strategy in 2021.

In Japan and the Republic of Korea, which launched their programmes in 2010 and 2015 respectively, resettlement quotas have so far been relatively small, though there are indications that both programmes may have potential for further growth. In 2017, the Republic of Korea extended its pilot resettlement programme and doubled the number of allocated slots from 30 to 60 refugees.¹¹⁸ Japan has also doubled its resettlement quota from 30 to 60 refugee admissions per year beginning in 2020.¹¹⁹ In Japan, research

115 Claire Higgins, 'How Australia's Federal Budget 2020-21 Impacts Refugees and Asylum Seekers', University of New South Wales, Andrew and Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, 7 October 2020; Author interview with official from UNHCR Regional Representation in Canberra, 28 September 2020.

116 Author interview with official from UNHCR Regional Representation in Canberra, 28 September 2020.

117 New Zealand Immigration, 'New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme', accessed 25 February 2021.

118 Author written communication by UNHCR, 9 June 2021.

119 Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council for Refugee Affairs, 'Detailed Implementation Modalities for Admission of Refugees through Third-Country Resettlement', updated 28 June 2019 (unofficial translation provided to the authors by UNHCR Japan in December 2020).

suggests that an increase in the involvement of communities and civil-society actors, improved integration support, and stronger partnerships between government officials and local actors might enable the expansion of existing resettlement programmes in the medium to long term. For more details on Japan, see Box 5.

Beyond these countries, as protection conditions remain weak and many countries in the region are either countries of origin for refugees or host countries, there are currently few opportunities to establish new or additional resettlement programmes. One exception is the Philippines, which is one of the few countries in Southeast Asia to have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol.¹²⁰ While the Philippine government expressed the willingness to accept refugees and forcibly displaced people, including Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020,¹²¹ there have been no concrete steps towards introducing a resettlement programme. In addition, the Government of the Philippines has supported the global resettlement program by hosting an Emergency Transit Mechanism.¹²²

BOX 5 **Refugee Resettlement in Japan**

Japan commenced its resettlement programme in 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, the country operated a pilot programme that resettled 86 refugees from Myanmar out of Thailand. In 2015, Japan launched a permanent resettlement programme, with the aim of resettling 30 refugees per year. In 2019, the government increased the annual quota from 30 to 60 refugees per year based on the recommendations of an expert panel convened to review the resettlement programme, in which UNHCR participated as an observer. Stakeholders have indicated that Japan maintains a strong commitment to refugee resettlement, especially as the first country in Asia to launch such a programme, thus setting a precedent for the region. The final report of the expert panel recommends that the government conduct another review of the programme within five years from the date of the report and that it consider further increasing the quota for 2024 and beyond.

¹²⁰ UNHCR, '[Fact Sheet: Philippine Operations](#)', accessed 25 February 2021.

¹²¹ UNHCR, '[UNHCR Welcomes Philippines' Commitment to Protect Rohingya](#)', updated 23 September 2020.

¹²² The Emergency Transit Mechanism is a unique protection tool that allows a refugee to temporarily stay in the Philippines while the process of onward resettlement to a third country is being completed.

BOX 5 (cont.)**Refugee Resettlement in Japan**

While there is potential to further expand the programme, stakeholders have indicated that the government is likely to remain cautious in its approach. One challenge is that the government remains concerned about the potential for negative public perceptions and media coverage of refugee admissions and resettlement. The government has thus been reluctant to engage in much publicity or awareness-raising around the resettlement programme, making it difficult to build the public engagement needed to gain acceptance for the expansion of the programme. Another challenge is that the centralised nature of the resettlement programme in Japan has made it difficult to engage communities and civil society in settlement efforts. Furthermore, the selection criteria set by the government, such as the focus on refugees' employability, make it difficult to scale up the programme by limiting the pool of potential candidates for resettlement and necessitating an intensive eligibility screening process.

Several critical elements could provide opportunities for the growth of resettlement. First, significant investments need to be made in increasing public awareness of and support for resettlement in Japan, including by leveraging civil society at the local level. Second, according to stakeholder interviews, increasing the involvement of cities and local CSOs would be critical in moving towards a public-private partnership and decentralising the resettlement programme, and thus providing for broader public engagement in the programme. Finally, stakeholders have suggested that the programme's integration goals should be broadened to look beyond early employment, recognise the individual needs of refugees, and rely more closely on partnerships with civil-society stakeholders and municipalities. The next review of the programme recommended by the expert panel may present an opportunity to address some of these issues.

Sources: UNHCR, '[Resettlement Data Finder](#)', accessed 31 January 2021; Questionnaire completed by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 16 January 2021; Author interview with Japanese resettlement expert, 28 December 2020; Author email communication with Japanese resettlement expert, 15 March 2021.

Third-Country Employment

Asia and the Pacific have been an important site of innovation for opening up third-country employment pathways to refugees. Australia has launched a successful pilot that is now

entering a second phase, and early discussions are taking place in New Zealand about the potential to pilot a similar programme.

These countries' flexible immigration systems have been an asset in advancing third-country employment pathways. Both offer multiple routes to permanent residence through their immigration systems for skilled workers that could be utilised by refugees. In 2018, Australia launched a pilot programme to help employers recruit skilled refugees, operated by TBB, Refugee Talent, and the Department of Home Affairs. Between April 2018 and September 2020, Australia admitted nine refugees (and 11 family members) through this pilot, with another ten refugees and their families awaiting visas or travel permission.¹²³ Building on this, Australia announced in February 2020 that it would operate a two-year Skilled Refugee Pilot to offer skilled work visas to up to 100 refugees and their families.¹²⁴ TBB plans to enter into a labour agreement with the Australian government to address some of the barriers identified during the first pilot phase, such as those related to documentation, skills assessment, and English language requirements.¹²⁵ TBB has also called for the creation of a separate work visa (a Displaced Talent Visa) specifically for refugees in Australia, a move that could grant refugees holding this visa more complete access to support services.

Like its neighbour, New Zealand has long-established economic immigration policies that include multiple pathways to permanent residence that could be adapted for use by refugees. These include the Skilled Migrant Category Resident Visa (which offers permanent residence to highly skilled workers) and the forthcoming Temporary Work Visa (which would offer temporary residence, with some workers potentially qualifying for permanent residence);¹²⁶ the exact details of the latter are yet to be announced, and New Zealand's immigration minister announced plans in February 2021 to review the Skilled Migrant Category Resident Visa.¹²⁷ It is unclear, however, whether there is the political will to change these visas in ways that would make them more accessible to refugees, particularly in light of the pandemic. The minister also indicated that immigration levels

¹²³ Data provided to the authors by TBB, 21 October 2020.

¹²⁴ Speech by Alan Tudge, Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services, and Multicultural Affairs, *Address to the Menzies Research Centre*, Melbourne, 7 February 2020.

¹²⁵ TBB, *Global Evaluation*.

¹²⁶ The new Temporary Work Visa will replace the two Work to Residence Visas that offered a temporary-to-permanent pathway for those with a job on the long-term skills shortage list or a job with an accredited employer. Details on how these rules may change under the new Temporary Work Visa are still forthcoming. See New Zealand Immigration, '[Changes to Temporary Work Visas](#)', accessed 22 February 2021.

¹²⁷ Gill Bonnett, '[Skilled Migrant Residency Programme in Need of Review - Fafoi](#)', Radio New Zealand, 25 February 2021.

may not recover to pre-pandemic levels once restrictions are lifted, as the government plans to focus on opportunities to upskill New Zealanders with the goal of reducing reliance on migrant workers in some jobs.¹²⁸

Elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific, avenues for introducing third-country employment pathways are curbed by the limited number of countries currently offering labour migration opportunities with a clear pathway to permanent residence. While Japan and the Republic of Korea are both major immigrant destinations and signatories to the Refugee Convention, their emphasis on temporary labour migration means that their employment pathways lack sufficient safeguards for refugees. In Japan, strict recruitment criteria and implementation difficulties for medium- and high-skilled immigration streams have meant that most labour migration occurs through its strictly temporary Technical Intern Training Program.¹²⁹ Likewise, labour migration to the Republic of Korea happens primarily through its strictly temporary Employment Permit System (focused on low-skilled roles in sectors such as manufacturing) and the H-2 Working Visit Visa for ethnic Koreans.¹³⁰

Third-Country Education

Few education opportunities for international refugee students currently exist in Asia and the Pacific. The major exception is Japan, which has had a government-funded scholarship for Syrian students since 2016 as well as several small-scale, privately organised scholarships (see Box 6 for more details).

¹²⁸ Jane Patterson, 'Migration Will Not Return to Pre-Covid Levels When NZ Border Reopens, Immigration Minister Warns', Radio New Zealand, 26 February 2021.

¹²⁹ The two new pathways for medium-skilled workers focus on shortage occupations, offering five-year work permits that can be renewed indefinitely for particularly acute shortages, potentially opening up access to permanent residence after ten years of continuous residence. However, there have been some issues with the implementation of these two new pathways. Japan introduced its high-skilled pathway in 2012, which offers an expedited pathway to permanent residence of one to three years, but the high bar it sets for entry via its points system has resulted in a somewhat limited approx. 13,000 visas being issued between 2012 and 2019. See Deborah J. Milly, 'Japan's Labor Migration Reforms: Breaking with the Past?', *Migration Information Source*, 20 February 2020; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 'Work or Long-Term Stay', updated 8 August 2019; Japanese Ministry of Justice, 'Points-Based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals', accessed 25 April 2021.

¹³⁰ The Employment Permit System offers very limited access to long-term stay (very few E-9 holders qualify for the E-7 long-term stay visa) and in turn permanent residence. By contrast, holders of a H-2 visa (which is open to ethnic Koreans from China, Mongolia, Russia, and Uzbekistan) can qualify for permanent residence (F-4 status). See Young-bum Park, 'South Korea Carefully Tests the Waters on Immigration, with a Focus on Temporary Workers', *Migration Information Source*, 1 March 2017; OECD, *Recruiting Immigrant Workers: Korea 2019* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019).

There may be opportunities to grow education programmes in Australia in the medium term. Australia is a major destination for international students—more than 26 per cent of students enrolled in higher education in the country in 2018 were international students.¹³¹ Beginning in 2012, Australia also reduced its visa application fees and introduced changes to simplify the visa application process as part of its higher education internationalisation strategy. The country also offers an extended post-study visa for international student graduates, allowing them to remain in the country to work for between 18 months and four years, depending on the qualification.¹³²

A few Australian educational institutions and community partners have been engaged in preliminary discussions on creating an education pathway for refugees,¹³³ but the interest of government stakeholders in such pathways has so far been limited.¹³⁴ Universities, government officials, and relevant private actors in the Republic of Korea and New Zealand have also expressed some tentative interest in education pathways, though the discussions in both countries are still in early stages.¹³⁵

Government officials in the Philippines have indicated more serious interest in launching an education pathway for refugees, following on a government pledge to explore opening complementary pathways in the country at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.¹³⁶ The government is still considering the exact parameters of such a programme, but the protection framework in the Philippines appears to be strong enough to support a pilot project.

131 OECD, '[International Student Mobility](#)', accessed 15 March 2021.

132 Australian Government, Department of Education, Skills, and Employment, '[National Strategy for International Education 2025](#)', accessed 24 February 2021; Australian Government, '[The National Strategy for International Education 2025](#)', accessed 24 February 2021.

133 Author correspondence with representative of WUSC, 28 July 2020.

134 Author interview with official from UNHCR Canberra, 28 September 2020.

135 Author interview with official from UNHCR Asia and the Pacific, 25 September 2020; Author interview with official from UNHCR Australia Regional Office, 28 September 2020; Author interview with Japan ICU Foundation, 10 September 2020.

136 UNHCR, '[PH Pledges Commitment in First Global Refugee Forum](#)', updated 23 December 2019.

BOX 6**Education Pathways in Japan**

Japan first introduced education opportunities for refugee students in May 2016, during the G7 Ise-Shima Summit hosted in the country. The pledge led to the introduction of two scholarships aimed at supporting up to 150 Syrian nationals (including refugees) to continue their higher education studies and to eventually contribute to the reconstruction of Syria. Several NGOs have also launched scholarship programmes. These programmes build on a government-led effort in Japan to internationalise the higher education sector (i.e., to increase international collaboration by universities and expand recruitment of foreign students), including by increasing the visibility of Japanese universities abroad, expanding international student services and Japanese language training programmes at universities, and growing the number of classes taught in English.

Overall, efforts to create third-country education opportunities in Japan have benefited from a relatively favourable legal framework and supportive government, streamlined visa procedures for students, support by nongovernmental and civil-society groups, and available funding. There have been challenges, however, regarding securing long-term protection or facilitating refugee graduates' transition into the labour market and attaining a durable solution in Japan. Ongoing collaboration between the government, UNHCR, and the private sector seeks to address these challenges. Language barriers and negative public perceptions of refugees have also hindered students' integration into the Japanese labour market and society.

The potential to grow education opportunities for refugees in Japan has been constrained by limited awareness of the country's refugee education programmes, including among universities. Further advocacy and awareness-raising by UNHCR and its civil-society partners could help address this issue, though leadership from within the government to promote these programmes would also be valuable. These education pathways could also benefit from efforts to expand and coordinate recruitment and outreach, rather than requiring each implementing partner or university to learn how to reach potential refugee students on its own. This could be done by scholarship programmes, working with partners on the ground in host countries, or in a more centralised way by a coordinating body that would operate a platform for all scholarship opportunities available to refugees. Finally, any scholarship programmes should seek to facilitate refugee graduates' access to legal status through better supporting their transition to the labour market—for example, by helping them access language courses,

BOX 6 (cont.) Education Pathways in Japan

soft-skills trainings, career planning services, and opportunities to gain knowledge of Japanese work culture.

Sources: European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, *Internationalisation of Higher Education* (Brussels: European Union, 2015); Author interview with representative of Japan ICU Foundation, 20 September 2020; Author interview with representative of Japan Association for Refugees, 2 December 2020; Author interview with official from UNHCR Japan, 6 April 2021.

B. Europe

Resettlement

Since 2015, the resettlement landscape in Europe has evolved significantly, with the European Union and some of its Member States becoming major players on the global resettlement scene.¹³⁷ In part, this evolution comes as a result of EU Member States' increased resettlement efforts due to the conflict in Syria, as some governments created new resettlement programmes and others scaled up existing ones. The number of European resettlement countries peaked in 2016–17, and 19 European countries (15 of them EU Member States) form the backbone of European resettlement efforts and have expressed strong political commitment to welcoming resettled refugees.¹³⁸ Five of these countries (France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) accepted approximately two-thirds of all refugees who were resettled to Europe.¹³⁹

At the EU level, resettlement moved higher up the political agenda following the large-scale arrivals of refugees and migrants in Europe in 2015–16 and the introduction of the EU Agenda on Migration in 2015. EU lump sum funding and the increased availability of AMIF funding to countries that resettle refugees, coupled with active peer-support networks (see Box 3 above), greater information exchange between EU Member States, and additional operational support through the EASO's Resettlement Support Facility in Turkey, have all proven to be critical in encouraging EU Member States to resettle more refugees, welcome

137 Susan Fratzke and Lena Kainz, *The Next Generation of Refugee Resettlement in Europe: Ambitions for the Future and How to Realise Them* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2020).

138 In 2019, these included Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

139 UNHCR, 'Resettlement Data Finder', accessed 25 March 2021.

them for the first time, or invest in existing resettlement programmes.¹⁴⁰ Resettlement remains a central policy issue for the European Commission. The September 2020 Pact on Migration and Asylum recommends growing investments across the European Union in resettlement and complementary pathways and sets an ambition to finalise the EU Resettlement Framework in the near future.¹⁴¹ In light of the pandemic and delays in finalising the EU budget, the pact extends both the European Union’s goal of welcoming 30,000 resettled refugees as well as the ad hoc pledges Member States made for 2020 into 2021. While this EU announcement slightly reduced Europe’s resettlement ambitions in the short term, it did help guarantee continued Member State support for resettlement activities with a 300-million-euro budget at the EU level. And despite the 2021 extension of the target quota, a number of countries have made additional pledges for 2021 in addition to rolling over unmet 2020 commitments. For 2022 and beyond, no specific target has been set; however, the pact makes a clear commitment to maintaining current numbers and growing resettlement.

At a national level and across different parts of Europe, political support for resettlement varies. In Scandinavia (Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden), as well as in countries such as Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, and Romania, there is a strong political commitment to resettling refugees. The Scandinavian countries, Croatia, and Germany all increased their resettlement quotas within the last five years—a move that signals the strength of their political commitment to resettlement but may also make additional growth less likely in the short term.¹⁴² In several countries, cities and localities have played a pivotal role in advocating for the expansion of resettlement programmes. Boxes 7 and 8 explore the Finnish and German contexts in greater detail.

By contrast, political will and public buy-in has waned over time in other parts of Europe. While some countries (such as Austria) have put their resettlement operations on hold for political reasons, others (such as Bulgaria) continue to resettle but with limited ambitions. In Czechia, Latvia, and Poland, resettlement programmes have come to an end due to a

140 UNHCR and European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), *Follow the Money III – Solidarity: The Use of AMIF Funds to Incentivise Resettlement and Relocation in the EU* (Brussels: UNHCR and ECRE, 2020).

141 European Commission, ‘[Commission Recommendation on Legal Pathways to Protection in the EU: Promoting Resettlement, Humanitarian Admission and Other Complementary Pathways](#)’ (COM [2020] 6467 final, 23 September 2020); European Commission, ‘[Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Asylum and Migration Management and Amending Council Directive \(EC\)2003/109 and the Proposed Regulation \(EU\)XXX/XXX \[Asylum and Migration Fund\]](#)’ (COM [2020] 207 final, 23 September 2020).

142 For example, Sweden expanded from 3,400 to 5,000 places in 2019. Author interviews with officials from UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries Office, 21 September 2020; Author interview with officials from UNHCR Regional Representation for Central Europe, 22 September 2020.

lack of public and political buy-in.¹⁴³ Interviews with UNHCR officials working in the Baltic and Balkan regions suggested that countries that have started to invest more in their integration systems, such as Croatia and Lithuania, have the potential to evolve into regional champions, but they would benefit from further guidance and targeted investments to help them manage their resettlement operations and integration systems effectively as they grow into this role.¹⁴⁴

BOX 7

Refugee Resettlement in Finland

Finland has a robust and long-standing refugee resettlement programme that has broad political support. Since 2001, Finland has typically set an admissions quota of 750 refugees per year, one of the largest per capita resettlement quotas in the European Union. Following elections in 2019, the new government raised the quota to 850 places for 2020 and later committed to setting it between 850 and 1,050 admissions places in future years.

EU resettlement priorities have played a substantial role in shaping Finland's resettlement ambitions and are likely to continue to do so going forward. Finland has typically closely aligned itself with EU priorities on migration, resettlement, and asylum, and it has prioritised supporting joint EU actions within its resettlement quota, including joint EU resettlement schemes for Syrians and the Evacuation Transit Mechanism out of Niger. In a 2020 report by UNHCR and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Finnish authorities reported that EU financial support for resettlement via the AMIF was important to maintain political support for increasing resettlement to Finland. Future EU-level action and priorities, including the outcomes of negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, are thus likely to influence the Finnish approach to resettlement.

Support for growing resettlement in Finland has also come to a large extent from municipalities. Finnish municipalities have been broadly supportive of resettlement in recent years, though the level of support varies across regions. Since 2016, the number of resettlement places offered by Finnish municipalities has exceeded the national government's annual quota. In 2019, municipalities across Finland offered a total of 1,300 resettlement places, almost double the government's 2019 quota of 750 refugees. In

¹⁴³ This has been attributed primarily to secondary refugee movements. Author interview with official from UNHCR Europe, 30 September 2020; Author interview with official from International Rescue Committee Europe, 29 September 2020.

¹⁴⁴ Author interview with official from International Rescue Committee, 29 September 2020; Author interview with official from the UNHCR Regional Representation for Central Europe, 22 September 2020.

BOX 7 (cont.)**Refugee Resettlement in Finland**

pledging places, many municipalities have been motivated by a desire to attract new residents and preserve local service infrastructure or bolster the labour force as the local population shrinks.

Going forward, much of the opportunity to grow and sustain resettlement in Finland lies at the local level. One way to capitalise on this could be to more closely align national quota-setting with the capacity offered by municipalities by engaging communities more directly in resettlement programme planning. The national government is currently exploring mechanisms to increase civil-society and community engagement in the resettlement programme, and the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment have published a feasibility study to assess the potential for introducing a community sponsorship pilot in Finland.

Sources: UNHCR and European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), *Follow the Money III – Solidarity: The Use of AMIF Funds to Incentivise Resettlement and Relocation in the EU* (Brussels: UNHCR and ECRE, 2020); European Commission, ‘New Pact on Migration and Asylum’, accessed 31 January 2020; Janina Stürner, ‘“Who Could Thrive Where?” Imagining Resettlement as a Cooperative Mobility Strategy’, updated 17 September 2020; Lauri Rautavuori, ‘Moneen kuntaan ei riitä kiintiöpakolaisia, vaikka vastaanottohalua on – erikoinen tilanne voi johtaa kotouttamispalveluiden kuihtumiseen’, YLE Uutiset, 22 January 2019; Finnish Immigration Service, ‘Quota Refugees’, accessed 15 March 2021; Author interview with officials from the Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 30 November 2020; Finnish Ministry of the Interior, ‘Resettlement of Quota Refugees Is One Way of Helping the Most Vulnerable’, accessed 10 May 2021.

BOX 8**Refugee Resettlement in Germany**

Germany launched a formal resettlement programme for the first time in mid-2015 after a three-year pilot. The government has so far proven itself to be highly supportive of resettlement, and resettlement maintains broad support across the political spectrum. From an initial quota of 300 places per year during the pilot phase, the German resettlement programme has grown substantially and now regularly admits several thousand UNHCR-referred refugees each year. For 2020, the government pledged to admit a total of 5,500 refugees, though these efforts were significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The engagement of a wide range of nongovernmental actors in the programme has been credited as one of the reasons resettlement has been able to grow so quickly in Germany. Support for resettlement extends beyond the government sector to an active and well-established community of CSOs. The Save Me and Seebrücke campaigns have

BOX 8 (cont.)**Refugee Resettlement in Germany**

mobilised additional segments of society at the city level and encouraged the involvement of new actors beyond CSOs such as Caritas and Diakonie that have been long-time partners in the country's resettlement programme.

Despite the strength of this government and civil-society support, stakeholders from civil society, government, and UNHCR as well as German resettlement experts believe that, at least at the federal level, the German resettlement programme is likely to follow a trajectory of 'slow and steady' growth. While government officials see potential for further increases in the quota in the future, they envision this occurring gradually rather than via large-scale new commitments. In interviews, stakeholders emphasised that German policymakers have made consolidating the current programme a priority to ensure it is able to operate smoothly and in a manner that can be sustained over time. The upcoming federal elections in September 2021 also constrain what the government is able to do in the immediate term.

In addition to refugees admitted through the federal resettlement programme, German law affords the possibility for regional governments to operate their own humanitarian admissions schemes. In addition to state-led humanitarian admissions schemes for Syrian and Iraqi refugees' extended family reunification that have operated since 2013, several states have launched state-led resettlement programmes for UNHCR-referred refugees or made a political commitment to do so. In the short term, much of the growth potential for resettlement in Germany is likely to be driven by state governments. But while the legal basis for state-level humanitarian admission and resettlement programmes exists, putting these programmes into place has been a challenge due in part to a lack of knowledge among state officials regarding how to establish and operate a resettlement programme. As a way to overcome these operational barriers, state governments have proposed the creation of a joint state-national resettlement programme that could be operated collaboratively and would incorporate state-level resettlement pledges as an add-on to the national quota.

Sources: German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community, '[Resettlement und humanitäre Aufnahmen](#)', accessed 15 March 2021; German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community, '[Anordnung des Bundesministeriums des Innern, für Bau und Heimat für das Resettlement-Verfahren 2020](#)', updated 21 February 2020; Caritas, '[Current Admissions](#)', accessed 14 December 2020; Author interview with official from UNHCR Berlin, 2 September 2020; Author interview with officials from the German Federal Ministry for the Interior, Building, and Community, 19 January 2021; Author interview with Marcus Engler, Researcher, Deutsche Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM) Institut, 25 November 2020; Author interview with official from Caritas Germany, 2 September 2020.

Third-Country Employment

Currently, the United Kingdom is the only country in Europe where a refugee is documented as having successfully entered the country using an employment visa.¹⁴⁵ TBB assisted a Syrian refugee in 2019 to enter the United Kingdom on a Tier 2 visa (the predecessor to the Skilled Worker visa) after he received a job offer from a UK employer. This test of the accessibility of the labour migration system to refugees revealed several barriers. These include documentation requirements (e.g., the requirement to produce a current passport or travel document) and high application costs.¹⁴⁶ Refugees entering on an employment pathway are also barred from accessing social benefits and the tailored supports provided to resettled refugees. In July 2021, the UK government announced a new displaced talent mobility pilot that will facilitate the admission of up to 100 displaced people and their families from Jordan and Lebanon via the Skilled Worker Visa. Participants would be provided with priority processing and case management support.¹⁴⁷ TBB is working with the Reset network, which coordinates the UK community sponsorship programme, to assist those arriving on this pilot.¹⁴⁸

There may well be other opportunities to introduce employment pathways in Europe. Most countries in Northern and Western Europe have long-established systems to admit immigrants for the purpose of employment. Reforms to attract and retain foreign workers with in-demand skills (especially in high-skilled roles in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics sectors) have also become a top policy priority to meet emerging labour

145 However, it is possible that refugees may have accessed employment pathways in other countries but not been recorded, as immigration data typically records citizenship or country of residence but not whether someone is a refugee.

146 Visa fees range from GBP 464 to GBP 1,220, depending on the type of occupation and duration of stay. Applicants must also pay a health surcharge of GBP 624 per year of the visa's duration and demonstrate they have GBP 1,270 in savings. The latter requirement can be especially challenging for refugees to meet given they may not have access to banking services, but there is some scope for employers to cover this sum by certifying maintenance of their employee and dependents. See UK Government, 'Skilled Worker Visa', accessed 26 March 2021. Applicants for the Health and Care Worker Visa must pay GBP 232 to GBP 464 in visa fees, depending on visa's duration, and are excluded from the health-care surcharge requirement. See UK Government, 'Health and Care Worker Visa', accessed 26 March 2021.

147 Marina Brizar, 'Introducing the UK's Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot', TBB, 19 July 2021; Patel, 'Home Secretary Opening Speech'.

148 UK House of Lords, 'Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill', Hansard, Vol. 806, Column 408 (5 October 2020).

force gaps as these societies age.¹⁴⁹ At the EU level, the European Commission has worked with Member States to introduce EU-wide permits for certain categories of workers, including seasonal workers and high-skilled workers (the Blue Card).¹⁵⁰ In December 2020, discussions about reforming the Blue Card Directive to improve uptake in different Member States were restarted as part of the negotiations around the new migration pact. As European policymakers review the admission criteria once more, this could be an opportunity to make this EU-wide admission channel more accessible to refugees, for example by considering alternative ways to assess the skills and experiences of refugees in the absence of formal documentation.

There are promising signs of interest in third-country employment pathways in several countries in Europe. For example, TBB is in early discussions with Irish stakeholders to explore the potential for testing a third-country employment pathway.¹⁵¹ And Finland's government has commissioned a comparative study on complementary pathways (with an emphasis on employment and study pathways), which could inform future discussions about how such a model might work in the Finnish context, alongside ongoing policy interventions intended to make it easier to attract talent to Finland (through, for example, the Talent Boost programme).¹⁵² Box 9 identifies avenues for adapting Finland's employment pathways to make them more accessible to refugees as well as priorities for additional reforms.

149 Attracting and retaining talent was a key theme of the European Commission's New Pact on Migration and Asylum, which proposed restarting reforms to the Blue Card Directive, launching 'Talent Partnerships' with third countries to combine support for mobility schemes for work and training with investments in capacity-building, and a Skills and Talent package that would include reviewing the Long-Term Residents Directive and the Single Permit Directive and exploring an EU 'Talent Pool' to streamline the recruitment of high-skilled workers from third countries. See European Commission, '[Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)' (COM [2020] 609 final, 23 September 2020).

150 See, for example, the Seasonal Workers Directive (Directive 2014/36/EU), which set common rules for admitting seasonal workers from third countries (and their residence and rights), and the Blue Card Directive (Directive 2009/50/EC), which created an EU-wide admission channel for high-skilled migrants with a well-paid job offer from third countries alongside national admission channels. See Council of the European Union, '[Directive 2014/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on the Conditions of Entry and Stay of Third-Country Nationals for the Purpose of Employment as Seasonal Workers](#)', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2014 L 94/375, 28 March 2014; Council of the European Union, '[Council Directive 2009/50/EC of 25 May 2009 on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-Country Nationals for the Purposes of Highly Qualified Employment](#)', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2009 L 155/17, 18 June 2009.

151 Author correspondence with representatives from TBB, April 30, 2021.

152 MPI Europe and the Refugee Hub, 'Global Mapping: Case Study Report on Finland'; Finnish Ministry of the Interior, '[The Study Surveys What Types of Work- and Study-Based Pathways for Legal Migration Are Available in Different Countries for Use by People in Need of International Protection](#)' (press release, 23 February 2021); Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment '[Talent Boost Programme](#)', accessed 1 July 2021.

Stakeholders in some EU Member States have expressed concerns about creating third-country employment pathways for refugees, citing worries about blurring the line between employment and protection channels, their focus on integrating recent refugee arrivals, and their preferences for using other channels to meet labour market needs.¹⁵³ Insights gathered in interviews suggest that some Member States (such as Germany and Sweden) have focused on integrating recent refugee arrivals, while others are exploring other channels to meet their labour market needs (such as Czechia, which has pursued recruitment from Ukraine and other countries).¹⁵⁴ The European Commission's outreach on complementary pathways (including a seminar for Member State representatives to explore this model) and funding of pilots under the AMIF could help address some of these concerns and build the knowledge base on key topics such as reducing barriers for refugees and models for providing services to refugees arriving through these pathways.¹⁵⁵

BOX 9 **Employment Pathways in Finland**

To date, Finland has not taken proactive steps to admit refugees through its employment pathways, but there is significant potential for doing so in the medium to long term. The Ministry of the Interior has commissioned a study, to be completed in Autumn 2021, to look at how different countries approach complementary pathways (including for education and employment), as well as a feasibility study on community sponsorship, which was published in May 2021. While some stakeholders are unfamiliar with the concept of complementary pathways or how they could work in Finland, there is broad support for the country's resettlement programme and for labour migration as a means to address labour and skills shortages.

Finland's employment pathways are comparatively more flexible than other European countries for several reasons. Residence permits can be issued for a specific employer or a field, allowing permit holders some flexibility to switch employers within the same sector. These permits also do not have language requirements (and English is spoken

¹⁵³ Author interview with official from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 1 October 2020; Author interview with official from the Irish Ministry of Justice, 8 October 2020; Author interview with official from the Finnish Ministry of Interior, 30 November 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Author interview with official from Cedefop, 1 October 2020.

¹⁵⁵ European Commission, '[Communication from the Commission on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#)' (COM [2020] 609 final, 23 September 2020); European Commission, '[Promoting Complementary Pathways for People in Need of Protection and Their Further Integration](#)' (funding and tender opportunities, AMIF-2020-AG-CALL-04, 14 October 2020); Author interview with official from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 30 September 2020.

BOX 9 (cont.)**Employment Pathways in Finland**

widely in major cities), making them more accessible to refugees who do not speak Finnish. Interviewees suggested that there is some administrative flexibility to address the potential barriers that refugee applicants may face (for example, in the assessment of documentation, reviewing evidence of qualifications and work experience) and to enable refugees to switch employers should they lose their job. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that further work is needed to ensure these programmes offer sufficient safeguards for refugees. Barriers remain, such as the use of a labour market test that requires employers to demonstrate they cannot fill the vacancy with a worker in Finland or another country in the European Economic Area in a timely fashion. As in other countries, refugees entering through labour migration channels would be ineligible for most public services such as health care and Finnish language training, hence another priority is to explore alternative means of supporting refugees who use these channels.

A future third-country employment pathway could capitalise on the administrative flexibility in Finland's immigration system to introduce a pilot that uses existing labour migration policies with certain adjustments. Alternatively, another option is to introduce a standalone employment pathway for refugees (perhaps via a refugee-specific employment visa or humanitarian channels, such as refugee private sponsorship), although this would require legislative action and thus may be a longer-term prospect. Finland's government has been exploring ways to attract and retain international talent in shortage occupations, most notably through its Talent Boost programme, with recent efforts including the launch of an online jobs portal to collate vacancies in English-speaking workplaces, support for small and medium-sized enterprises to recruit internationally, and planned reforms to speed up processing times for permits. While these reforms are not targeted towards refugees, they could nonetheless benefit those refugees who apply for a permit and are indicative of a broader commitment to promoting employment pathways.

Given the limited familiarity with complementary pathways among Finnish government and private-sector stakeholders, further outreach and education on this topic by UNHCR and other experienced actors would be a useful endeavour. Another priority is to investigate further the barriers identified above and assess whether some can be resolved through administrative flexibility and where reforms may be required.

Sources: Jobs in Finland, '[Home](#)', accessed 22 January 2021; Author interviews with officials from the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 12–13 January 2021; Business Finland, '[Talent Boost Finland Program](#)', accessed 14 January 2021.

Third-Country Education

Since 2013, a number of third-country scholarship programmes have emerged across Europe, first targeting Syrian students and more recently expanding to other nationalities. Scholarship programmes are or have been active in at least nine countries (Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Kingdom). Programmes in France and Germany are outlined in Boxes 10 and 11. In several countries, higher education institutions have also introduced scholarship programmes for refugee students already in the country.¹⁵⁶

Third-country scholarship programmes have relied on study visas to admit refugees and have benefited from the efforts of European governments over the last several years to internationalise their higher education sectors. This has included, among other things, seeking to attract and retain qualified students by relaxing visa rules and by expanding English-language degrees, recruitment of international students, and international student services on campuses.¹⁵⁷ Many of these measures have also been beneficial for refugee students. In Spain and Estonia, for example, the government changed visa rules to permit students to bring their family members with them, and in Sweden and Estonia, family members of study visa holders were granted work rights.¹⁵⁸ The EU Students and Researchers Directive requires EU Member States to grant international student graduates permission to stay in the country for at least nine months on a job-search visa. Some countries have gone further: Germany issues an 18-month job-search visa, and in Ireland, students with graduate degrees may stay up to two years.¹⁵⁹ Longer bridging permits can help to ease the transition to a work visa and, eventually, long-term residency, providing a durable solution to refugee students.

Since 2015, a number of initiatives have emerged at European universities to ease access to universities for refugees already in the country and to support them in their studies—capacity and services that could also benefit refugee students traveling from third countries. In Germany, DAAD (funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research) has developed the Integra and Welcome programmes to support the development of German-language programmes, preparatory courses, and student

¹⁵⁶ Helen Lock and Zofia Niemtus, “[We Want to Be Part of the Solution](#)”: Universities Reach out to Refugees’, *The Guardian*, 2 October 2015; DAAD, ‘[How the DAAD Is Helping](#)’, accessed 8 October 2020.

¹⁵⁷ European Migration Network, *Attracting and Retaining International Students in the EU: EMN Synthesis Report for the EMN Study 2018* (N.p.: European Migration Network, 2019).

¹⁵⁸ European Migration Network, *Attracting and Retaining International Students*.

¹⁵⁹ European Migration Network, *Attracting and Retaining International Students*.

mentorship programmes to assist refugees at participating universities. In France, the Réseau MEnS network provides a platform for peer support and continuous learning between universities committed to serving refugee students in the country. The Council of Europe has also supported the development of a European Qualifications Passport for Refugees that provides an assessment of refugees' higher education qualifications based on available documentation and an interview.¹⁶⁰ The Conference of Italian University Rectors announced in July 2020 that they would accept the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees as part of the application for their refugee scholarship programme.¹⁶¹

There are several possibilities to expand third-country education pathways to new countries in the future. Civil-society groups in the Netherlands have expressed interest in establishing new pathways.¹⁶² In countries such as Belgium, Finland, and Norway, existing scholarship programmes for in-country refugees could be refitted as a pathway to admit refugee students. At the EU level, the European Commission has been working under the mandate of the Pact on Migration and Asylum to facilitate network building and peer learning among Member States on third-country education pathways.¹⁶³ The Commission also extended a call for proposals in October 2020 under the AMIF to support complementary pathway pilot projects and capacity-building initiatives.¹⁶⁴

160 Council of Europe, 'European Qualifications Passport for Refugees'.

161 Council of Europe, '[Italian Universities Start Accepting the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees for Scholarship Applications](#)' (news release, 20 July 2020).

162 Author interview with official from UNHCR Netherlands, 16 October 2020.

163 Author interview with official from European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 30 September 2020.

164 European Commission, 'Promoting Complementary Pathways'.

BOX 10 Education Pathways in France

At least five scholarship programmes exist in France that specifically support refugee students who wish to travel to France to study, utilising existing student visas. While most of these pathways have targeted Syrian refugees, some of them are open to refugees from other regions. French NGOs and CSOs have led the development (and support) of most of these programmes, except for one that is directly supported and administered by the government.

Education pathways in France have benefited from a relatively favourable legal framework (e.g., there is no requirement to prove an intention to return to the country of origin, alternative travel documents can be used instead of a passport) and generous rights for international students (e.g., access to social security is provided for students with families and work rights are granted to family members). They have been aided by networks that coordinate university actors and promote refugees' access to education in France (such as l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, Réseau MEnS, the Conférence des présidents d'université, Réseau d'Études Supérieures et Orientation des Migrant et Exilé e.s., and l'Union des étudiants réfugiés). In addition, in 2016 the government made a commitment to cooperate with scholarship programmes to provide a timely review of visa applications and support with documentation.

Efforts to scale up and strengthen education pathways in France would require enhancing students' longer-term options to stay in the country, for example, by better supporting them in their transition to the labour market. The existing humanitarian visa pathway could also be explored as an avenue to enable refugee students to enter France with humanitarian status and thus access the funding, support, and legal protections afforded to refugees and other protection beneficiaries.

Third-country education pathway efforts in France would also benefit from identifying alternative and more sustainable sources of funding as well as tailoring infrastructure at universities to meet refugees' needs. Building the capacity of participating French universities to serve refugee students and ensure their success could include training university staff on refugee status and related legal issues and how to provide academic advising services to non-traditional students, creating the capacity to provide trauma-informed counselling, building protocols to recognise previous experience/education, and creating job-search support networks for refugee students. These efforts would benefit from greater coordination among the NGOs and CSOs operating scholarship and

BOX 10 (cont.)**Education Pathways in France**

pathways programmes, supported and coordinated by UNHCR, to share resources and exchange information. A memorandum of understanding could also be used to organise the responsibilities of key actors and, if agreed with the government, could include provisions to provide refugee students using the pathways programme with access to grants, fee waivers, or other benefits that are currently only available to those with recognised refugee status.

Finally, future pathways would benefit from targeting outreach to refugee students with French language skills to increase the pool of applicants without having to provide access to language training prior to refugees' participation in the pathway programmes.

Sources: Author interview with official from the French Ministry of Interior, 18 February 2021; Author interview with official from Démocratie et Entradie en Syrie, 1 December 2020; Author interview with official from Réseau MEnS, 25 November 2020; Author interview with official from Union des étudiants exiles, 21 December 2020; Author interview with official from Campus France, 21 December 2020; Author interview with official from University of Toulouse, 23 December 2020; Author interview with official from the Conference of University Presidents, 2 December 2020; Author interview with official from l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, 22 September 2020; Author interview with official from Forum Réfugié-Cosi, 12 November 2020; Réseau d'Études Supérieures et Orientation des Migrant et Exilé, '[L'Accès aux Études Supérieures pour les Personnes Exilées](#)' (presentation, June 2020); Union des Étudiants Exilés, '[Union des Étudiants Exilés](#)', accessed 29 April 2021.

BOX 11**Education Pathways in Germany**

The German federal government has long been a supporter of access to higher education for refugees in host countries through the DAFI scholarship programme (the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative), which began with German financial support in 1992. Since 2014, the government has also launched several efforts to support refugee students studying in Germany (including the Welcome and Integra programmes, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research), as well as scholarship programmes (funded by the Federal Foreign Office and, in some cases, state governments) that have allowed refugees to travel to Germany for educational purposes. These efforts have been coordinated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In 2014, DAAD announced the Leadership for Syria programme as part of an effort to enable refugees to continue their education and, eventually, return to rebuild Syria. It was intended to be a one-time programme available to refugees residing in a host country or country of origin, as well as for those already in Germany who wanted to

BOX 11 (cont.)**Education Pathways in Germany**

pursue a bachelor's, master's, or PhD degree programme in Germany. In 2020, inspired by the success of the Leadership for Syria programme, DAAD and the Federal Foreign Office launched the Leadership for Africa programme focusing on applicants from East African countries (including refugees and nationals) who aim to pursue their master's degree in Germany.

Pathways led by nonstate actors are less common but also exist in the country. Since 2015, Bard College Berlin has been running a programme designed for bachelor's students originating from areas of conflict (i.e., students who have sought refuge in a host country as well as those remaining in their country of origin). The programme is funded through private and institutional donations.

Students with a refugee background entering existing education programmes in Germany have typically done so through the Study Visa with Admission category, which allows visa officers to waive some requirements that could pose a barrier to refugee students (such as the proof that they have sufficient living expenses or the requirement to have a valid passport at the time of application). In addition, pathways to permanent residency are relatively open for international students. International graduates of German universities can extend their residence permits for 18 months upon completion of their studies to find employment or to set up a business. Once they find a job that corresponds to their qualifications, the permit can be changed to a residence permit for the purpose of employment under specific conditions. However, NGOs, civil-society groups, state authorities, and private foundations and organisations have so far had limited influence in expanding education pathways in the country, and most existing scholarship programmes, including Leadership for Syria and Leadership for Africa, have been fully reliant on resources provided by the government.

As a result, medium- to long-term opportunities to scale education pathways in the country involve either (1) further scaling up existing, government-sponsored education pathways for refugee students or (2) engaging additional, new funders (for example, philanthropies, private citizens, or state governments). New scholarship programmes for international refugee students (including those offered by private funders or higher education institutions themselves) could, in theory, utilise the infrastructure already built for the DAAD programmes. While these programmes might have a greater chance of securing political cooperation and face fewer hurdles if coordinated by DAAD—given its

BOX 11 (cont.)**Education Pathways in Germany**

existing operational capacity and experience coordinating with the government—they could also be operated by other actors. A final opportunity relates to increasing the pool of applicants who would be eligible to study in Germany by linking up preparatory programmes and education opportunities for refugees in host and origin countries with education pathways in Germany. This could include educational institutions that have participated German-funded programmes in host countries, such as DAFI as well as the Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) and HOPES-Lebanon scholarship programmes.

Sources: DAAD, [“Welcome” – Students Helping Refugees](#), accessed 22 March 2021; DAAD, [‘Integrating Refugees in Higher Education – The “Integra” Funding Programme](#), accessed 22 March 2021; Author interview with officials from DAAD, 4 January 2021; German Federal Government, [‘Residence Permit for the Purpose of Seeking Employment](#), accessed 10 December 2021; Author interview with official from DAAD, 4 January 2021; Author interview with official from DAAD, 6 January 2021; Author interview with official from Goethe University, 2 December 2020; Author interview with official from Justus Liebig University Giessen, 16 December 2020; Author interview with official from German Rectors’ Conference, 21 December 2020; Author interview with official from Bard College Berlin, 13 April 2021.

C. North America

Resettlement

North America, specifically the United States and Canada, has historically been a major region for refugee resettlement. Most of the potential for growth currently lies in the United States, which saw its resettlement numbers dramatically reduced between 2017 and 2020. After the 2016 election, the government decreased the refugee admissions ceiling for U.S. fiscal year (FY) 2017 from 110,000 places to 50,000, and cut it further in subsequent years to just 18,000 places for FY 2020.¹⁶⁵ Following the 2020 election, the new administration has, however, stated that it plans to increase the refugee admissions ceiling to 125,000 places for FY 2022.¹⁶⁶ Box 12 explores the current state of play and opportunities for growth in the U.S. resettlement programme in greater detail.

¹⁶⁵ MPI Migration Data Hub, [‘U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present](#), accessed 11 May 2021.

¹⁶⁶ White House, [‘Remarks by President Biden on America’s Place in the World](#); Priscilla Alvarez, [‘Biden Administration to Propose Significant Increase in Refugees Admitted to US](#), CNN, 6 February 2021.

In Canada, resettlement has seen significant and sustained growth since the 2015 election.¹⁶⁷ Between 2015 and 2017, 40,000 Syrian refugees arrived through private sponsorship and government resettlement schemes, following a pledge during the 2015 election.¹⁶⁸ From 2017 through 2019, Canada admitted an average of 8,500 refugees referred by UNHCR for resettlement per year, though this number fell to 3,500 in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶⁹ For 2021 to 2023, Canada has pledged to resettle 12,500 refugees per year through the Government-Assisted Refugees Program and 1,000 refugees through the Blended Visa Office-Referred Program, both streams referred by UNHCR.¹⁷⁰ In addition, Canada has taken on a key leadership role in supporting the growth of resettlement as well as community sponsorship efforts worldwide, and it is actively sharing its expertise with countries in other parts of the world. Notably, at the Global Refugee Forum of 2019, Canada pledged its ongoing commitment to build community refugee sponsorship programmes globally through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative.¹⁷¹

While Mexico has, to date, not operated a resettlement programme, it has been an important player in regional cooperation on asylum.¹⁷² Notably, the Mexico Plan of Action was established in 2004 as a strategy for building protection capacity among Latin American countries.¹⁷³ Mexico has also been a critical actor in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)—a mechanism for solidarity and responsibility-sharing in the Central America region.¹⁷⁴

167 Mina Mir, Nitasha Syed, and Kalkidan Alemayehu, ‘[Seven Decades of Refugee Protection in Canada: 1950 – 2020](#)’ (research paper, York University and UNHCR Canada, 2020).

168 Mir, Syed, and Alemayehu, ‘Seven Decades of Refugee Protection’.

169 UNHCR, ‘Resettlement Data Finder’.

170 Government of Canada, ‘[Notice – Supplementary Information for the 2021-203 Immigration Levels Plan](#)’, updated 30 October 2020.

171 Government of Canada, ‘[Canada Reaffirms Strong Leadership Role in Refugee Protection at Global Refugee Forum](#)’ (news release, 17 December 2019).

172 UNHCR, ‘[Mexico](#)’, accessed 19 March 2021.

173 María José Marcogliese, ‘[The Solidarity Resettlement Programme, and Alternatives, in Latin America](#)’, *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 54–56.

174 UNHCR, ‘[Central America and Mexico Reaffirm Commitment to Address the Needs of Hundreds of Thousands Forced to Flee](#)’ (news release, updated 8 December 2020).

BOX 12**Refugee Resettlement in the United States**

The United States, once the largest resettlement country in the world, dramatically decreased its resettlement operations following the 2016 election. Between the dramatic cuts to the refugee admissions ceiling between 2017 and 2020, changes to security procedures, and delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States admitted 6,740 refugees in 2020 via UNHCR-referred resettlement—roughly 8 per cent of the number of refugees resettled to the country in 2016.

In an executive order issued on 4 February 2021, the new U.S. administration reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to resettlement and directed an internal review of refugee processing procedures and security measures to improve efficiency and expedite the arrival of refugees. In a statement accompanying the release of the executive order, the president also stated the goal of increasing the resettlement admissions ceiling to 125,000 places for FY 2022, which will begin in October 2021. Furthermore, the president issued a new presidential determination on 3 May 2021 that raised the FY 2021 ceiling to 62,500 and restored regional quotas.

Despite the aim of increasing resettlement, significant challenges remain in the United States. These include the politicisation of resettlement in the country, delays caused by the extensive layers of security review within resettlement screening, limited staffing and capacity in federal and voluntary agencies, and the need to strengthen integration supports after arrival. Approaches to addressing these challenges could include: rebuilding bipartisan political and public support for resettlement through better communication, building out community sponsorship and engagement opportunities, addressing various pipeline and processing issues within the refugee resettlement infrastructure, and improving integration assistance and coordination with local governments.

Sources: UNHCR, '[Resettlement Data](#)', accessed 7 January 2021; White House, '[Executive Order on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration](#)', updated 4 February 2021; White House, '[Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World](#)', updated 4 February 2021; Priscilla Alvarez, '[Biden Administration to Propose Significant Increase in Refugees Admitted to US](#)', CNN, 6 February 2021; White House, '[Statement by President Joe Biden on Refugee Admissions](#)', updated 3 May 2021.

Third-Country Employment

In North America, only Canada has launched an initiative to admit refugees through employment pathways to date. However, both Canada and the United States, as major immigrant destination countries with longstanding economic and humanitarian visa pathways, have significant opportunities for launching and expanding third-country employment pathways for refugees in the future.

Canada is at the forefront of efforts to roll out third-country employment pathways for refugees, both through its own commitments via the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) and its leadership of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility. The EMPP was launched in 2018, in collaboration with TBB, with the aim of admitting ten to 15 refugees (and their families) from Jordan, Kenya, and Lebanon through Canada's economic immigration programmes and documenting barriers they encountered. To date, it has admitted 12 refugees (and 17 family members) through Provincial Nominee Programs and the federal Atlantic Immigration Pilot to work in roles in fields such as software development and tech, caregiving, food services, and manufacturing.¹⁷⁵ Another 23 refugees and their 46 dependents are awaiting their visas in the Middle East and Kenya.¹⁷⁶ The pilot offers a compelling example of how governments can make existing employment pathways more accessible to refugees through a combination of administrative changes and tailored support.

Canada intends to scale up the EMPP considerably, with the minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada announcing plans in June 2020 to admit up to 500 refugees and their families over the next two years.¹⁷⁷ In this second phase, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada plans to explore how skilled refugees can help meet local labour market needs through a 'community-driven' model (which targets smaller and more remote communities with chronic labour shortages) and a 'sector-driven' model (which targets in-demand sectors). At the same time, TBB will explore how to scale admissions along with other key partners such as RefugePoint (which has handled recruitment of refugees from Kenya) and the Shapiro Foundation.¹⁷⁸ TBB is also exploring opportunities with partners to recruit refugees from other parts of the world, such as displaced Venezuelans living in Colombia and Peru, and to recruit French-speaking

175 UNHCR, 'Syrian Software Developer Starts New Life as Canadian Skilled Worker' (news release, 3 May 2019); Author interview with representative of RefugePoint, Kenya, 2 October 2020.

176 Data provided to the authors by TBB, 26 March 2021.

177 IRCC, 'Canada Continues to Explore Innovative Solutions for Refugees'.

178 IRCC, 'The Economic Mobility Pathways Project'.

refugees for Québec's separate immigration programmes. There may also be potential to expand third-country employment pathways through the private sponsorship programme. Canada's WUSC recently launched a separate employment-linked sponsorship pilot (Hospitality Industry welcomes Refugee Employment, or HIREs), which recruits refugees from Kenya for in-demand roles (including in low-skilled positions) in hospitality and tourism, using Canada's private sponsorship pathway and providing predeparture vocational training through a partnership with a Canadian college.¹⁷⁹

In the United States, there are some promising developments that could lay the groundwork for helping refugees access employment pathways. While the H-1B employer-sponsored visa (the primary visa issued to skilled workers) is oversubscribed and unlikely to be suitable for many refugees, there are a few other employment pathways that offer permanent residence and that could potentially be used by refugees. This includes the Special Immigrant Visa Category (EB-4), which has been used to admit foreign nationals who have worked for the U.S. government in Afghanistan and Iraq, although Congress would need to expand this to cover other nationalities.¹⁸⁰ Meanwhile, a more general barrier to entry is the 'extreme vetting' directives put in place between 2017 and 2020 (including checks on social media use and contact history). But early signs point to political will (and support from some civil-society stakeholders) for addressing some of these barriers and exploring opportunities for refugees to move through employment-based channels.¹⁸¹ For example, in an explanatory statement accompanying the recent appropriations bill, the Senate Committee on Appropriations directed the secretary of state to 'expand efforts to assist refugees and other displaced persons to become self-reliant through labour mobility, as a complementary solution for refugees in addition to resettlement'.¹⁸²

U.S. policymakers have also signalled an interest in broader reforms to employment-based immigration that could indirectly benefit refugees by opening up more opportunities to access permanent residence. A proposed immigration reform bill put forward in Congress in February 2021 would allow for the issuance of an additional 30,000 employment-based visas to workers in positions that require less than two years of training, education, or

179 WUSC, 'Businesses Respond to the Global Refugee Crisis: A New Model to Think Global and Build Local through Welcoming Workplaces' (news release, 25 September 2020).

180 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 'Special Immigrants', updated 22 October 2020; U.S. State Department, 'Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) for Iraqi and Afghan Translators/Interpreters', accessed 28 March 2021.

181 Author interview with representative of Refugee Council USA, 11 September 2020.

182 U.S. Senate, 'Explanatory Statement for Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2021', page 59, accessed 15 March 2021.

experience; exempt spouses and minor children from the annual numerical cap on employment-based visas; and put in place a system to clear visa backlogs.¹⁸³ These measures would increase the supply of green cards (grants of legal permanent residence) and decrease the wait for them, removing some of the barriers for refugees and other immigrants seeking to come to or stay in the United States based on employment. The bill would also create a pilot place-based visa programme, in which 10,000 green cards would be available to immigrants whose employment is essential to the economic development of a particular city or county.¹⁸⁴ Such a programme could make employment-based green cards more accessible to refugees who contribute to revitalising economically stagnant parts of the country.¹⁸⁵

There may be some opportunities opening up in Mexico, which is increasingly becoming a destination country for many asylum seekers from elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean. While no specific employment-based complementary pathway for refugees has been introduced in Mexico to date, opportunities for growth may lie in future reforms to the country's work visas. For example, the Border Worker Visitor Card currently enables citizens from Guatemala and Belize to work in the states along the southern border of Mexico (Chiapas, Campeche, Tabasco, and Quintana Roo), provided they can present a valid passport or travel document and an offer of employment from an entity that is formally registered with Mexico's National Institute for Migration.¹⁸⁶ The Border Worker Visitor Card grants multiple entries into the aforementioned Mexican states and is valid for one year. Opportunities for growth may exist if the card were to be expanded to make it available to Hondurans and Salvadorans, which Mexico's president has proposed in the past, and if geographical restrictions were relaxed to allow for employment of these workers in regions with higher demand for labour.¹⁸⁷ UNHCR and its partners could play a role in helping asylum seekers and refugees connect with employers, for example by drawing on networks with the private sector established via UNHCR's relocation, job placement, and local integration programme. However, efforts to implement some aspects of existing legislation (such as the provisions for a points system under a 2011 law) have

183 *United States Citizenship Act of 2021*, HR 1177, 117th Cong., 1st sess. (introduced 18 February 2021).

184 *United States Citizenship Act of 2021*.

185 See, for example, PBS NewsHour, 'What Happened When This Struggling City Opened Its Arms to Refugees', updated 6 July 2017.

186 The employment offer must also include details of the salary, occupation, and duration of the work indicated.

187 Andrew Selee and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, *Building a New Regional Migration System: Redefining U.S. Cooperation with Mexico and Central America* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2020), 14–15; Jorge Monroy, 'AMLO promete visa y trabajo para migrantes centroamericanos', *El Economista*, 17 October 2018.

been delayed, which may affect the timeline for further reforms that could facilitate refugees' access to employment pathways.¹⁸⁸

Third-Country Education

The Canadian pathway for admitting refugee students run by WUSC is well regarded and has frequently been cited as a model for the development of third-country education pathways in other countries.¹⁸⁹ The WUSC Student Refugee Program utilises the private sponsorship entry channel to provide the opportunity to pursue higher education at a Canadian tertiary institution, with costs covered via a student levy.¹⁹⁰ Refugees arriving to take up this opportunity are identified and supported for entry by WUSC and receive permanent residence status, granting them access to a broad range of rights on equal footing with Canadian students. More recently, WUSC has started working on the policy level to try to fix the legal and policy gaps that can prevent refugees from accessing student visas in order to provide another entry pathway.¹⁹¹ Canada issued more than 400,000 student visas in 2019, and mobility on student visas is thus a significant channel of entry.¹⁹²

The United States, a key destination for international students, also has several existing scholarships for international refugee students. Enhanced opportunities to expand third-country education pathways in the United States might also be on their way under the new administration, following statements made in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election on exploring options for opening education pathways for refugee students.¹⁹³ These opportunities are detailed further in Box 13.

In Mexico, the NGO Habesha Project was established in 2015 with the aim of helping young Syrians continue their university education in Mexico under a Temporary Student

188 For example, while Mexico's 2011 migration law includes provisions for a points system that would offer temporary labour migrants an expedited pathway to permanent residence, the government has yet to introduce the regulations to implement such a system. See Government of Mexico, '[Ley de Migración](#)', 25 May 2011; Selee and Ruiz Soto, *Building a New Regional Migration System*.

189 Author interview with official from the University Alliance for Refugees and At-Risk Migrants, 17 September 2020.

190 WUSC, '[Student Refugee Program](#)', accessed 23 October 2020.

191 Author interview with official from WUSC, 28 July 2020.

192 Kareem El-Assal, '[Canada Welcomed More than 400,000 New International Students in 2019](#)', CIC News, 13 February 2020.

193 In a statement on World Refugee Day 2020, Biden pledged, 'I will pursue policies that increase opportunities for faith and local communities to sponsor refugee resettlement. I will make more channels, such as higher education visas, available to those seeking safety.' See Joe Biden, '[My Statement on World Refugee Day](#)', Medium, 20 June 2020.

Residency Permit.¹⁹⁴ At the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, the Habesha Project, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pledged to convert the project into a formal complementary pathway, though this pledge has not yet been converted into a memorandum of understanding.¹⁹⁵ There is also some discussion of expanding the project to include young refugee students from different nationalities. Actors involved in implementing the project have indicated that they are eager to share the lessons they have learnt with other countries, particularly in Central and South America.¹⁹⁶

BOX 13 **Education Pathways in the United States**

At least six scholarships for international refugee students are or have been offered in the United States. All of the scholarships identified are open to both refugee students already in the United States as well as to those outside the United States at the time of application. These scholarships are all run by private actors (universities, scholarship consortia, and foundations), are funded by universities themselves (including Columbia University, Salve Regina University, and Wheaton College) or by private donors, and utilise existing study visas to facilitate students' entry.

There is a considerable degree of interest among some U.S. universities, advocacy groups, and a few private funders not just on the topic of refugee education, but specifically on the feasibility of third-country education pathways. However, there are also barriers to pursuing such pathways, including the high cost of higher education (particularly for international students), the legal frameworks that govern entry on study visas (including, for example, the need to prove the intention to leave the country after graduation), and the limited options for stay after a student visa expires.

Addressing the legal barriers faced by international refugee students could be done in one of two ways: (1) through the introduction of a new refugee-specific study visa that would remove burdensome qualification requirements, open up possibilities for family reunification and work, and provide a path to permanent residence; or (2) through adjusting the existing international study visa framework to introduce waivers for refugee students to some standard requirements. In addition to resolving the legal barriers, further work will be needed to build interest in third-country education pathways among a wider network of higher education institutions and private funders.

¹⁹⁴ Author interview with official from Habesha Project, 24 September 2020.

¹⁹⁵ Author interview with official from Habesha Project, 24 September 2020.

¹⁹⁶ Author interview with official from Habesha Project, 24 September 2020.

BOX 13 (cont.)**Education Pathways in the United States**

Colleges, universities, and scholarship providers would also benefit from additional training and peer-learning opportunities on how to better serve refugee students. This could include addressing admissions barriers, improving counselling and academic advising services, and providing more tailored legal assistance. Finally, future education pathways in the United States would benefit from larger-scale fundraising efforts (at the university, grassroots, private sector, and state and federal levels) to cover the significant costs of travel and visa fees, tuition, and living expenses, including health care, as well as to support the work of a coordination platform or other services to offer guidance for universities and scholarship providers. Additional funding could be used either to directly fund a set of scholarships for refugee students or even to cover application and recruitment costs.

Sources: Joe Biden, '[My Statement on World Refugee Day](#)', Medium, 20 June 2020; International Refugee Assistance Project, *Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugees and Displaced Persons: A Blueprint for the U.S. Government* (New York: International Refugee Assistance Project, 2020); U.S. Government, '[Aliens and Nationality—Immigration and Nationality—General Provisions](#)', U.S. Code, Title 8, Chapter 12, Subchapter I, Section 1101(a)(15); U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs, '[Student Visa](#)', accessed 4 March 2021; U.S. Government, '[Aliens and Nationality—Immigration and Nationality—Administration Qualifications for Aliens: Travel Control of Citizens and Aliens](#)', U.S. Code, Title 8, Chapter 12, Subchapter II, Section 1184(b); U.S. Department of State, '[Nonimmigrant Status](#)', 9 *Foreign Affairs Manual* 401.1-3 (C) – (E), updated 12 January 2021; U.S. Department of State, '[Presumption of Immigrant Status – INA 214\(B\)—Application](#)', 9 *Foreign Affairs Manual* 302.1-2(B), updated 11 January 2021; American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, *Inclusive Admissions Policies for Displaced and Vulnerable Students* (Washington, DC: American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, 2019).

D. South America

Resettlement

Resettlement programmes in South American nations have historically been small in scale. Between 2003 and 2020, five countries operated resettlement programmes (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) and admitted a total of 1,452 refugees.¹⁹⁷ Initiatives led by UNHCR and other international partners such as the Solidarity Resettlement Programme (2004–15) and the UNHCR-IOM Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM, 2016–19) have offered resources and support to encourage countries in the region to launch and grow resettlement programmes. These efforts have met with mixed success. Under the ERCM, support was provided to Argentina, Brazil, and

¹⁹⁷ UNHCR, 'Resettlement Data Finder'.

Chile to expand their resettlement efforts.¹⁹⁸ However, financial and political constraints slowed the growth of these programmes, ultimately halting efforts in Chile, though programmes in Argentina and Brazil have continued and are being supported by the CRISP, as is a programme in Uruguay.¹⁹⁹

Argentina's nascent programme likely provides the greatest opportunity to expand resettlement in the region. The government has indicated its intention to design a new programme with better protection safeguards. Refugees resettled through the future programme will receive refugee status upon arrival; in contrast, refugees admitted through the Syria Programme were given a humanitarian visa but needed to apply for refugee status once in Argentina, without any guarantee that it would be granted.²⁰⁰ Community sponsorship will continue to be used as a tool for the reception and integration of UNHCR-referred cases, the infrastructure for which already exists.²⁰¹ In addition, UNHCR launched a global pilot process with a first operational pilot in Argentina to strengthen the reception and integration of resettled refugees by engaging local mentors associated with a national private-sector partner in Buenos Aires. While mentors will provide practical integration support to refugees, their efforts will be combined with crowd funding to raise financial support for refugees' integration. Experience from this pilot will inform the global process. Sponsors and local volunteer mentors are reportedly eager to welcome new refugees, despite uncertain economic conditions and the pandemic.²⁰²

Finally, conditions for integration have improved since the programme supported by the ERCM ended in 2019. Argentine law provides refugees and migrants with many of the same rights as nationals, most notably, amidst the pandemic, access to health care. The legal framework also facilitates the rapid employment of refugees.²⁰³ UNHCR's Cities of Solidarity, which links a network of cities interested in supporting refugees, may also provide support to improve reception and integration conditions. The initiative grew in 2020, with four cities joining in Argentina, for a total of ten in the country. Cities

198 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 8 October 2020.

199 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 8 October 2020.

200 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 17 February 2021.

201 See Red Argentina de apoyo al patrocinio comunitario de personas refugiadas, '[Patrocinio Comunitario](#)', accessed 19 February 2021.

202 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 17 February 2021.

203 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 8 October 2020.

participating in the initiative commit to opening reception and integration opportunities for refugees at the local level.²⁰⁴

There may also be opportunities for growth in the programmes in Brazil and Uruguay. Both programmes have government buy-in and, crucially, are seen as cost effective. Uruguay's programme focused on resettling Central Americans in rural areas of the country where there was a need for agricultural workers.²⁰⁵ The central role of potential employers in the programme allowed Uruguay to create a highly efficient and low-cost programme—gaining buy-in from the national government and boasting a built-in mechanism for connecting refugees with jobs and, thus, aiding their integration.²⁰⁶ There is potential to use community sponsorship as a tool to support the reception and integration of resettled refugees in Brazil. The Brazilian government committed to such a programme at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019.²⁰⁷ It has also built practical experience facilitating integration at the community-level through the internal relocation programme for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, established in 2018; this experience could be applied to refugee resettlement more broadly in the future.²⁰⁸ The establishment in 2017 of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) to support the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in Latin America has created opportunities for resettlement as well; it is the mechanism facilitating the resettlement of Central Americans in Brazil, and it has facilitated the programme in Uruguay.²⁰⁹

The reluctance on the part of some South American national governments to invest financially in resettlement programmes has been one of the main barriers to sustaining resettlement schemes in the region.²¹⁰ Resettled refugees have access to mainstream public education and health-care systems, but refugee-specific support systems remain scarce. The limited availability of core social services and integration measures has also

204 UNHCR, '[Argentina: Córdoba se sumó a la iniciativa Ciudades Solidarias de ACNUR](#)' (news release, 21 December 2020).

205 Author interview with official from the Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Relations and External Foreign Relations Consultant, 6 November 2020.

206 Author interview with official from the Uruguayan Ministry of Foreign Relations and External Foreign Relations Consultant, 6 November 2020.

207 Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, '[Joint Statement](#)' (joint ministerial statement, Global Refugee Forum, Geneva, Switzerland, December 2019).

208 For more on the interiorisation programme, see UNHCR and REACH, '[Venezuelan Migration in Brazil: An Analysis of the Interiorisation Programme](#)' (N.p.: UNHCR and REACH, 2019).

209 Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), '[Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework](#)', accessed 19 February 2021.

210 Susan Fratzke, Lena Kainz, Hanne Beirens, Emma Dorst, and Jessica Bolter, '[Refugee Sponsorship Programmes: A Global State of Play and Opportunities for Investment](#)' (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2019).

placed greater responsibility on civil society and become one of the driving factors behind the growing interest in community sponsorship as a tool for reception and integration to help sustain national resettlement efforts.²¹¹ UNHCR and IOM initiatives such as the ERCM and the CRISP will provide technical support to assist in building up these programmes over time. Programmes such as Argentina’s community sponsorship initiative, Brazil’s future programme, and the Uruguay resettlement programme may present promising models for the growth of resettlement in the region.

Third-Country Employment

Countries in South America have well-established labour migration policies to facilitate regional mobility—channels that could form the basis of a future employment pathway for refugees, as proposed by the 2014 Brazil Plan of Action.²¹² However, based on interviews conducted for this study, the research identified few opportunities for the growth of third-country labour pathways in South America at present.

Third-Country Education

One third-country education pathway for refugees has been developed to date in South America, but it has not reached the implementation stage. The partnership between the NGO Blue Rose Compass and the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina was intended to support refugee graduate students through Argentina’s Syria Programme. The programme stalled because of challenges developing a cost-effective intensive language training course that students would have needed to take before enrolling. Although the programme has not been activated, it demonstrates that the country’s legal framework is largely amenable to third-country education pathways, and that there is interest in them.²¹³

Still, opportunities to develop third-country education programmes may exist in South America. In Brazil, UNHCR, through the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair, established partnerships with 26 universities.²¹⁴ The partner universities have agreed to increase academic study and dissemination of knowledge on refugee issues, and to assist refugees

211 Fratzke, Kainz, Beirens, Dorst, and Bolter, *Refugee Sponsorship Programmes*.

212 The Brazil Plan of Action is a 2014 regional agreement outlining commitments to providing international protection. See UNHCR, ‘[Brazil Declaration: A Framework for Cooperation and Regional Solidarity to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees, Displaced and Stateless Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)’, updated 3 December 2014.

213 Author interview with official from UNHCR Multi-Country Office for Southern Latin America, 8 October 2020.

214 UNHCR, ‘[Universidades conveniadas](#)’, accessed 25 March 2021.

and migrants with their integration into local communities.²¹⁵ Since 2017, some universities have also begun making places available specifically for asylum seekers and refugees already in the country. By 2020, 14 universities had facilitated admission processes for asylum seekers and refugees, including 11 with specific admission processes for refugees. As of mid-2020, 329 refugees and asylum seekers were enrolled in undergraduate programmes at these Brazilian universities.²¹⁶ Considering the interest and experience of the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair, UNHCR supported the establishment of a Working Group on Education Opportunities as third-country solutions at the end of 2020 to explore initiatives to allow refugees in host countries to access undergraduate programmes in Brazil.

Throughout South America, for refugees who come from outside the region and do not speak Spanish or Portuguese (in Brazil), language barriers may pose a significant obstacle and will need to be considered carefully. Unlike universities in Europe or Asia, higher education institutions in South America typically do not conduct classes in other languages, so a high level of proficiency is required to enrol. Pathways focused on refugees from within the region may thus be the most viable option for growth.

215 UNHCR and Sérgio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair, *Annual Report: Sérgio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair (SVMAC)* (Brasília: UNHCR, 2020).

216 UNHCR and Sérgio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair, *Annual Report: SVMAC*.



*A Congolese refugee mother and children in the French city where they now live.
© UNHCR/Benjamin Loyseau*

5 Recommendations for Action

In the three years since the international community adopted the Global Compact on Refugees, efforts to secure durable solutions to displacement for refugees through voluntary return, local integration, or third-country resettlement and complementary pathways have met with a mixture of success, innovation, and difficulty. Protracted conflict and oppression mean that return remains a distant possibility for most of displaced people. And while the Global Compact and associated Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) have made strides in securing greater access to livelihoods and services for refugees in CRRF countries, access to the full range of rights that accompany permanent residency or citizenship is still out of reach for refugees in many countries. The COVID-19 pandemic, and its associated economic hardships, has further disrupted progress on these solutions.

While resettlement places remain far below the number needed, the last several years have brought energy and innovation to the resettlement and complementary pathways space. Many countries have committed to or already undertaken efforts to grow their resettlement programmes in significant ways, substantially increasing or committing to increase their quotas. Civil-society organisations, higher education institutions, and businesses have embraced the opportunity afforded by complementary pathways to directly support refugees in accessing third-country solutions, and in many countries they are actively pursuing partnerships with government to establish or grow complementary pathways programmes.

The Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways and the CRISP initiative seek to support and further the growth trajectory of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes. In furtherance of these goals, and building on the information presented in this study about opportunities for growth and good practices for supporting resettlement and third-country education and employment pathways, this final section sets out recommendations for action by UNHCR, national and local governments, civil society, higher education institutions, and businesses to support the expansion of third-country solutions for refugees.

A. Resettlement

UNHCR and its partners in national governments and civil society could consider the following actions to support the growth of resettlement in new, emerging, and established resettlement states:

- 1. Deepen understanding of public opinion on resettlement in specific target geographies and how to shape it.** Public opinion and, by extension, political will to establish and grow resettlement programmes were identified as the largest challenges across the case study countries and throughout the global mapping. Yet a granular understanding of people's views in specific contexts, how they differ between constituencies within a society, and how they interact with and are activated by specific messages or policy approaches is limited in many countries. While this level of nuanced understanding of public opinion around refugees is emerging in some larger resettlement countries, such as the United States and Germany, it is still lacking in many newer or emerging resettlement countries. In countries where UNHCR and others are working to grow resettlement programmes, it may be useful for UNHCR or its partners in government or civil society to invest in targeted research (and longitudinal research) that explores the

most effective narratives for broadening public support and how these can be tailored to reach particular constituencies within a society. These findings should then be used to inform public outreach campaigns on the part of civil society, as well as how the government approaches messaging around the launch or expansion of a resettlement programme.

- 2. Grow the diversity of actors engaged in supporting national resettlement programmes.** Expanding the constituencies across a society that are supportive of resettlement, and that are able and willing to voice that support to government, is also critical to creating and maintaining the political space to grow resettlement programmes. Diversifying the actors who are directly engaged in supporting the implementation of resettlement programmes, and who thus have a close-up view of programmes' needs and a stake in their success and growth, is one way to do so. This may take the form of local-level partnerships (for example, with local government, community organisations, or employers), community sponsorship opportunities, or welcoming community initiatives. UNHCR and its civil-society partners could encourage governments to identify ways in which programmes can be opened up to engage a broader range of actors, particularly at the local level. The study commissioned by the government of Finland, in consultation with UNHCR, to explore how to engage civil society more fully in resettlement through a community sponsorship programme to support integration is a good example.

- 3. Continue to encourage governments to move towards multiannual quotas and budgets.** Commitments to resettlement via quotas that extend over multiple years, with accompanying multiannual budgets, make it easier for UNHCR and programme partners at the national level to plan and organise resettlement activities. Governments should examine and consider how and whether multiannual quotas can be set. UNHCR should continue to encourage governments to develop multiannual quotas, where possible. In the short term, UNHCR could encourage governments to explore whether setting more informal multiannual targets for planning would be possible. In Finland, for example, the government committed in its coalition programme to setting the annual quota within a specific range (between 850 and 1,050). Governments may also play a role in inspiring their neighbours to move towards multiannual pledges. The analysis suggested a strong preference among states to operate in concert with their neighbours when making resettlement commitments. Encouragement from peers at the regional level, for example as part of pledging at the EU level, could be one way to expand willingness to set multiannual quotas.

- 4. Continue to invest in targeted peer support alongside opportunities for continuous learning, particularly at the operational level.** For new and emerging resettlement states, peer support and training will continue to be critical to building their capacities, and this should continue to form a central component of the CRISP's work. To be effective, the objectives of peer support and training should be clearly defined and carefully matched to the needs of the target countries. In particular, peer matches should be made based on what a country wishes to learn and which models of practice would be most appropriate. For example, smaller programmes that wish to scale up may benefit from learning from other countries with small programmes that recently (and successfully) travelled a similar trajectory, rather than countries with large programmes that have been well established for some time. Taking a regional approach to peer learning may also be useful, as countries may be most open to learning from others operating in a similar context. Resettlement countries with established programmes also benefit from opportunities for peer learning to continue to improve their processes through in-depth exchanges on procedural topics, study visits, or opportunities to exchange examples of operational documents and tools. The existing Priority Situations Core Group, which already incorporates some practical exchanges along these lines, should continue to serve as a venue for this type of detailed learning and exchange.
- 5. Create venues for states to exchange practical information on resettlement operations and identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration.** Alongside additional opportunities to exchange information and ideas, there may be value in creating venues for states to coordinate their selection missions and predeparture operations, particularly in contexts where many resettlement states are active. This need may become more urgent as the United States scales up its resettlement commitments into 2022. Coordination could be done through the existing Priority Situations Core Group process. In Europe, the EASO Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network is building a portal where EU Member States can share information about upcoming selection missions to avoid overlap and reduce overbooking of facilities and support staff in departure countries. Regularly exchanging practical information around operations in specific contexts could also generate ideas for how states could collaborate at a deeper level in the future on logistical matters, for example by sharing facilities or services. In Istanbul, EASO has piloted a joint facility that provides space and support resources for EU Member States to conduct their interviews or predeparture training. Experiments such as EASO's coordination portal and joint resettlement facility may provide

useful examples and lessons learnt that could inform efforts to extend cooperation at the international level.

- 6. Implement flexible operational modalities, such as remote processing and selection based on UNHCR referrals (i.e., dossier selection).** The COVID-19 pandemic has created an impetus to experiment more widely with flexible operational modalities for resettlement processing in many states, including remote interviewing and dossier selection. Building these processes into resettlement programmes on a permanent basis would help to both capture the benefits of these practices and prevent the learning that has happened over the last year from fading away. Doing so will help ensure that programmes retain an element of operational flexibility going forward and would allow for processing from locations that are hard to reach and where vulnerable refugees would otherwise not have access to a third-country solution. As these modalities are used more widely, it may be useful to collect and examine in a more systematic way how they have been used, in what contexts, and to what effect. States that have deployed these modalities in the past could contribute to growing a knowledge base in this area by conducting evaluations of their own programmes. This could be an opportunity to build a more resilient resettlement system beyond the pandemic.

B. Complementary Pathways

UNHCR and its partners in national governments and civil society could consider the following actions to support the growth of complementary pathways:

- 1. Identify and apply context-specific solutions to legal and regulatory barriers to enable refugees to use of existing visa channels.** Legal barriers inherent in the process of applying for nonhumanitarian visas (including study and work visas) in many countries and the limited pathways to permanence that these visas provide are some of the biggest obstacles to growing third-country employment and education pathways. In contexts where there is a strong interest among civil-society and private partners (including businesses and higher education institutions) in creating or further scaling complementary pathways, a critical first step will be for interested actors to develop an in-depth understanding of the specific legal and regulatory barriers that may pose a challenge for refugees (such as requirements to provide a passport or prove an intention to return to the country of origin or residence, or prohibitive visa fees) and the mechanisms and

possibilities for remedying these issues. Both the challenges and their potential solutions will vary by country.

Removing the identified barriers will ultimately be the responsibility of governments, through legislation, regulatory changes, or soft policy such as amending guidance and training for visa officers. UNHCR and its partners in civil society, business, and higher education should work to inform the strategies adopted by government, for example by providing input on specific legislative or regulatory language that could be adopted and by encouraging policy strategies to be developed in a participatory way that invites feedback and input from civil-society and private partners that will be supporting the implementation of these pathways. In most contexts, the most feasible strategy will likely be for UNHCR and its partners to advocate for a mix of soft policy and programmatic options in the short term, while pursuing more extensive legal and regulatory changes in the medium to long term, as political opportunities arise. In pursuing more extensive legal and regulatory reforms, it may be useful for UNHCR and its partners to join forces with those advocating for broader reforms to national immigration systems and seek to embed proposed changes that would benefit refugees within these discussions. In the United States, for example, advocacy to allow student visa holders to have dual intent to stay in the United States or to return after they finish their studies has also been taken up by other higher education and immigration advocates.

Ultimately, bespoke visa options for refugees to access third-country education or employment opportunities are likely to have the best chance of achieving scale. Targeted visas could be designed to remove barriers that keep many refugees from accessing mainstream study and work visas and to provide additional protections such as immediate access to long-term residence and social assistance supports. Another option would be to create broader humanitarian admission avenues, such as private refugee sponsorship, that allow for visas to be issued based on sponsorship from a variety of actors, including higher education institutions, scholarship providers, or businesses. Flexible humanitarian admission programmes may offer economies of scale in terms of obtaining legislative changes, as the same visa framework could be used for several complementary pathways.

As countries begin to experiment with adaptations to existing legislative and regulatory frameworks—or introducing new visa or humanitarian admission

avenues, such as private sponsorship—creating opportunities for policymakers to exchange with peers may help to encourage creative thinking and experimentation on how to overcome legal barriers facing refugees.

- 2. Continue to raise awareness of complementary pathways with relevant private actors and government stakeholders outside of the humanitarian and resettlement space.** Awareness of and interest in complementary pathways is still low among private stakeholders (including businesses and higher education institutions) and immigration officials who work on non-refugee-related issues in many countries. This presents a challenge to obtaining buy-in across government for the necessary policy reforms to make complementary pathways feasible, and to finding potential sponsors. Common concerns expressed by stakeholders during this study included a lack of clarity about how such an approach could work in their country, whether refugees have the skills and experience to qualify, whether these pathways would be truly additional to (rather than substitutes for) resettlement, and how to navigate common barriers such as access to integration services and visa processes. Some of these concerns could be addressed by documenting and sharing success stories of refugees who have benefited from these pathways in other countries, as TBB has done with the beneficiaries of its programmes. Examples of refugees accessing study or work opportunities within the target country or another country with a similarly structured labour market or higher education system would be particularly valuable. In turn, for employment pathways, detailing how refugees have helped meet specific labour or skills needs could be a valuable tool for engaging economic immigration and private-sector stakeholders. The task forces on complementary pathways organised under the Three-Year Strategy can play an important role in continuing to disseminate these examples through their networks in target geographies.

To be effective, awareness-raising efforts must target the right stakeholders in each geography. For employment pathways, these efforts could focus on sectors that are documented as experiencing shortages, and specific employer associations or employers that either have experience with hiring refugees or that are already engaged on labour migration issues. Local economic development organisations have also played an important role in Canada and are central to discussions on expanding resettlement and complementary pathways in Finland. For education pathways, UNHCR and civil-society partners will need to connect directly with leadership at high-profile higher education institutions or work through associations of university presidents and chancellors. Associations of universities

organised around relevant issue areas (such as those committed to providing higher education opportunities to refugees already in a country, as in Brazil) could be another entry point.

- 3. Create venues for coordinating and sharing learning among actors involved in implementing programmes within each country.** Platforms for coordinating the work of civil society, higher education or business partners, private donors, government, and UN agencies working to implement education and employment programmes in specific national contexts can provide a valuable tool to streamline work, share learning, and coordinate advocacy and outreach. Depending on the context, a platform could be led by a single actor (e.g., WUSC in Canada) or it could be an association of actors, with each taking on a specific role (e.g., UNICORE in Italy). Such platforms could provide guidelines and training for universities or businesses on how to adapt their environments to be welcoming to refugees, or they could be used to organise peer learning between actors within the country or internationally. They could also centralise certain services, for example screening refugees' applications and matching them with appropriate job or university admissions offers (as done by RefugePoint for the EMPP in Canada or by DAAD for Germany's Leadership for Syria programme), raise awareness among possible business or university sponsors, connect with potential refugee participants in host countries, coordinate advocacy for necessary policy changes, and reach out to potential funders. Coordination platforms will need to be organised and led by civil society and private partners in each country. UNHCR can play an important role in catalysing coordination by helping to identify relevant actors and bringing them to a common table. Once mechanisms for coordination are established, UNHCR should continue to be engaged in order to support outreach and assist with facilitating the identification and departure of refugees from host countries.

- 4. Pilot, evaluate, and share models that provide a sustainable source of funding.** A critical need for third-country education and employment pathways is to identify sustainable funding models that can help achieve scale. While governments and private philanthropy have shared the costs of the administrative work required to coordinate pathways and identify and screen beneficiaries, some economies of scale may be realised through soft policy or regulatory changes (for example, reducing some documentation requirements) and through the use of technology when identifying and selecting candidates. UNHCR and its partners can also build on their work to pilot and test creative funding solutions to help refugees cover the costs of their applications, travel, and initial (or ongoing, in the case of education

pathways) support; these may include, among other things, student levies or loan programmes. These pilots should be evaluated for lessons learnt, with the findings disseminated via the complementary pathways task forces launched under the Three-Year Strategy, the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, and other forums. Innovative funding strategies should be paired with outreach to relevant government actors and private philanthropies to encourage them to provide some capital for complementary pathways.

5. Build capacity to map refugees' skills in host countries and provide predeparture training to fill language and skills gaps. Identifying individuals who match the needs of specific employers or the requirements of specific educational programmes is a prerequisite to the success of education and employment pathways. Yet mapping and matching refugees' qualifications for individual third-country opportunities can be time and resource intensive, and redundant if it must be done every time an individual applies to a new programme. It may be worth identifying whether some economies of scale can be found in these procedures by creating a common database of profiles of individuals interested in pursuing education or employment in third countries. It could be useful to explore whether databases maintained by host countries (such as registration databases, school enrolment databases), UN agencies (such as UNHCR's proGres database), or actors supporting livelihoods and education activities on the ground could be expanded to include this information or, alternatively, whether existing programmes could coordinate to develop a separate platform. TBB, for example, recently made its refugee talent database (Talent Catalog) open source. Alongside a database, higher education institutions participating in these programmes could also explore whether it would be possible to standardise some of their application requirements (e.g., what information is needed regarding previous study experience or the format for letters of recommendation) to reduce the demands placed on refugee applicants.

Efforts to map refugees' previous experience and education could also be paired with training programmes in host countries to help refugees fill language or skills gaps. Universities, for example, could provide a one-year preparatory programme for accepted students prior to departure that includes language learning, study skills, or core coursework. Preparatory programmes could be offered by single universities or consortia in a particular country. They could draw on the lessons

learnt and infrastructure built by the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium,²¹⁷ where universities in third countries have offered skills training and certificate programmes to refugees in host countries via online and hybrid learning. Similar preparatory programmes could also be built for employment pathways; in fact, some experience with this already exists for employment pathways in some countries, such as Germany's Triple Win programme.²¹⁸ Predeparture upskilling and language training will be critical to expanding pathways beyond highly skilled and English-speaking refugees, who have predominately benefited from most third-country education and employment opportunities to date. Training programmes will need to be implemented and designed by private partners, and UNHCR could play a central role in connecting partners and advertising opportunities.

- 6. Identify opportunities to create links among education and employment pathways.** Addressing qualifications or language gaps for refugees who are seeking to access a complementary pathway could also be done by creating closer links between education and employment programmes in host and destination countries, particularly those with similar education systems and labour markets. Obtaining a degree or certification via an education programme could facilitate matching with a potential employer interested in hiring refugee workers. And some scholarships, such as those in France and Japan, already offer short language training programmes that refugees can use as a springboard for further study. UNHCR or another central actor would, however, need to be involved in coordinating movement across these programmes and providing guidance to beneficiaries to ensure that no one slips between the cracks when transitioning between programmes in the same or different countries.

C. Looking Ahead

The imperative to realise expanded access to third-country solutions for refugees, including through resettlement and complementary pathways, is a cornerstone of the Global Compact on Refugees. UNHCR, states, civil society, higher education, the private sector, and other relevant actors have an opportunity under the Three-Year Strategy to support the continued growth of resettlement and complementary pathways for years to

²¹⁷ Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium, '[Welcome to the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium](#)', accessed 25 April 2021.

²¹⁸ The Triple Win programme recruits nurses in partner countries, provides them with language and professional training, and places them with employers in Germany. So far, more than 4,000 nurses have been placed with employers. See German Agency for International Development (GIZ), '[Sustainable Recruitment of Nurses \(Triple Win\)](#)', updated January 2021.

come. Partnerships with actors outside the humanitarian sphere will need to be at the centre of efforts to advance and scale resettlement and complementary pathway programmes. New and active partners have critical roles to play in advocating for the development of resettlement and complementary pathways programmes, but also in supporting their implementation and the development of welcoming societies, particularly at the local level. Ensuring that resettlement and complementary pathways truly become whole-of-society endeavours will thus be an important goal going forward.

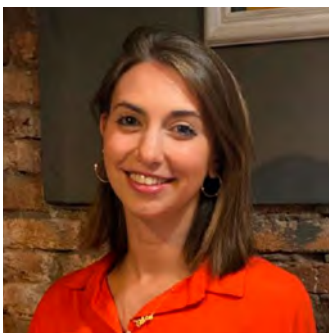
About the Authors



SUSAN FRATZKE

Susan Fratzke is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) International Programme, where she primarily works with the Transatlantic Council on Migration. Her research areas include forced migration, asylum, and resettlement policy, with a particular focus on Europe. Before joining MPI, Ms. Fratzke worked for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and with an adult literacy programme serving immigrant and refugee students in Minnesota.

Ms. Fratzke holds an MA in German and European studies, with a concentration in European migration policy, from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. She has also earned a certificate in refugees and humanitarian emergencies from Georgetown's Institute for the Study of International Migration and holds a BA in political science (with honours) from Iowa State University.



MARIA BELEN ZANZUCHI

Maria Belen Zanzuchi is a Research Assistant at MPI Europe, where she focuses on refugee policies, including complementary pathways to resettlement and durable solutions for refugee settlement and integration. Previously, she worked with the Humanitarian Corridors Initiative at the University of Notre Dame, which examines humanitarian corridors in Italy and assesses whether these programmes could serve as a model for migrant integration elsewhere in Europe. Ms. Zanzuchi also worked as an Economic Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce of Argentina, focusing on issues related to anti-trust policies, trade agreements, and sectorial policies and coordinating with private and public stakeholders.

Ms. Zanzuchi has a master's degree in sustainable development from the University of Notre Dame, with a focus on refugee and migrant studies, and a bachelor's degree in economics from the Universidad Torcuato di Tella in Buenos Aires.



KATE HOOPER

Kate Hooper is a Policy Analyst with MPI's International Programme, where she primarily works with the Transatlantic Council on Migration. Her research areas include labour migration, migration and development, and refugee and immigrant integration policies, with a focus on Europe and North America.

She holds a master's degree with honours from the University of Chicago's Committee on International Relations, and a bachelor of the arts degree in history from the University of Oxford. She also holds a certificate in international political economy from the London School of Economics.



HANNE BEIRENS

Hanne Beirens is Director of MPI Europe. She specialises in EU policies related to asylum and migration, human trafficking, labour migration, and youth. Prior to joining MPI Europe as Associate Director in 2015, Dr. Beirens worked as a Lead Managing Consultant for ICF Consulting, a Research Fellow at the Institute for Applied Social Studies of the University of Birmingham, and as an independent consultant for the International Labour Organisation and the Quaker United Nations Office.

She holds a master's degree in race and ethnic relations, with distinction, and a PhD in sociology and ethnic relations on the participation of minors in armed conflict, both from the University of Warwick.



LENA KAINZ

Lena Kainz was an Associate Policy Analyst with MPI Europe, where she focused on legal pathways to protection, global mobility governance, and unaccompanied minors. Prior to joining MPI Europe, Ms. Kainz completed internships in Amman with the UN Development Programme's Sub Regional Response Facility to the Syrian Crisis, in Rabat with the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and with the German Bundestag. She also worked as a mentor for unaccompanied minors in Malmö and as a Research Assistant at Humboldt University Berlin.

Ms. Kainz holds a master's degree in refugee and forced migration studies, with distinction, from the University of Oxford, and a bachelor's degree in Scandinavian studies and political science, magna cum laude, from Humboldt University Berlin.



NATHAN BENSON

Nathan Benson is the Legal and Research Director at the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, leading the Hub's research, policy, and law portfolio. He is a collaborator in the Local Engagement Refugee Research Network (LERRN) and the Sustainable Practices of Integration (SPRING) consortium and is co-leading a project on Canada's Role in the Global Refugee Regime.

A lawyer by training, Mr. Benson co-founded and led the Refugee Hub's public interest legal interventions clinic at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law (2017–20) and serves on the litigation committee of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL). He is the former National Director of the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program, a former legal counsel with the Department of Justice Canada, and has previously worked in senior strategy, communications, and policy roles.



ELIZA BATEMAN

Eliza Bateman is the Senior Research Analyst at the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, leading and supporting legal scholarship, policy analysis, and research projects on refugee protection, with a focus on refugee resettlement, refugee sponsorship, complementary pathways, and integration. She co-leads the Refugee Hub's interdisciplinary research team.

Prior to joining the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, Dr. Bateman worked as Senior Legal Advisor for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (Australia) and as a Senior Lawyer specialising in equality and human rights legal practice at Victoria Legal Aid (Australia). She has also worked in senior policy and legal roles for the Australian Department of Home Affairs, specialising in immigration and administrative law. She holds a PhD in Law and an LLM from McGill University and degrees in law and arts (hons., literature) from the Australian National University.



JESSICA BOLTER

Jessica Bolter is an Associate Policy Analyst with the U.S. Immigration Policy Programme at MPI. Her research focuses on migration patterns at the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration enforcement, and asylum and refugee issues. She also conducts research on Latin American migration policy, particularly on regional responses to Venezuelan migration and extracontinental migration.

She has interned with MPI, the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition, the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs, and the Center for Democracy in the Americas. Ms. Bolter holds a bachelor's degree in American studies and Spanish area studies from Kenyon College, where she focused on relations between the United States and Latin America.

Our Work

UNHCR

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organisation dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. We lead international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. We deliver life-saving assistance, help safeguard fundamental human rights, and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place called home where they can build a better future. We also work to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality. We work in over 130 countries, using our expertise to protect and care for millions.

MPI EUROPE

The Migration Policy Institute Europe is a nonprofit, independent research institute that aims to provide a better understanding of migration and thus promote effective policymaking. MPI Europe provides authoritative research and practical policy design to governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who seek more effective management of immigration, immigrant integration, and asylum systems as well as successful outcomes for newcomers, families of immigrant background, and receiving communities.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

September 2021



Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Service
Division of International Protection, UNHCR
Email: hqdiprcps@unhcr.org

www.unhcr.org



Migration Policy Institute Europe
Tel.: +32 (0) 2235 2113
Email: communications@migrationpolicy.org

www.mpieurope.org