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MIGRATION POLICY PRACTICE

A Bimonthly Journal for and by Policymakers Worldwide

ISSN 2223-5248

Vol. VIII, Number 1, February 2018–April 2018



Somali migrants board the bus at the transit centre heading towards the airport for their resettlement flight. © IOM 2016 (Photo: Muse Mohammed)

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Published jointly by the
International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Eurasylum Ltd.



The views in this journal are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration or Eurasylum Ltd.

These papers have been issued without formal editing by IOM. Any errors or oversights in this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Introduction

*Solon Ardittis and Frank Laczko*¹

Issues of refugee resettlement have ascended the international policy agenda considerably over the past few years. A number of new schemes, drawing on the principle of regional or international responsibility sharing, have been devised with varying success in Europe, North America and other regions of the world.

The first three articles in this issue of *Migration Policy Practice* discuss some of the current challenges in designing and implementing large-scale resettlement programmes.

According to Kathleen Newland, one of the pressing challenges to resettlement is currently its sheer cost, both in financial and administrative terms. Policy innovation and experimentation are therefore needed, including through an in-depth evaluation of old and new programmes in order to identify the factors that have been most effective in eroding the barriers to resettlement programmes and in allowing for greater numbers of refugees to be resettled.

In the second article, Gregory Maniatis and Jennifer Bond discuss Canada's resettlement programme, and in particular the Government of Canada's Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) that was officially launched in December 2016. The GRSI seeks to generate and support new pathways for refugee resettlement by providing assistance to governments and community members interested in establishing a community sponsorship programme. The long-term goals of the initiative are to: (a) increase the availability and quality of global resettlement; (b) strengthen welcoming communities; and (c) improve public narratives around refugees and other newcomers.

The third article, by Meghan Benton, explores the use of technology as a facilitator of refugee resettlement. One of the article's conclusions is that while information and communications technology has proved its ability to help refugees move more easily and settle more quickly, most of these innovative tools still suffer from duplication and overlap of efforts, limited capacity and an often imperfect understanding of what refugees need.

The last article, by Davide Mosca, discusses the need to introduce policies and initiatives relating to migrants' health as a global agenda, both within and beyond the global compact for migration and the World Health Organization Action Plan on the Health of Refugees and Migrants until 2019. The article notes, in particular, that there is currently no platform for migrant health that informs and is informed by the United Nations system global debates, a fact that possibly explains the absence of migrant health within the themes selected in New York for the consultations on the global compact for migration. ■

1 Solon Ardittis is Managing Director of Eurasyllum Ltd. and Frank Laczko is Director of the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Berlin. They are the co-editors of *Migration Policy Practice*.



Refugee resettlement in an era of large-scale and protracted displacement

Kathleen Newland¹

Introduction

As the number of refugees rose through 2017 to a post-World War II high, the search for solutions to forcible displacement intensified. The total number of refugees reached nearly 22.5 million at the end of 2016, with many communities having lived as refugees over generations – in Kenya, Thailand, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Palestinian Territories, among others. New violent conflicts arose and long-standing ones defied resolution, preventing large-scale repatriation. Countries of first asylum were, with some notable exceptions, reluctant to permit refugees to settle permanently. Resettlement from a country of first asylum to a third country seemed the most direct route to a durable solution, but this was available to less than 2 per cent of the world’s refugees. In 2015, some resettlement countries received numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers multiple times – in some cases in several orders of magnitude – greater than their resettlement commitments.

At its current low level, what role does conventional resettlement play in this context of large-scale flows of refugees and protracted displacement? Is it increasingly irrelevant to all but the tiny proportion of refugees who are resettled? Can it play a more strategic role than it has in recent years? Can it be made available to significantly larger numbers than at present? Can it be redesigned to operate more efficiently while retaining current safeguards against fraud and infiltration by people who might pose security risks? How can political support for refugee resettlement programmes be preserved and expanded?

This article addresses these and other questions surrounding refugee resettlement in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The enormous growth in the number of refugees worldwide in the 2010s, and the corresponding leap in the number considered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be in need of resettlement, has highlighted the challenges to resettlement as it is currently practised. These challenges are both direct and indirect.

One of the former is the cost of resettlement, in a context in which almost all governments face constraints on public spending. Another direct challenge is the fear that resettlement may be used as a path of infiltration for terrorists; guarding against this possibility both increases the cost of resettlement and slows down the process of moving refugees to a new, permanent home. The slow pace of resettlement procedures in many national programmes creates new vulnerabilities. Indirect challenges include the absorptive capacity of potential resettlement countries, particularly those that are receiving large numbers of spontaneous asylum seekers, and the potential for populist backlash against refugees by politicians and members of the public who conflate planned resettlement with spontaneous arrivals of asylum seekers and unauthorized immigrants. Integrating resettled refugees presents another set of challenges, which are often felt most keenly at the state/provincial and municipal levels. All of these challenges are, of course, interrelated. The article goes on to explore possible responses to the challenges described earlier, and innovations that may expand the scope and efficacy of resettlement. These range from technical “fixes” to fundamental rethinking of the purposes and procedures of resettlement.

¹ Kathleen Newland is a co-founder of and a senior fellow at the Migration Policy Institute (MPI).

The strategic use of resettlement

Most countries with large resettlement programmes express the intention to use their resettlement resources strategically. By this, they mean that resettlement serves purposes in addition to the strict humanitarian goal of protecting vulnerable refugees.

Several strategic goals can be advanced by resettlement. One of the most common is to bring a protracted refugee situation to a definitive end – as with the multinational effort to empty the camps holding Bhutanese refugees in Nepal by providing a durable solution for a population displaced since the 1980s and with no prospect of repatriation or local integration. Another common strategic goal is to preserve first asylum where countries receiving huge flows of refugees have threatened to close their borders or push refugees back into situations of danger. This was a motive for the huge resettlement of Indochinese refugees out of South-East Asia after the Viet Nam War, and the resettlement and temporary relocation of Kosovar refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 1999. Resettlement may be used in the hope and expectation of influencing the behaviour and attitudes of countries of first asylum in other positive ways: relieving the pressure of numbers can allow countries of first asylum to offer a better quality of protection.

Resettlement is also used strategically to advance a particular State's foreign policy goals. This was most comprehensively the case in the US resettlement programme during the Cold War, when almost all of the refugees admitted by the United States came from Cold War adversaries – the Soviet Union, Cuba and the communist countries in South-East Asia. But resettlement has also been used in pursuit of narrower strategic goals such as supporting a government in exile, protecting a group of special interest to the resettling State and stabilizing a refugee community. Although the 1951 Refugee Convention defines refugee recognition as a non-political act, resettlement priorities can send a message that external powers are actively concerned with the fate of particular individuals (e.g. political dissidents), an ethnic group or a religious minority. The Netherlands emphasizes a priority for human rights defenders and democracy promoters, for example, while France, the United States and the United Kingdom have given preference to Iraqis who have worked with their forces.

Direct challenges

One of the pressing challenges to resettlement is its sheer cost. Resettlement is a resource-intensive process, both in financial and administrative terms. Most resettlement countries send personnel to countries of first asylum to interview candidates for resettlement identified by UNHCR; in the US programme, a face-to-face interview with a US government official is required by statute. UNHCR has attempted to promote group determinations, multi-year commitments of places, and multinational selection missions to increase the efficiency of selection, but most refugees continue to go through multiple layers of procedures for screening and placement. For example, in nine EU Member States, resettled refugees must go through an asylum application process after they arrive at their destinations, having already gone through a UNHCR refugee determination process and screening (in most cases) by a national selection mission. Few countries are willing to accept many refugees on the basis of

UNHCR dossiers alone – although a Belgian official acknowledged the cost effectiveness of dossier-based selection of refugees stranded as a result of the Libyan crisis and noted that “after arrival, no cases of abuse were established.”² In 2016, the Government of the United States spent about USD 1.4 billion on refugee selection, processing, reception, placement and support in the first several months after arrival.³

Selection, processing, reception and placement are by no means the sum of the costs associated with refugee resettlement. The more important costs are those associated with long-term settlement and

2 Ewout Adriaens, quoted in D. Perrin and F. McNamara, *Refugee Resettlement in the EU: Between Shared Standards and Diversity in Legal and Policy Frames*, KNOW RESET Research Report 2013/03 (Florence, Italy, European University Institute, 2013), p. 21.

3 Calculation by the author based on data from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; the Office of Refugee Settlement; and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

integration. Income support, housing, education, medical care and other social services are usually provided at or above the levels offered to citizens and legal permanent residents. States, provinces and municipalities normally receive subsidies from the national government to cover these costs, but they are often inadequate. In Germany, the estimated costs of housing and integrating asylum seekers and refugees (1.1 million of whom entered Germany in the peak year 2015) were about EUR 23 billion in 2016.⁴ A few countries have blurred the lines between asylum and refugee funding on the one hand and overseas development assistance on the other, so that funding for refugees is subtracted from development aid. Greater integration between humanitarian and development funding and programming overseas is desirable, but not in the context of a fixed budget that weakens one to pay for the other.

The argument is often made that money devoted to resettlement would be better spent in the region of refugee origin, where the cost of living is much lower (and lower standards are accepted) – but support in the region does not offer a durable solution for refugees except in the rare instances that the country of first asylum is prepared to offer local integration. More often, care and maintenance in countries of first asylum condemns a refugee to a life in limbo, with unstable legal status and dim prospects for education and decent work.

Another direct challenge to resettlement is the fear that terrorists or other people who pose a threat to national security and/or public safety may infiltrate countries of destination through the resettlement programme. Actual incidents of resettled refugees perpetrating terrorist attacks are extremely rare. In the United States, which has resettled about 3 million refugees since 1980, no fatal attack has been committed by a resettled refugee as of late 2017, and only a tiny number of non-fatal ones. Of the few resettled refugees who have been arrested on terrorism-related charges, most were plotting to provide material support to a terrorist group abroad.⁵ Prior to resettlement, refugees (unlike asylum seekers

who arrive without prior processing) go through rigorous security screenings, often multiple times, to detect any risk factors. In the United States, the resettlement process involves security checks against five independent biographical or biometric databases as well as face-to-face interviews.⁶

A third challenge intrinsic to the resettlement process to varying degrees is the slow pace of resettlement. This is related to both the cost and security challenges, as resettlement processing is chronically underfunded in many countries, especially when some of the same resources (especially personnel) are drawn into the processing of asylum claims. This is obviously exacerbated when resettling refugees are required to go through an asylum procedure after arrival. Security screening can result in delays in resettlement when multiple agencies do not coordinate their work. Countries with smaller resettlement programmes often manage to process cases within a few months, and emergency cases sometimes within days, but refugees can wait for two years or more after they have been identified as a likely case by UNHCR to complete the processing for larger programmes such as those of the United States and Canada. The wait is a source of frustration to refugees, as well as to the agencies and communities prepared to receive them – acutely so in the case of private sponsors of refugees.

Indirect challenges

Of the challenges that are not direct consequences of the way resettlement programmes are implemented and financed, the most serious in the short term are those related to the absorptive capacity of communities that receive refugees. These have become acute in countries that are also receiving large numbers of asylum seekers. Sweden has received large numbers of unaccompanied minors among asylum seekers in recent years. Over 35,000 unaccompanied children sought asylum in Sweden in 2015 alone⁷ – the equivalent of 1,000 new classrooms in Swedish schools – not counting the number of children who arrive with their parents. Even in the absence of simultaneous asylum flows, refugee resettlement can place strains on schools, health-care facilities, infrastructure and

4 L. Dearden, “Germany ‘spent more than €20bn on refugees in 2016’ as crisis outstrips state budgets” (*The Independent*, 10 March 2017).

5 K. Newland, “The U.S. record shows refugees are not a threat” (Migration Policy Institute, October 2015). Available from www.migrationpolicy.org/news/us-record-shows-refugees-are-not-threat

6 Ibid.

7 Human Rights Watch, *Seeking Refuge: Unaccompanied Children in Sweden* (n.p., 2016). Available from www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/09/seeking-refuge/unaccompanied-children-sweden

many kinds of public services beyond the cost issues discussed above. The supply of teachers, for example, cannot always be expanded simply by increasing the education budget – particularly teachers who are specialized in teaching children and adults who are not competent in the local language. Even if housing for refugees is subsidized, stocks are inelastic in the short term and may result in competition for low-cost housing with low-income natives, or in overcrowding and substandard accommodations. These strains are mostly felt at the local level.

The challenges of cultural integration are prominent concerns in communities receiving refugees whose language, religion and mores differ from the native-born population. While many communities feel enriched by ethnic diversity, short-term problems of communication and misunderstanding create tensions that can be exploited as wedge issues by populist commentators and politicians. Terrorist incidents like the multiple attacks in Paris in November 2015, the Christmas market attack in Berlin in 2016 and the London Bridge/Borough Market attack in London in 2017 – as well as criminal incidents like the New Year 2016 incidents in Cologne and elsewhere in Germany – fan these tensions. Popular portrayals do not make the distinction between resettled refugees, refugees who have received asylum, asylum seekers, unauthorized immigrants and citizens “of immigrant background”. Of these groups, the only intakes governments can easily control are intakes of resettled refugees, since they are the only stream whose arrival is planned. Therefore, resettlement programmes become easy targets for those who would like to stop or slow the arrival of new immigrants.

The risk of populist backlash indiscriminately aimed at visible minorities is a challenge that goes well beyond the resettlement programme. In Germany in 2015, where the population as a whole has been generally welcoming to refugees, whether resettled or awarded asylum, by some reports⁸ there were about 500 attacks on refugee shelters, transport or gathering places in 2015, including an arson attack in December that injured 10 people including a two-month-old baby.⁹ This kind of pattern, not unique to Germany, is a broader challenge to the rule of law. The

electoral success of right-wing parties running on anti-immigrant platforms throughout the West threatens the political consensus that supports the international humanitarian system, including resettlement programmes. In many countries, mainstream politicians are driven to the right on asylum and refugee issues by a passionate minority. In the United States, where the resettlement programme has long enjoyed bipartisan support, 31 state governors called for a moratorium on resettlement of Syrian refugees after the 2015 Paris attacks, even though no refugees took part in the attacks.

The need for innovation

The challenges of refugee resettlement are real but not insurmountable. Policy innovation and experimentation are needed; both old and new programmes should be monitored closely to develop a more systematic idea of what policies have been effective in eroding the barriers to resettlement programmes that can handle greater numbers more successfully. In some cases, better communication with communities and local authorities about arriving refugees can ease concerns and help them to prepare to meet the needs and benefit from the personal assets of refugees. Countries like Denmark and Norway offer good practice in the way that municipalities are consulted about timing and readiness to welcome new arrivals. It is a relatively simple matter to make sure that receiving communities are well informed about the characteristics and needs of refugees resettling in the locality, but such information is not always forthcoming in a timely way.

Pre-departure orientations and training sessions for refugees can be valuable, but what is funded is often brief and perfunctory. Particularly when waiting periods are long, the time could and should be productively used for language instruction, vocational training and enhancement of life skills such as financial management. These investments are likely to pay off in earlier employment and readiness for school. Resources, especially teachers, could be supplemented with online instruction, but such programmes should be monitored for effectiveness so that design can be improved. Private-sector engagement at an early stage could be helpful in targeting vocational training; educational and professional associations could also take advantage of this time to assist qualified refugees with recognition of their credentials.

8 Die Zeit reports 222 violent attacks on refugee shelters.

9 RT News, “‘Attempted murder’: 10 injured in arson attack on German refugee shelter” (RT News, 8 December 2015). Available from www.rt.com/news/325053-arson-attack-germany-migrants/

The systematic involvement of civil society is a key to the successful integration of refugees. Integration cannot be left entirely to State institutions and authorities. Non-governmental organizations in the United States play an important role in organizing voluntary efforts and raising additional resources for refugee resettlement. Refugees who enter Canada via the private sponsorship route have better medium-term integration outcomes than those who are government-sponsored. The most comprehensive services of the most competent welfare States are no substitute for personal contact between refugees and members of the community in which they settle. Harnessing the broad goodwill that many people have towards refugees when they understand who they are and why they have fled is important for a successful integration, but a lack of systems to do so can lead to frustration and lapse into apathy. Local and national authorities should support people-to-people programmes that bring together refugees and their new neighbours. Some private-sector companies are taking the initiative to bring refugees and members of the host communities together, notably through initiatives such as Airbnb’s “Open Home” initiative, which provides a way for people with extra rooms to offer temporary shelter for refugees and others in need.

The Refugee Council of Australia points out that while the short-term costs can be high as refugees settle and adjust, successful integration brings permanent social, cultural and economic benefits – not least that five of Australia’s eight billionaires have refugee backgrounds.¹⁰ It noted the young age profile of refugees, in a country where new retirees outnumber new labour force entrants – a factor that applies in most European countries as well – and the potential for revitalization of rural areas and other regions outside of major metropolitan areas. Several US communities have also experienced the dynamism that new refugee populations can bring – to the extent that some struggling post-industrial cities such as Baltimore, Detroit and St. Louis have actively sought refugee resettlement. The small city of Boise, Idaho, found that the arrival of refugee families stabilized the school population in an area where declining

enrolment had threatened the viability of some schools. Among the ingredients for the successful integration of refugees, the Australian Council highlighted community support; access to training, mentoring and language instruction; affordable housing with access to community-based resources and transportation; participation in the labour force; social connectedness; and access to cultural, sporting and voluntary activities.

Social support of the kind that makes for successful settlement is built into private sponsorship arrangements for refugees. Broadening sponsorship opportunities to private citizens, civic groups, the private sector and educational institutions is a path that more governments should explore. Countries that have successful experience with private sponsorship could mentor others that are interested in developing it, as Canada is doing in partnership with UNHCR and the Open Society Foundations, the University of Ottawa and the Radcliffe Foundation through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative.

Relatively few studies track the economic and social outcomes for refugee populations, owing to a lack of data. Data collected by government authorities does not normally differentiate between refugees and other migrants, making it difficult to formulate evidence-based policies. A more systematic collection of data on how refugees fare in resettlement programmes would be extremely useful.

Conclusion

The refugee crisis that came to prominence towards the end of 2014 with a tragic shipwreck off the Italian island of Lampedusa has focused the minds of policymakers on alternative legal pathways to protection of refugees and durable solutions for them. Resettlement is a well-established alternative to the dangerous journeys and unauthorized entry made by millions in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Yet it is a narrow path, and has become narrower since 2017 as the United States, with the world’s largest resettlement programme, has drastically reduced its intake.¹¹ To make a difference to the refugee problem, not just to the problems of individual refugees

10 G. Fernando, “Will refugees really ‘take Australians’ jobs’ like Peter Dutton said this morning?” (*news.com.au*, 18 May 2016). Available from www.news.com.au/national/politics/will-refugees-really-take-australians-jobs-like-peter-dutton-said-this-morning/news-story/b782ac23492b324366dc140b13f83965

11 United States, Department of State, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for 2018: Report to the Congress* (2017). Available from www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/docsforcongress/274613.htm

accepted for resettlement, resettlement must be used more systematically and strategically. It can also be expanded, as the efforts of special programmes in Brazil, Canada and Germany demonstrate. If many more States took the expansion of resettlement seriously, it could tilt the balance of humanitarian response towards solutions rather than suspended animation as the norm for refugees.

At the United Nations General Assembly special session on 19 September 2016, the international community of States agreed to negotiate a global compact on refugees by the end of 2018. A clear-eyed look at the potential of resettlement as an important part of a new “grand bargain” should be on the agenda. ■

Further reading

Beirens, H. and S. Fratzke

2017 *Taking Stock of Refugee Resettlement: Policy Objectives, Practical Tradeoffs and the Evidence Base*. Migration Policy Institute Europe, Brussels.

Bokshi, E.

2013 *Refugee Resettlement in the EU: The Capacity to Do It Better and Do It More*. KNOW RESET Research Report 2013/04, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.



The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative: Sharing innovation in resettlement

Gregory Maniatis and Jennifer Bond¹

“In the face of record levels of displacement and soaring resettlement needs, UNHCR has been calling for a massive expansion in opportunities for refugees to find protection in third countries. This joint initiative is an excellent way for resettlement States to learn from Canada’s very successful model of private sponsorship. It also provides an avenue for civil society and local communities to actively contribute to refugee protection.”

– Filippo Grandi,

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees²

The number of refugees seeking international protection rose markedly throughout 2015 and 2016. As the world struggled to respond, the search for innovative approaches to the crisis intensified. A series of international conferences called for new and expanded legal pathways for refugees to escape the dangers of their home countries and the limbo of bare survival in overburdened countries of first asylum. The conference process culminated in September 2016 with a summit meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. At the summit, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and then Immigration Minister John McCallum announced a new initiative to promote increased refugee resettlement – the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI). The purpose of the GRSI is to provide training for States and community actors interested in learning from Canada’s highly successful system for privately sponsoring refugees, as well as direct support for those interested in adapting the model and introducing new programmes suited to their circumstances.

Although the Initiative was announced by the Prime Minister at an intergovernmental meeting, the GRSI was from the beginning a partnership of

several different kinds of organizations: initially the Government of Canada; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); and the Open Society Foundations, a private philanthropy in the United States. Within weeks, the University of Ottawa and the Radcliffe Foundation, a Canadian philanthropy, had also joined the partnership.

Private sponsorship in the Canadian resettlement programme

“Canada is committed to working to help facilitate a stronger global response to the ongoing refugee and migration crises. We have seen first-hand how many Canadian citizens have come forward to sponsor refugees from around the world, and we want to encourage and support other States to engage their citizens to do the same.”

–John McCallum,

former Minister of Immigration,
Refugees and Citizenship Canada³

Canada’s resettlement programme is described by the Government as an expression of “Canada’s proud humanitarian tradition,”⁴ with a legislated purpose to save lives and offer protection to the displaced and persecuted.⁵ It has also become an element of Canada’s “soft power”, increasing its influence and standing in the world. Private sponsorship was included in Canada’s Immigration Act of 1976, which formalized the country’s refugee resettlement programme. Since it became operational in 1978, private sponsorship has facilitated the resettlement in Canada of nearly 300,000 refugees. Today, more than 400 communities across Canada are home to privately sponsored refugees, and it is estimated

1 Gregory Maniatis is Director of the Open Society Foundations’ International Migration Initiative. Jennifer Bond is Chair of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative and Faculty Director at the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub.

2 Excerpts from the remarks of Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the announcement of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI), New York, 19 September 2016.

3 Excerpts from the remarks of John McCallum, former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, at the announcement of the GRSI, New York, 19 September 2016.

4 Statement of the Prime Minister of Canada on the arrival of Syrian refugees. See: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2015/12/11/statement-prime-minister-canada-arrival-syrian-refugees>

5 Canada, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, *Statutes of Canada*, chapter 27 (2001), section 3(2)(a).

that over a million Canadians have supported a sponsorship group in some capacity. Importantly, refugees who are privately sponsored add to the total number of refugees able to resettle in Canada through government sponsorship.

Canada's four decades of private sponsorship experience has given rise to many different forms of sponsorships: private sponsors may be corporations or registered organizations or associations; Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) enter into agreements with the Government of Canada to sponsor refugees on an ongoing basis; and "Groups of Five" consist of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents who agree to sponsor refugees on an ad hoc basis. While all three streams are active, most privately sponsored refugees now come under the auspices of SAHs, which may sponsor directly or act as umbrella groups for smaller community organizations or groups of citizens. Interest in refugee sponsorship is extremely high, and the number of privately sponsored refugees arriving in Canada each year is constrained more by government capacity than by a dearth of willing sponsors.

Canadian sponsors provide privately sponsored refugees with financial, logistical, and social support for one year or until the refugees become self-sufficient, whichever comes first. This arrangement ensures that refugees will not draw on public welfare systems for at least one year post-arrival and facilitates improved integration that is tailored to the needs of each refugee. In practice, many sponsor groups remain connected with the refugees they resettle for many years.

Government-assisted refugees are referred to Canada by UNHCR and also receive support for up to one year. Civil society organizations receive federal funding to support these individuals in navigating entry procedures, finding accommodation, linking up to language training classes and employment counseling, and providing a number of other forms of assistance.

Blended visa-office-referred refugees are likewise referred for resettlement in Canada by UNHCR and matched with a private sponsor. The Government and private sponsors share responsibility for providing income support, while private sponsors provide social and logistical support during the refugees' first year in Canada (and, as with a strictly private sponsorship, frequently beyond). Another type of joint public-private sponsorship, known as Joint Assistance

Sponsorship, makes it possible for private sponsors to resettle individuals with special needs that may make it too difficult for them to shoulder full responsibility without government assistance.

To be eligible for resettlement in Canada, a person must meet the criteria of the 1951 Refugee Convention or be a member of the Humanitarian-protected Persons Abroad Class as defined under Canadian law.⁶ People may also be admitted for resettlement "under public policy considerations due to the compelling nature of their particular situation."⁷ Qualified refugees must also pass medical, security and criminal background examinations.

Potential sponsors are assessed for their financial and settlement capacity to support the refugees during their first year in Canada. Financial requirements are based on prevailing provincial social assistance rates per family size, and sponsoring group members must provide proof of income or funds held in trust to show their collective financial capacity to sponsor. Sponsoring groups must also submit a detailed Settlement Plan explaining how they plan to fulfil their settlement responsibilities. These include: providing friendship and emotional support; finding housing; providing clothing, furniture and other household goods; locating interpreters when required; accessing medical and dental care; enrolling children in school; helping in the employment search; and providing orientation to life in Canada and services such as banking and transportation.⁸

Objectives, principles and priorities of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

"There are millions of people across the world who want to do more to help welcome refugees. Private sponsorship is a proven way to engage individuals,

6 "Section 2.1: Who may be sponsored?" of the Government of Canada's Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. Available from www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp#a2.1

7 Government of Canada, "Country chapter: Canada", UNHCR Resettlement Handbook (UNHCR, Geneva). Available from www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/3c5e55594/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapter-canada.html

8 "Sections 2.6: What are the responsibilities of the sponsoring group?" and "Section 2.7: How much financial support will be required?" of the Government of Canada's Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. Available from www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp#a2.6

community groups, and companies to directly contribute to refugee protection, and I hope others will also be interested in supporting this new joint initiative's objectives."

– George Soros,
Founder and Chairman, Open Society Foundations⁹

The GRSI seeks to generate and support new pathways for refugee resettlement by providing assistance to governments and community members interested in establishing a community sponsorship programme. The long-term goals are to: (a) increase the availability and quality of global resettlement; (b) strengthen welcoming communities; and (c) improve public narratives around refugees and other newcomers.

The GRSI pursues these goals through a number of targeted activities, including:

- **Distilling what has been learned from the Canadian experience** of private sponsorship in ways that will be useful to stakeholders seeking to establish and expand such programmes in other countries. Knowledge derived from the perspectives of diverse actors across the Canadian system will be disseminated in printed form, online, and via study tours and meetings.
- **Offering direct advisory support and building the capacity** of stakeholders who are committed to the development of community sponsorship. This includes identifying and supporting stakeholders in select countries that are willing and able to champion the establishment of such programmes.
- **Coordinating actors**, including the core partners, who are working on promoting community sponsorship of refugees globally, to make sure openings are pursued effectively, to avoid overlap in efforts and to ensure a consistent approach to promoting private refugee sponsorship.¹⁰
- **Creating a community of global sponsors and resettled refugees** to facilitate peer-to-peer support and momentum for iterative and sustainable sponsorships.

9 Excerpts from the remarks of George Soros, Founder and Chairman of Open Society Foundations, at the announcement of the GRSI, New York, 19 September 2016.

10 Excerpts from the remarks of Frank Giustra, Founder and President of the Radcliffe Foundation, at the announcement of the GRSI, New York, 19 September 2016.

Official Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative launch

"The refugee crisis can be addressed if we act as global citizens, in collaboration with governments, the private sector and the philanthropic community."

– Frank Giustra,
Founder and President, Radcliffe Foundation

The GRSI was officially launched in Ottawa in December 2016, with three days of consultations and events engaging expert stakeholders and partners. Overall, more than 100 Canadian and international delegates contributed to these consultations. The objective of the launch was to build a foundation for the GRSI activities by:

- Undertaking expert consultation on the Canadian model and its core elements;
- Initiating dialogue with key stakeholders from other jurisdictions interested in exploring community sponsorship models; and
- Carrying out strategic planning discussions among the GRSI partners.

Expert delegates representing a cross-section of Canada's private sponsorship system convened on the first day to cultivate insights into Canada's model as a whole, and to begin to disaggregate and investigate its key elements through the lens of adaptability to other jurisdictions. In-depth discussion provided valuable insights into community mobilization, settlement and integration, and using case studies of model variants in Canada as a tool to unpack and assess the merits of various elements of the system. Outcomes from this meeting informed the international consultations on the third day and provided the foundation for development of the GRSI training materials.

GRSI partner organizations convened on the second day to discuss organizational priorities as well as high-level planning for the upcoming GRSI training development and global engagement activities. The partners also publicly launched the Initiative with a press release and conference, and hosted an evening event designed to give international stakeholders an overview of the Initiative and its priorities.

On the third day, over 70 international delegates representing 8 countries (Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom

and the United States) convened to discuss key considerations for successfully introducing community sponsorship models in various jurisdictions. GRSI partners led round tables designed to generate input on the engagement of States, communities and funders – key stakeholder groups vital to the success of community sponsorship in any location. Delegates also discussed country- and region-specific insights during breakout sessions.

Putting Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative into practice: Facilitating private sponsorship in the United Kingdom

Since 2004, the Government of the United Kingdom has been operating the Gateway Protection Programme, which provides for a quota of UNHCR-identified refugees to be resettled in the United Kingdom.

The UK Home Office launched the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) in 2015, with a commitment to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees and 3,000 unaccompanied minors from September 2015 to May 2020. The VPRS is run in partnership between the UK Home Office, the Department for International Development, and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Home Office provides funding for local authorities that pledge to resettle refugees under this scheme.

In July 2016, the Home Office introduced a community sponsorship programme as part of the overall VPRS. The UK community sponsorship model offers opportunities for registered charities and community interest companies to help resettle refugees. To qualify as sponsors, UK groups must provide sufficient funds to cover refugees' costs over and above the State benefits that refugees receive, secure housing for a minimum of two years, receive approval from their local authorities, and demonstrate capacity and access to relevant expertise. Several families have been resettled under community sponsorship over the past few months, and many more sponsorship applications are currently under review by the Home Office.

The UK Syrian VPRS team drew on expertise provided by the Government of Canada and Canadian sponsor groups as it developed its own programme. As part of the exchange, a UK delegation visited Canada in October 2016 specifically to learn about the Canadian private sponsorship model. During that visit, key

stakeholders visited several Canadian SAHs, settlement service providers, the Ontario provincial government and a parish in a small town outside of Ottawa that has sponsored refugee families. Subsequently, a large delegation from the United Kingdom – including the Home Office, civil society organization leaders and the first community sponsor – participated in the GRSI launch events in Ottawa in December 2016.

A delegation comprising several members of the GRSI leadership team conducted a reciprocal visit to London in January 2017 at the invitation of the UK Home Office, where they met with UK stakeholders including others from the Home Office, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, and current and potential community sponsors. The objectives of the visit were:

- To plan future collaboration to support the UK community sponsorship scheme, including identifying areas where the GRSI can support the development of community sponsorship in the United Kingdom;
- To expose ministers and senior officials to the Canadian experience of sponsorship, such as the beneficial impacts on local communities;
- To prepare the ground through communications, and clarify the needed investment and infrastructure in sponsor training and refugee integration services;
- To engage and encourage UK civil society with the aim of increasing buy-in and take-up of community sponsorship; and
- To engage with United Kingdom-based philanthropic funding organizations to promote their investment in community sponsorship activity.

During its visit to the United Kingdom, the GRSI team met with several ministers to discuss the impact that community sponsorship of refugees can have on both integration outcomes for refugees and the local communities that welcome them. The GRSI also met with several other interested groups. Discussions with organizations active in refugee advocacy and with experienced resettlement organizations focused on options for capacity-building of potential participants in the community sponsorship programme. With senior representatives from some of the larger charitable foundations in the United Kingdom, the GRSI highlighted ways in which the UK charity

sector could support the community sponsorship programme. Finally, at a public event for interested community sponsors, the Home Office and the GRSI delegations engaged with over 50 potential sponsors from around the United Kingdom.

The GRSI is continuing to support the development of a community sponsorship programme in the United Kingdom. In particular, the Initiative is offering assistance by:

- Conducting a mapping of different Canadian sponsor groups that are interested in joining an online peer-to-peer support network between Canada and other countries that have expressed interest in community sponsorship, and creating a pilot registry of such resources to be shared with stakeholders in the United Kingdom;
- Helping connect UK organizations and the Government with the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) and other organizations involved in training sponsors in Canada;
- Developing a training guidebook for the UK stakeholders;
- Helping facilitate visits of different UK stakeholder groups to Canada to meet and learn from their Canadian peers; and
- Creating media products that help both capture the first UK sponsorships and promote community sponsorships within the United Kingdom in an effort to recruit more sponsors.

In addition, the GRSI will also help UK partners to identify and reach out to potential partners and supporters, including private-sector actors and other funders who can help finance various aspects of the project – both for short-term goals and long-term plans.

Looking forward

In addition to its work in the United Kingdom, the GRSI is engaged in discussions with a series of other countries to determine how best to support their efforts. The Initiative is also focused on raising awareness of the GRSI through upcoming events in Europe and Latin America, as well as on establishing a sound organizational structure through which to execute its work.

In the meantime, private sponsorship continues to play a prominent role in Canada. After the extraordinary effort to resettle Syrian refugees in late 2015 and 2016, the target for resettlement in 2017 anticipates the arrival of 7,500 government-assisted refugees, 16,000 privately sponsorship refugees and 1,500 refugees in the blended programme.¹¹ It is clear that Canada will continue to provide a model for other countries where people and communities are willing to offer refugees a personal welcome. ■

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11 Government of Canada, “Key highlights 2017 immigration levels plan”. Available from www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2016/10/key-highlights-2017-immigration-levels-plan.html

Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada

Shortly after the general election in October 2015, the new Canadian leadership announced plans to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees from Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey in the coming months: 10,000 by the end of 2015, and an additional 15,000 by the end of February, prioritizing families, women and children. This resettlement was achieved through a combination of government and private sponsorship.

This resettlement plan consisted of five stages:

1. Canada would work with UNHCR and the Government of Turkey to identify suitable candidates in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.
2. Prospective candidates were then screened overseas for processing. To meet these new demands, Canada established dedicated processing centres in Lebanon and Jordan, staffed by around 500 temporarily deployed officials, and worked to enhance Turkey's visa issuing capacity.

Canada's processing includes interviews with visa officers, and then medical and security screenings. Successful candidates are issued permanent resident visas.

3. Syrian refugees were then transported to Canada (Montreal or Toronto), using privately chartered airplanes or commercial flights. The first group of 164 Syrians to move under this programme arrived in Canada on 10 December 2015.
4. Upon arrival in Canada, refugees were processed by border services officers for admission to Canada and underwent a final medical screening. Privately sponsored refugees then travelled to their sponsors' communities; government-assisted refugees either travelled directly to their host communities or were placed in temporary accommodation while arrangements for their resettlement were being finalized with municipalities.
5. When refugees arrived in their host communities, they accessed support and services to facilitate their integration (e.g. health care, housing, language services, schooling and counselling) via the Government, their private sponsors or both, depending on their types of resettlement sponsorship.

Between November 2015 and the end of January 2017, Canada welcomed over 40,000 refugees as part of its special programme for Syrian refugees. Over 18,000 of them benefited from the support of a sponsorship group.^a

a Government of Canada, "#WelcomeRefugees: Key figures". Available from www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/welcome-syrian-refugees/key-figures.html



Using technology to facilitate refugee resettlement¹

Meaghan Benton²

One of the most remarkable developments of the last decade is the widespread use of modern communications technology by refugees. At every stage of the refugee experience, from leaving home to settlement in a new community, the smartphone – a mobile phone that provides Internet access and geolocation services – is a crucial source of information and a channel for communication. Mobile phone ownership is nearly universal. Smartphone penetration is growing and low-cost SIM cards are easily available, putting advanced communications technology into the hands of refugees as they resettle and make their way into new communities.

The potential for information and communications technology (ICT) to ease the integration of resettled refugees is profound but still underutilized. Some disconnects arise because of the difference between the way refugees use ICT and the way organizations trying to support them use it, which may reflect misunderstanding of how refugees prefer to get information. Currently, resettlement agencies use ICT, mostly through websites, to help new arrivals find and understand local services, job opportunities and community support. Refugees, on the other hand, prefer to use messaging services such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp to connect to trusted sources of information within their own networks.

Adding a new dimension to these patterns, there has been an explosion of energy, enthusiasm and innovation since 2015 from the tech community, aimed at helping refugees find the information they need.

Techfugees, a global network of tech entrepreneurs which has been both a driving and a unifying force for diverse efforts, had more than 15,000 participants in some 27 countries by October 2016. Hackathons, events and people collaborating across borders have been promoted, especially through the Techfugees platform. These efforts have been concentrated in three main areas: smartphone applications (apps); innovations to get new arrivals into work and/or training; and development of refugee-specific uses of the “sharing economy”, especially housing.

The smartphone revolution

Smartphone apps have perhaps attracted the most attention. Smartphone use is rising exponentially, especially among young people.³ Mobile devices worldwide reached 8 billion in 2016, with smartphones accounting for most of the growth from the previous year. In North America, 81 per cent of mobile devices are “smart” and by 2021 the figure is expected to reach 99 per cent. For Western Europe, the figures are 69 per cent for 2016 and 83 per cent projected for 2021.⁴ The premise is that a smartphone app can bundle together large amounts of information about local services in a user-friendly format and in a language used by refugees, thereby massively reducing barriers to services. A single smartphone can provide Internet access to an entire household, even if only one family member (typically a younger member) is fully comfortable using it. Moreover, the use of smartphones generates an enormous amount of data, which can help to inform officials about how services are used and where gaps exist.

1 This article is based on the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report *Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs Are Supporting Refugee Integration*, which was co-authored with Alex Glennie.

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3 Smartphone usage is much higher (83%) among people aged 18–29 years than other groups (58% average), according to a study on cell phone and smartphone ownership demographics, done by Pew Research Center (available from www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/).

4 Cisco, “Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2016–2021” (Cisco, 28 March 2017). Available from www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/mobile-white-paper-c11-520862.html

A number of smartphone apps have been developed to address specific needs of newly arrived immigrants and refugees, such as language training; information about education, health and other services; or guides to immigration law and naturalization. Newly arrived refugees often face obstacles to language lessons including cost, compatibility with work schedules and access to child care. Online language learning tools offer many possibilities for personalization and flexibility, such as work-focused vocabulary training or diagnostic tools that adapt to individual strengths, weaknesses and paces of learning. This has long been recognized, but the smartphone offers the additional advantage of portability, with apps accessible on the go, enabling learning to take place during travel time, break or leisure periods.

Games accessible on smartphones have been used to train disadvantaged groups how to use public services or live independently.⁵ Such games could provide innovative tools for packaging information or navigating services for newly arrived refugees.

Several apps have also been created to inform newcomers about immigration laws concerning, for example, family reunification, as well as the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in interactions with various government agencies. The CitizenshipWorks app built on the website of that name provides a one-stop shop for naturalization, bringing together information, civics training, and access to legal access for United States-based immigrants and refugees.⁶ The Migreat platform provided constantly updated information about the asylum and migration rules of several countries and had 2 million visitors a month by the end of 2015; however, it closed (or rather stopped being updated) in February 2016, for lack of funding – pointing to a common problem for ambitious efforts.

A large number of apps have been developed – perhaps too many in that it is difficult for refugees to know which are best suited to their needs. In practice, few apps are being used, and many lose their usefulness by not being updated regularly. Few have been designed with or around refugees.

User research among refugees has indicated that apps are not a preferred way of getting information. They take up memory on a device, require the user to learn to use a new platform and often present out-of-date information. Rather, refugees want information by word of mouth or through social media from people they trust. Refugees also want government websites to be easy to use and understand, jargon-free, multilingual and accessible on mobile devices. In many cases, apps are seeking to compensate for the absence of these qualities in official sources or information.

Moreover, while smartphones and mobile apps provide a host of potential opportunities for supporting access to services and training, they also raise many significant obstacles. Use of these tools depends not only on access to a smartphone but also on a considerable level of digital literacy, which many refugees lack – if they have not had access to education or exposure to technology. Indeed, the trend to rely more heavily on online resources to distribute information can exacerbate problems for those without these skills.

Innovations in access to work and training

Internet-based learning is not dependent on a physical location, so refugees can upgrade their skills as they await resettlement or adjudication of their asylum claims, while they are in reception centres, and in new locations even in rural areas. For refugees with access to the Internet, the classroom is portable. Some “open university” models, such as Kiron Open Higher Education, are aimed specifically at asylum seekers. Through Kiron, two years of online classes can lead to one year of study at a partner university that recognizes the credits from Kiron. In Berlin, a host of coding schools have emerged that teach both programming skills and “soft” skills in demand in the local market, including the REDI school, whose graduates have gone on to launch social enterprises.

Digital tools are particularly useful to prepare refugees for work in the digital economy. Online courses that teach computer programming are popular with refugees and well suited to distance learning. Many courses combine online work with personal coaching or mentoring. They also prepare graduates for work in a rapidly expanding sector: it is estimated that

5 J. Stewart et al., *The Potential of Digital Games for Empowerment and Social Inclusion of Groups at Risk of Social and Economic Exclusion: Evidence and Opportunity for Policy* (Luxembourg, European Union, 2013). Available from <http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC78777.pdf>

6 C. Costantini, “Immigration: There’s an app for that” (*ABC News*, 18 February 2013). Available from http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/immigration-related-smartphone-apps/story?id=18511818#3

Europe's technology industries will have to fill 756,000 vacancies by 2020.⁷

Digital-economy training programmes, however, serve the minority of highly skilled refugees who are well educated and highly motivated. More attention needs to be directed to job training, credentials recognition and skills acquisition for low- and mid-skilled refugees. Technology can be helpful in job-matching programmes, for example, where employers can search for refugees with particular skills or experience. Digital technologies could also help bring jobs to people, wherever they are, through freelance platforms such as Worker. If these innovations could be scaled up and expanded to support people with lower levels of education, they have the potential to be transformative. In many countries, however, asylum seekers are not allowed to work until their claims are decided, a process that can take months or even years. In some countries of first asylum, refugees (or some groups of refugees) are not allowed to work legally at all. This is an issue beyond the reach of technological solutions.

Refugees in the sharing economy/society

Innovative platforms such as Airbnb and Uber have revolutionized the way that people can use their assets. Harnessing these resources for humanitarian rather than strictly financial gains is a more recent development.

Crowdfunding platforms offer a way for people to get involved in initiatives to support refugees, but the funding stream can be unstable. A recent examination of crowdfunding concluded that the involvement of large investors, potentially including governments, could help crowdfunded initiatives make the transition to sustainability.⁸

House-sharing platforms such as Refugees Welcome and Comme a la Maison help newcomers settle in more quickly by placing them with families. If taken to scale, these initiatives could form the basis for a more collaborative approach to integration, with former migrants and communities playing a greater role in welcoming newcomers instead of immigration and social change being imposed on communities. They could also reduce pressures on housing – a critical challenge given the large numbers of new arrivals in countries like Germany and Sweden.

The broadest use of the sharing society can be seen in the long-standing Canadian system of private sponsorship, in which sponsors agree to receive, support and mentor refugees resettled in Canada for the first year after their arrival. But even less comprehensive schemes can be helpful, with volunteers sharing their homes, cars, expertise, and time with refugees to help them learn the language of their new locales, navigate services, search for work, fill out forms and applications, communicate with doctors and teachers, and so forth. Some sharing platforms have more limited goals – they distribute furniture, household goods, smartphones, and laptops to refugees and asylum seekers.

In general, sharing platforms for refugee integration have had difficulty scaling up. The Canadian private sponsorship programme is an exception, but it has been in operation and collaborating with the Government of Canada for almost 40 years. Unless volunteer-dependent programmes are well organized and supported, they can be difficult to sustain. Public interest in participating may wax and wane with the news cycle unless a floor of public-sector support is in place.

What role for public policy and programmes?

Since 2015, policymakers in Europe have shown increasing willingness to promote ICT innovation to support the integration of refugees who have been resettled or awarded asylum. One method has been to offer “challenge prizes” – competitions for good ideas in a particular policy area, which invite applications from a wide pool of participants, the most successful of which are then invited to develop their ideas further. The European Commission's European Social Innovation Competition took refugee integration as its theme in 2016, awarding three prizes of EUR 50,000

7 Euractiv, “Two-fifths of Europeans are digitally illiterate” (*Euractiv*, 10 June 2016). Available from www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/commission-wants-europeans-to-be-better-at-using-technology/

8 J. Bone and P. Baeck, *Crowdfunding Good Causes: Opportunities and Challenges for Charities, Community Groups and Social Entrepreneurs* (London, Nesta, 2016). Available from https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/crowdfunding_good_causes-2016.pdf

to the winners.⁹ The innovation agency Vinnova in Sweden ran a similar competition. In the United Kingdom, Innovate UK has run a few challenge prizes for good ideas in community cohesion, including language learning and counter-terrorism.

While generating new ideas is important, it is not enough. There is ample information about innovations that work on a small scale to promote integration. But expansion is often difficult and/or expensive. The scale of the challenge of integrating refugees is large. Innovations need investment and acceleration if they are to get beyond the start-up phase, which too often follows a pilot-and-crash pattern when attention shifts and funding for implementation dries up or fails to materialize.

Governments, both at the national and local levels, have an important role to play in escaping this cycle. They spend an enormous amount of money on integration. For example, Germany has estimated it would spend EUR 94 billion by the end of 2020. Some of this funding could be redirected to supporting technical innovation. An example comes from the US city of Philadelphia, which is combining a challenge prize model with incubation efforts and ultimately the possibility for innovative small operations to win city contracts. Opening a relatively large and stable source of funding through government contracts to innovative providers, without sacrificing quality control, is a test that policymakers should embrace. Technological innovation could well increase efficiency in public services and end up saving public funds in the medium to long term.

Conclusion

ICT has proven its ability to help refugees move more easily and settle more quickly, but its potential for the latter is only starting to be tapped. The field suffers from duplication and overlap of efforts, limited capacity and an often imperfect understanding of what refugees need. Smartphone apps may offer technological solutions, but only if the information that refugees need – like how to register your child for school, or whether you are allowed to work – is accessible to them, is user-friendly and is available in a language the refugee can understand.

Greater integration between the speed and creativity of the tech community on the one hand, and the stability and reach of government on the other, is needed to move technological innovation into the mainstream of refugee resettlement. More interaction among policymakers, refugee resettlement agencies and social entrepreneurs in the technology field could help to realize the potential of technology to provide solutions to some of the problems refugees face in the resettlement process. The involvement of refugees is also essential to make sure that the problems addressed by technology are in fact the problems that refugees experience. ■

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Advancing migrants' health as a global agenda: Looking at the global compact for migration and beyond

*Davide T. Mosca*¹

Desperate large-scale, conflict-driven human displacement and irregular migration flows have crystalized in the international attention as defining features of contemporary human mobility, overshadowing the otherwise positive and diverse reality of migration. This more positive reality is one that involves hundreds of millions of people worldwide and recognizes that migration is one of humanity's most traditional poverty reduction strategies, as well as a vital developmental and societal enriching factor for both countries of origin and destination. This element was decisively acknowledged by the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, filling the gap that existed in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in terms of migration and migrants. Unfortunately, a gap remains within the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)² – and moreover, in the global health and wider development agenda – with regard to the health aspects of migration. Rather than an oversight or question of interpretation, the absence of an explicit, comprehensive reference to the health of migrants in several global frameworks for international cooperation and global goals – including the ongoing development of a global compact for migration called by the UN New York Declaration of September 2016 – might be a hint of the divisive discourse that persists in societies in relation to the integration of non-citizens. This divide is particularly acute when it relates to the extension to migrants of public entitlements and services such as health-care coverage. Therefore, countries, agencies and other actors in the lead in shaping a more collaborative global migration governance agenda should endeavour to feature the health of migrants more prominently within current dialogues and commitments. It has been repeatedly argued in fact that in the sphere of population health and global health security, the upfront costs of investing

in migrants' health are largely compensated for by the longer-term public health benefits of integration, as healthier migrants are better able to contribute to economies and societies and overall health-risk reduction.

The current migration governance climate

The polarization of the current political debate on migration between the proponents of borders and societal fence-building on one side, and the campaigners for modern and pragmatic migration management approaches that are open to accepting human mobility as an ineluctable and potentially enriching aspect of the contemporary world on the other, has necessarily widened to encompass the domain of health policy and the debate around the health of migrants. For some policymakers, increasingly restrictive migration governance policies should be given primacy over more egalitarian “health for all” principles and values. Indeed, despite global declarations of commitments to realize universal health coverage (UHC) and to “leave no one behind”, what ultimately determines the level of access migrants have to health care today and, more generally, the health outcomes of migration, is the legal status that migrants hold in society, public perceptions around migration, and the use of restrictions to limit access to fundamental social services as a means to regulate and curtail migration.

Wherever countries may position themselves on the continuum between inclusion and exclusion, between those promoting equity in health and those focused on strictly regulating migration, the issue of migrant health can no longer be ignored. It must take its place within the global health agenda, as well as within the global migration and socioeconomic development agenda, owing to its relevance in an increasingly interconnected world where, from a purely public health point of view, individual health security and global health security are interdependent. Furthermore, being and staying healthy is a fundamental prerequisite for successful integration and the ability of migrants to contribute to the prosperity of societies of origin and destination.

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2 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

This is in everyone's interest, as migration and human mobility are indisputably megatrends of the twenty-first century.

It is estimated that over 1 billion people worldwide are on the move, either across national borders as international migrants (258 million) or within the borders of their own countries as internal migrants (740 million). The health needs of a population of this size (essentially, 1 in 7 of the world's population) is an indicator of the relevance of the issues as a global theme, especially when one considers that, to varying degrees, most migrants – whether internal or international – may face challenges and obstacles to accessing health care that is comparable to that enjoyed by the resident population, due to administrative, economic, cultural, linguistic and social barriers, which the realization of “migrant-sensitive health systems” could overcome. Migrants and mobile populations may also be neglected by national health surveillance systems that remain unprepared to monitor the health of people on the move, and may not be harmonized with other surveillance systems across borders.

These gaps and disparities in accessing services are more significant in the case of international migrants, wherein the status of non-nationals – within the prevailing societal context of anti-migrant sentiment – impedes migrants' empowerment and participation in the elaboration of effective health promotion strategies; these have been critical factors in the resilience of certain vulnerable populations in the face of specific health hazards, such as HIV/AIDS. The presence of gaps and the lack of remedial strategies means that migrants – particularly those less educated and skilled, women and youth, those in situations of exploitative labour and those with health needs – are often left unprotected and vulnerable as they cope with increasingly difficult living and working conditions, and face risky journeys.

Migration and health as a global agenda

Countries in different regions of the world and with different motivations – ranging from the constitutional recognition of equal rights for all, regardless of nationality, to more pragmatic public health imperatives – have promoted a health equity agenda for migrants and displaced populations notwithstanding their legal status. A common factor seems to be an understanding that the realization of national health goals cannot be achieved without

the inclusion of migrants – an often sizeable and vulnerable part of the population – and that health represents a fundamental aspect of human rights that extends beyond issues of nationality. This awareness, supported by the leadership of those countries that have heralded the migrant health agenda internationally, led to the adoption of the first Resolution on the Health of Migrants³ by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly in 2008, that, together with the outcomes of the First Global Consultation on Migrant Health⁴ in 2010, produced an action framework that various countries and health actors have since used.

Few countries, however, have scaled up their capacity and invested in their response to new or prospective health needs related to migration flows; nor have many countries put in place mechanisms to enhance multisectoral collaboration, cross-sector policy coherence and multi-stakeholder partnership, which are fundamental to the ability to consistently address migrants' health needs and determinants of health. In most instances, this has been due to the presence of political sensitivities and the lack of readiness to commit financial resources, as well as a general political climate where migration has catalysed divisive elements of society. In this context, the health sector has often had to capitulate and retreat from well-established principles of universalism and equity in health coverage, as well as from widely supported global strategies that put people at the centre of the health-care delivery system, and has had to align itself with the prevailing realpolitik of the moment.

The new framework of principles and priorities in promoting the health of refugees and migrants,⁵ sponsored by the countries that have been championing this agenda nationally and internationally, was discussed at the Seventieth World Health Assembly in May 2017; there, it was reported as “noted with appreciation” by the World Health Organization (WHO) Member States, rather than as “adopted”, an indicator, for those familiar with UN language, of the widespread reserve among governments in recognizing the applicability to

3 http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/23533/1/A61_R17-en.pdf

4 <http://publications.iom.int/books/health-migrants-way-forward-report-global-consultation>

5 www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/WHA_RES_70.15.pdf

migrants – particularly the undocumented – of the principles of health equity and social justice, thought of as already acquired by all in the global health narrative.

This omission is not limited to the health sector, but it extends to the various platforms that have addressed the governance of migration in multilateral forums, starting in 2006 with the First UN High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, moving onto successive editions of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and finally to the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants of September 2016. Health has remained a neglected theme, exemplified by its omission from the process defined by the UN Resolution A/RES/71/280 on Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration,⁶ meant to be developed by the UN Member States by late 2018. The recently publicized zero draft of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration resulting from the intensive phase of intergovernmental consultations in the follow-up to the New York Declaration, and meant to set milestones in the history of the global migration dialogue by defining common understanding, shared responsibilities and unity of purpose regarding migration, has failed to dedicate to the health of migrants the place and relevance many had advocated in governments, civil society and UN agencies.

The zero draft only marginally refers to health issues, except for a generic commitment to provide migrants with access to basic social services and to promote the operationalization of the WHO Framework of Priorities and Guiding Principles discussed by the World Health Assembly in May 2017 (WHA 70.15). It is ironic that while the World Health Assembly has deferred consideration of a draft WHO Global Action Plan on the Health of Refugees and Migrants until 2019, the development of such an Action Plan is implicitly entwined with the elaboration of the global compact for migration in 2018 – a process that does not include health as a subject of particular attention. Additionally, besides the half-hearted support that the Member States of the Seventieth World Health Assembly has given the Framework, it is unlikely that the health sector alone will be able to mobilize the leadership and political will at the multisectoral level capable to overcome the legislative and

xenophobic determinants around migration that remain the underlying factors hampering progress in the realization of an equitable health coverage for migrants. Clearly, advancements in the migrant health agenda will not be accomplished within the health sector alone, and WHO, supportive Member States and other actors should not miss to try and receive within the final version of the global compact for migration much emphasis and political impetus on health issues, including with regard to the “*actionable commitments, means of implementation, and follow-up and review of implementation*”, expected from the global compact. Continuous high-level advocacy, mainstreaming the health of migrants within relevant national, regional and international platforms of negotiations, as well as progressive and incremental realizations within health and other sectors – such as migration governance, labour, education, justice, social protection, humanitarian action and others – with adequate mobilization of resources and means to monitor progress are needed to advance this critical agenda.

Looking ahead to future steps

The WHO Action Plan, which was announced at the Seventieth World Health Assembly and will be considered for adoption in 2019, will be an important instrument for the advancement of the migrant health agenda, both nationally and globally. It is hoped that the Action Plan will reflect the diversity of migration patterns and phases, as well as the multisectoral and multi-actor nature of the agenda, and the inherent health determinants for migrants and mobile population groups as they evolve in different regions of the world and in different societal contexts. The Action Plan should go beyond a Western-centred mindset and avoid rigid categorizations of migrants that are linked to entitlements and legal status, upholding universal people-centred principles, such as the right to health and safety for all, UHC and the “leave no one behind” agenda, which are in the global public health interest; such inclusive, non-discriminatory values should be at the core of the migration and health discourse.

The European–Mediterranean migration crisis, with its outrageous loss of human lives and untold human suffering, not to mention the profoundly divisive debate on migration it has engendered, has challenged the principles of protection and humanitarian values regarding refugees and asylum seekers that have long been considered as inalienable. Moreover, it has

6 www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_280.pdf

influenced the UN General Assembly's discussion of "large influxes" of migrants and has precipitated an entrenchment of the contentious divide between "refugees" and "migrants" along different regimes of protection regulated by national laws and international instruments. Indeed, the New York Declaration called for the elaboration of two separate global compacts, one for refugees, led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and one for migrants, led by Member States. Such a marked divide should, however, have little bearing on health issues, particularly when one considers the contemporary reality of protracted displacement crises and the fact that the majority of refugees and asylum seekers are hosted in urban settings rather than in camps; these elements have generated a shift in the focus of refugee health from a matter to be addressed within parallel and temporary emergency mechanisms to one that takes a more far-sighted approach, looking at strengthening existing health systems, and the nexus of humanitarian response and development with an emphasis on integration. Such an approach brings the health response for refugees closer to that needed for other categories of migrants. This is reflected in the New York Declaration's encouragement that States address common issues, such as the health-care needs of both groups, through "people-centred, sensitive, humane, dignified, gender-responsive" and comprehensive approaches.

Unfortunately, the New York Declaration did not address internally displaced persons, internal migrants, the majority of migrant workers in a regular situation or other mobile groups; consequently, this omission has influenced other processes, including the work of the World Health Assembly on migration, and risks turning back the clock of a discussion that, at the time of WHA Resolution 61.17 Health of Migrants (2008), was intentionally comprehensive. Resolution 61.17 looked at human mobility as a determinant of health whatever the category of migrant, and aligned its actions with the principle of "health for all", with no discrimination. The challenge is now for Member States, WHO, UNHCR, IOM and the UN system as a whole to maintain this holistic approach and avoid sanctioning a politically driven "health divide".

Beyond the importance of what the global compacts on refugees and migrants in 2018 and the WHO Action Plan of 2019 might represent, it is clear that, considering the prevailing sensitivities around migration and around the health aspects of

migration in particular, the realization of concrete improvements for migrants and displaced persons will require longer-term commitment, leadership and partnership, as well as the integration of national and global multisectoral initiatives. These initiatives include national policies, institutional capacities to be built and strengthened, and local intersectoral responses, supported by international and global sets of principles, methods, evidence, dialogues, available instruments and resources.

The fact that a theme of such relevance has never been presented and discussed by the UN General Assembly is, per se, of concern; there is no current platform for migrant health that informs and is informed by the UN system global debates, a fact that possibly explains the absence of migrant health within the themes selected in New York for the consultations on the global compact for migration. Could the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative⁷ be the venue for a more permanent debate on this topic, thereby linking the work at the World Health Assembly with other relevant platforms, including the IOM Council and the UN General Assembly? Should a new, more specific initiative play this role? Could the Colombo Statement⁸ issued by participating countries to the Second Global Consultation on Migrant Health in February 2017 develop into such an initiative and include other countries that have taken an international lead, for example, in promoting the theme within the work of the World Health Assembly and beyond? The Colombo Statement commits signatory countries to "lead in mainstreaming the migration health agenda within key national, regional and international fora, in domains such as migration and development, disease control, global health, health security, occupational safety, disaster risk reduction, climate and environmental change, and foreign policy, as guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Yet modalities for such leadership have not yet materialized that would facilitate the mainstreaming of migrant health within, for example, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, or the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour, such as the Colombo and the Abu Dhabi Processes, other regional consultative processes on migration or the G20, to mention a few.

7 www.who.int/un-collaboration/health/oslo-ministerial-declaration-2010.pdf?ua=1

8 www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/Migration-Health/Colombo%20Statement%2023Feb2017%20FINAL.pdf

In the past, the UN Secretary General has appointed special envoys on health issues to support the use of diplomacy to advance health themes of global interest that have an impact on health security, economy, issues of stigma and discrimination, and a need for resource mobilization attached. All these attributes are applicable to migration and health, including the sensitivity of a divisive topic that is often hard to address within country dialogues. Could a UN Secretary General Special Envoy on Migrant Health help now in catalysing leadership and partnership in relevant sectors? Could partnership be strengthened between UN agencies, such as WHO, IOM, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO and others, as well as within the Global Migration Group, in order to address specific issues related to the migration health agenda and within the relevant SDGs? It is vitally important to enhance specific intersectoral solutions both locally and globally, but so far, a convening capacity has been lacking and actions have remained fragmented.

While networks of dedicated researchers and academia, as well as the organization of training programmes and symposiums on this topic, are growing, there is still no international association or society to systematically advance knowledge and dialogue on migrant health, and events often fail to build onto each other. It is hoped that, in the future, there will be a dedicated international society to ensure a more continuous exchange of good practices and experiences, so as to gauge the growth of an alliance of scope and the concrete results it will be able to achieve.

Lastly, there exists a plethora of scholars, practitioners, clinicians, service providers, activists and their representing institutions, whose wealth of knowledge, insight and wisdom often remains unheard, and whose resourcefulness goes untapped. We hope that the work of the UCL-Lancet Commission on Migration and Health,⁹ the International Society of Travel Medicine Conference on Migrant Health in October 2018¹⁰ in Rome, and other similar events will help to bring clinicians, nursing experts, scholars and policymakers closer together and strengthen into a community of practitioners that can better respond to the health needs of millions of migrants on their migration journeys, and can make our health systems more migration- and mobility-competent and responsive for the benefit of all. ■

⁹ www.migrationandhealth.org/

¹⁰ www.istm.org/ICMH2018

Publications



World Migration Report 2018

2017/358 pages

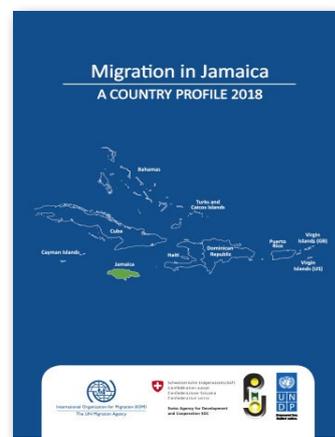
ISSN 1561-5502

ISBN 978-92-9068-742-9

Chinese

Since 2000, IOM has been producing world migration reports. This World Migration Report 2018, the ninth in the world migration report series, has been produced to contribute to increased understanding of migration throughout the world.

It presents key data and information on migration as well as thematic chapters on highly topical migration issues, and is structured to focus on two key contributions for readers: Part I: key information on migration and migrants (including migration-related statistics); and Part II: balanced, evidence-based analysis of complex and emerging migration issues.



Migration in Jamaica: A Country Profile 2018

2018/236 pages

English

The recent Migration Profile for Jamaica shows that emigration continues to be greatly in excess of immigration. The overall trend of decreasing numbers of permanent emigrants to the three traditional and still major destinations – United States, United Kingdom and Canada – continued, but numbers trended downwards from around 29,000 in 2006 to less than 23,000 in 2015. The dominance of the United States as a permanent destination has continued, especially of young professionals and students.

Immigrants showed an increase in number of approximately 11,700 in the recent five years (2012–2016) over the previous five-year period. Foreignborn immigrants accounted for 72 per cent of the total. China as the main country of origin – and India in second place – continued since 2011 to 2017. The returning Jamaican nationals accounted for 28 per cent of the immigrants. This included voluntary returnees and forced returnees. The latter accounted for 20 per cent of the total immigrants in 2007–2016, exceeding the voluntary returnees that amounted to only 8 per cent of the total number of immigrants.

Temporary (guest) Workers Programmes have expanded from farm and hospitality work to include low-skilled employment in Canada since 2014.

The overall numbers of persons on these programmes has increased over the past decade. An estimated number of some 1.3 million Jamaican-born persons are residing abroad, amounting to at least 36.1 per cent of the national population. Remittance receipts from Jamaican emigrants have trended upwards over the years 2011–2016. The Bank of Jamaica estimated remittances at USD 2.292 million in 2016, which contributed 16.1 per cent to Jamaica's GDP in 2015.

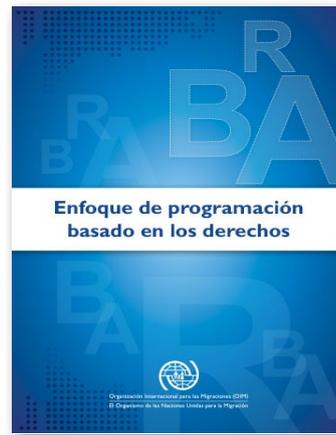


Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Policy Brief Series Issue 2 | Vol. 4 May 2018

2018/9 pages
ISSN 2410-4930
English

Today, almost 15 per cent of the global population is on the move, with more than 244 million international migrants and 763 million internal migrants, UN statistics estimate. An increasing proportion of these migration flows are linked with the scarcity of natural resources. Consequently, on the one hand, the importance of managing natural resources is increasingly recognized in migration policies. On the other hand, these migration flows have become an important issue to consider in various international, regional and national policy frameworks, including those related to water resource governance.

The increasing number of global water challenges and associated migration patterns – in many cases forced migration – create a strong impetus to discuss and integrate migration policy concerns in water governance at the global level. This policy brief examines the nexus between migration and fresh water governance and explores the potential synergies between both policy domains.



Enfoque de programación basado en los derechos 2018/180 pages

Spanish

Este manual fue elaborado para apoyar al personal de la OIM en cómo adoptar en sus programas, un enfoque basado en los derechos (EBD), determinando las normas jurídicas internacionales que entran en juego en sus proyectos y entendiendo los principios de derechos e incorporándolos en el proceso efectivo de la programación.

El primer módulo de este manual presenta al lector el enfoque basado en los derechos, su historia y su desarrollo. El segundo módulo es una guía práctica para el enfoque de programación de la migración basado en los derechos. El capítulo examina cada etapa pertinente del ciclo del proyecto y recalca que un EBD se centra tanto en el proceso de programación como en los resultados del proyecto. Además, mediante el uso de ejemplos prácticos, el manual muestra cómo se pueden incorporar las cuestiones relativas a los derechos en los resultados del proyecto y cómo se pueden incorporar los principios de derechos en el proceso del proyecto. El tercer módulo familiariza a los lectores, al personal de la OIM y a sus asociados en la implementación del derecho internacional sobre la migración, o refresca sus conocimientos al respecto, para que puedan determinar fácilmente las formas en que la programación de la migración podría afectar y tener un impacto en los derechos de los migrantes, así como las cuestiones legales que pueden ser pertinentes para el proyecto en particular. Proporciona una visión general del marco jurídico internacional relativo a la migración, que comprende los convenios y tratados internacionales, las obligaciones de los Estados y los derechos de los migrantes. Además, los Anexos al final del manual incluyen ejemplos, herramientas y fuentes que pueden ser de ayuda y proporcionar orientación práctica para diversos proyectos.



Call for authors/Submission guidelines

Since its launch in October 2011, *Migration Policy Practice* has published over 184 articles by senior policymakers and distinguished migration policy experts from all over the world.

Past authors have included, inter alia:

Eric Adja, Director General of the International Migrants Remittances Observatory (IMRO) and Special Adviser to the President of Benin; *John K. Bingham*, Global Coordinator of civil society activities in the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the Global Forum on Migration and Development; *Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje*, Chair of the GFMD 2013-2014; *Mark Cully*, Chief Economist at the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *António Guterres*, Secretary-General of the United Nations; *Khalid Koser*, Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Migration; *Khalid Malik*, Director of the Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); *Cecilia Mamlström*, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs (2010–2014); *Ali Mansoor*, Chair of the GFMD 2012; *Andrew Middleton*, Director of Culture, Recreation and Migrant Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics; *Najat Maalla M’Jid*, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2008–2014); *Robert A. Mocny*, Director of the Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM), formerly US-VISIT, US Department of Homeland Security; *Imelda M. Nicolas*, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Office of the President of the Philippines; *Ignacio Packer*, Secretary General of the Terre des Hommes International Federation; *Kelly Ryan*, Coordinator of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees – IGC, Geneva; *Martin Schulz*, President of the European Parliament (2012–2014); *David Smith*, Director of Economic Analysis Unit, Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *Sir Peter D. Sutherland*, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Migration (2006–2017); *Ambassador William Lacy Swing*, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); *Myria Vassiliadou*, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission; *Catherine Wiesner*, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, US Department of State.

Migration Policy Practice welcomes submissions from policymakers worldwide. As a general rule, articles should:

- Not exceed five pages and be written in a non-academic and reader-friendly style.
- Cover any area of migration policy but discuss, as far as possible, particular solutions, policy options or best practice relating to the themes covered.
- Provide, as often as applicable, lessons that can be replicated or adapted by relevant public administrations, or civil society, in other countries.

Articles giving account of evaluations of specific migration policies and interventions, including both evaluation findings and innovative evaluation methodologies, are particularly welcome.

To discuss any aspect of the journal, or to submit an article, please contact:

- **Solon Ardittis** (sardittis@eurasylum.org); and
- **Frank Laczko** (flaczko@iom.int)