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# TAKING STOCK OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

POLICY OBJECTIVES, PRACTICAL  
TRADEOFFS, AND THE EVIDENCE BASE

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By Hanne Beirens and Susan Fratzke

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May 2017

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to record levels of displacement, national governments around the world have increased their commitment to refugee resettlement. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of resettlement places globally rose by approximately 27,000 spots. This growth partly stems from the participation of more countries in resettlement efforts: while 16 countries reported resettling refugees in 2005, 28 countries did so in 2015. Although the nearly 82,000 resettlement departures facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2015 were far below the 1.19 million needed, the increase in places pledged and countries engaged demonstrates renewed commitment to resettlement as a critical tool of the global refugee protection regime. But while interest has proliferated in some arenas, growing scepticism toward immigration and refugees in particular has spilled over into some resettlement policy decisions; this trend is most evident in the efforts of U.S. president Donald Trump to significantly reduce the size of U.S. resettlement commitments in 2017, citing security concerns.

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*In taking on more responsibility within the global protection framework, European governments will need, more than ever, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their resettlement systems.*

In the European context, growing interest in resettlement has been driven in part by the proximity of European Union (EU) Member States to several major humanitarian crises and the large-scale forced migration flows they have generated. By introducing new resettlement initiatives or scaling up existing efforts, European governments have sought to show solidarity with countries of first asylum, such as Turkey and Jordan, as well as to bring some order to chaotic migration flows. Most notably, in July 2015 the European Union agreed to launch a two-year effort that committed Member States to participating in a joint resettlement scheme, with the aim of increasing the number of refugees brought to Europe through a managed, safe channel. Achieving this goal has required countries that had previously never resettled refugees to develop programmes, and those with established initiatives to increase their commitments.

In taking on more responsibility within the global protection framework, European governments will need, more than ever, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their resettlement systems. Yet the evidence base available to inform their actions is exceedingly thin. This report maps the specific policy questions governments face, and the accompanying needs for quality information and analysis, as they develop their resettlement efforts.

Whether launching a new resettlement effort or expanding an existing initiative, governments face four particular and interlocking challenges:

- ***Setting coherent goals for resettlement efforts.*** Governments rarely articulate in a clear and detailed way the specific goals of a resettlement programme, which can range from a desire to share responsibility with first-asylum countries to the aim of reducing spontaneous asylum flows. Moreover, the various actors involved in resettling refugees—from humanitarian agencies to government authorities and civil society—often have very different reasons for engaging. Without clear aims, evaluating the effectiveness of resettlement efforts and adjusting programme design accordingly is difficult.
- ***Creating a strategic impact.*** Even when goals are clearly stated, balancing the constraints of national processing, reception, and integration capacity with the desire to achieve a specific impact can be a challenge. This is particularly the case for small-scale programmes. Moreover, certain goals may come into competition with one another. This tension can be felt in disagreements over who to resettle. While many countries prioritise the most vulnerable, in line with the humanitarian origins of

resettlement, this aim may limit feasibility of other goals, such as ensuring swift integration or reducing spontaneous asylum flows.

- ***Ensuring efficient refugee resettlement.*** Maintaining a coherent resettlement effort requires extensive management of the process, including review and vetting of prospective refugees. These procedures can be resource intensive, especially if resettlement efforts are spread out across multiple refugee situations. Particularly for small national programmes, effectively managing a comprehensive process can be challenging. Pooling resources, such as translators or logistical planning capacity, among resettlement states is one way to overcome some of these obstacles.
- ***Facilitating success after resettlement.*** Regardless of their broader goals, all resettlement efforts aim to ensure that refugees are able to settle into their new communities. Authorities face a number of choices when determining how best to invest in integration. Key considerations include whether to invest in predeparture orientation activities and how to define and measure successful integration for a group whose vulnerabilities may make traditional benchmarks (such as quickly achieving self-sufficiency) inappropriate.

Addressing each of these tradeoffs effectively requires governments to have sufficient information on the relative value and costs of the many different resettlement approaches and practices applied to date—a level of detailed analysis and evaluation that is scarce in many countries. Much of the information available is primarily descriptive and presented in the form of handbooks or overviews of prior practice. Few countries have undertaken truly comprehensive evaluations of their programmes. The evaluations that do exist have focused to a large extent on outputs (e.g., number of persons resettled) rather than outcomes (e.g., the degree to which resettlement has helped achieve national priorities in a particular region), and even when outcomes are considered, little consideration is usually given to the role policy and programme design play in shaping them.

Three gaps in research merit particular attention: First, programme evaluations should consider whether a resettlement effort is meeting its stated policy goals, rather than merely monitoring its outputs. Second, information on the costs of resettlement programmes and their various components should be carefully recorded and disseminated. Without such information, governments are limited in their ability to make an informed decision about the relative merits of different approaches. Finally, data on the integration outcomes of refugees should be improved in a way that facilitates thorough analysis while also safeguarding individuals' privacy. Currently, many resettlement countries lack comprehensive longitudinal data on resettled refugees. Even where such data exist, they do not usually capture links between outcomes and specific policy and programmatic inputs, making it difficult to determine their effectiveness. To be properly equipped to launch or expand resettlement efforts, states will need to make investments in addressing these gaps in crucial research and analysis.

## I. INTRODUCTION

While refugee resettlement has long been one of the core tools of protection employed by the global humanitarian regime, the attention it has received at international, national, and local levels has increased drastically since the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2011. Policy developments in the European Union (EU), the United States, and Canada testify to this sharp rise of resettlement, and refugee issues more broadly, on political agendas. In North America, 2016 began with the Canadian and U.S. governments significantly increasing their resettlement commitments; Canada took in an additional 25,000 Syrian refugees in just five months, and the United States increased its resettlement quota by 15,000 places over the previous year and pledged a further 25,000 increase for 2017 (though the fate of this latter commitment remains uncertain under the newly

inaugurated Trump administration).<sup>1</sup> The search for a solution to the increased flow of migrants and refugees across the Mediterranean generated similar pressures to expand resettlement places in the European Union. In July 2015, the Council of the European Union agreed to establish an EU-wide resettlement scheme with the aim of admitting 20,000 persons over a two-year period.<sup>2</sup> The European Commission further agreed to make an extra 50 million euros available to support Member States in filling these additional resettlement places.<sup>3</sup> The EU-Turkey agreement announced on 18 March 2016 solidified the position of resettlement at the centre of the European approach to the crisis, committing Member States to resettling one Syrian refugee for every Syrian migrant Turkey readmits from Greece.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to encouraging existing resettlement states to expand their programmes, these EU actions have pushed other Member States to launch or significantly scale up their resettlement efforts. For both established and, especially, new resettlement countries, information on how to design and implement a successful resettlement programme is essential. And for policymakers at EU and Member State levels, a better understanding of how to effectively pool resources and coordinate efforts across national borders is needed. Yet the resettlement field lacks a tradition of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation, meaning there is a dearth of data on the outcomes and effectiveness of resettlement policies. Moreover, the heavy focus in existing research on integration has meant that few independent studies have sought to fill this gap.

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This report takes a first step toward addressing this paucity of information by mapping the primary questions governments face regarding the goals, design, and implementation of resettlement policies and programmes, as well as by considering the quality of the evidence currently available to guide them in these decisions. In highlighting gaps in existing knowledge, it also identifies areas where further research is needed. While this report focuses on traditional government-operated resettlement programmes, private sponsorship and humanitarian admission initiatives are also considered, where relevant. The analysis draws on examples and evidence from both EU Member States and other established resettlement countries.

The report begins by examining the development of resettlement as a protection tool and the scope of present-day efforts. It then considers the goals of resettlement programmes and how these differ between the key actors involved. Next, the analysis assesses the tradeoffs policymakers face in designing resettlement programmes, before considering the state of evaluation and assessment efforts within the field. The report concludes by offering recommendations for further research to support informed policy development in this field.

- 1 Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), 'Canada's Syrian Commitments', updated 9 February 2017, [www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/commitment.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/commitment.asp); Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, 'Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States—Refugees and Asylum Seekers', *Migration Information Source*, 8 March 2017, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#RefugeesAsylum](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#RefugeesAsylum).
- 2 Council of the European Union, 'Conclusions of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States Meeting within the Council on Resettling through Multilateral and National Schemes 20 000 in Clear Need of International Protection' (conclusions, 11130/15, 22 July 2015), <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11130-2015-INIT/en/pdf>.
- 3 European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A European Agenda on Migration' (COM [2015] 240 final, 13 May 2015), [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication\\_on\\_the\\_european\\_agenda\\_on\\_migration\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf).
- 4 Council of the European Union, 'EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016' (press release, Brussels, 18 March 2016), [www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/).

## II. EVOLUTION AND SCOPE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT INITIATIVES

Over the past 70 years, the international community has turned to refugee resettlement as one of three principal durable solutions—along with voluntary repatriation and local integration—to address human displacement. Though first implemented on an ad hoc basis in the aftermath of World War II, resettlement has become a global tool and an integral part of the humanitarian policy regime in many countries.

### *A. The origins of modern resettlement policy, 1945–60*

Resettlement first emerged as a solution for some of the more than 65 million people displaced both within and outside their countries of origin by World War II.<sup>5</sup> While policies addressing displacement originally focused on repatriating refugees to their origin countries, by the late 1940s it had become clear that many could not return home and the attention of the international community, led by the United States, turned to finding solutions elsewhere. The International Refugee Organisation, a temporary UN body, became the institutional vehicle for these early efforts, eventually resettling more than 1 million refugees.<sup>6</sup> In 1950, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created to serve as a more permanent refugee agency. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)<sup>7</sup> was established in parallel in 1951 in response to the desire among some countries, particularly the United States, for an organisation with a more state-driven rather than multilateral mandate.<sup>8</sup>

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*The Hungarian operation marked the first use of resettlement beyond the immediate aftermath of World War II and significantly expanded both the profile and role of UNHCR and IOM.*

The first test of the newly created refugee system came with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which led to the exodus of 200,000 people.<sup>9</sup> Pressure from Western governments that opposed the Communist regime in Hungary meant that resettlement rather than repatriation was the primary policy response for Hungarian refugees. The Hungarian operation marked the first use of resettlement beyond the immediate aftermath of World War II and significantly expanded both the profile and role of UNHCR and IOM in responding to displacement, with 180,000 Hungarians eventually resettled to Western countries. The United States and Canada took the largest numbers (38,000 and 35,000, respectively), while the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Switzerland, and France each admitted between 10,000 and 15,000 refugees.<sup>10</sup>

5 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford, UK: UNHCR and Oxford University Press, 2000), 13, [www.unhcr.org/publications/sowr/4a4c754a9/state-worlds-refugees-2000-fifty-years-humanitarian-action.html](http://www.unhcr.org/publications/sowr/4a4c754a9/state-worlds-refugees-2000-fifty-years-humanitarian-action.html).

6 Ibid., 17.

7 In 1951, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was known as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME). It was renamed the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952, and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1980. It took on its current name in 1989.

8 Fabian Georgi, 'For the Benefit of Some: The International Organization for Migration and its Global Migration Management' in *The Politics of International Migration Management*, eds. Martin Geiger and Antoine Pécoud (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

9 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees 2000*, 26.

10 Ibid., 32.



## B. Institutionalising the practice of resettlement, 1975–90

Resettlement again emerged as a leading policy solution in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the fall of Saigon in 1975. More than 3 million Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese were displaced,<sup>11</sup> and thousands embarked on dangerous sea journeys to seek safety in neighbouring countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. As the willingness of these countries to accept the arriving refugees waned, UNHCR and a number of national governments—including the United States, Canada, and Australia—reached an agreement with countries of first asylum to resettle large numbers of refugees in exchange for their continued willingness to allow new arrivals to remain while awaiting resettlement. For its part, the Vietnamese government also agreed to allow refugees to depart the country directly as part of the UNHCR-led Orderly Departure Programme (ODP) that aimed to curb deaths at sea.<sup>12</sup> By the second half of 1979, 25,000 were being resettled from the region each month.<sup>13</sup> The United States, driven by its interests and involvement in the region, accepted 1.3 million refugees in the two decades after 1975.<sup>14</sup> Canada and Australia also accepted significant numbers (200,000 and 185,000, respectively), as did France (100,000) in part due to its colonial ties to the region.<sup>15</sup> Smaller numbers were taken in by several other European countries, New Zealand, and Japan (see Table 1). The ODP was eventually replaced by the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) in 1989, which introduced more restrictive elements into the resettlement process, such as status determination, a cutoff date for resettlement applications, and the return of rejected applicants.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 1. Indochinese refugee resettlement, by resettlement country, 1975–95**

Resettlement country	Number of refugees resettled			
	Cambodians	Laotians	Vietnamese	Total
Australia	16,308	10,239	110,996	137,543
Belgium	745	989	2,051	3,785
Canada	16,818	17,274	103,053	137,145
Denmark	31	12	4,682	4,725
Finland	37	6	1,859	1,902
France	34,364	34,236	27,071	95,671
Germany*	874	1,706	16,848	19,428
Japan	1,061	1,273	6,469	8,803
Netherlands	465	33	7,565	8,063
New Zealand	4,421	1,286	4,921	10,628
Norway	128	2	6,064	6,194
Sweden	19	26	6,009	6,054
Switzerland	1,638	593	6,239	8,470
United Kingdom	273	346	19,355	19,974
United States**	150,240	248,147	424,590	822,977
Others	8,063	4,688	7,070	19,821
<b>Total</b>	<b>235,485</b>	<b>320,856</b>	<b>754,842</b>	<b>1,311,183</b>

Notes: \*Figures for Germany include refugees resettled to West Germany and, after 1990, to unified Germany; \*\*Figures for the United States exclude arrivals under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP).

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford, UK: UNHCR and Oxford University Press, 2000), 99, [www.unhcr.org/publications/sowr/4a4c754a9/state-worlds-refugees-2000-fifty-years-humanitarian-action.html](http://www.unhcr.org/publications/sowr/4a4c754a9/state-worlds-refugees-2000-fifty-years-humanitarian-action.html).

11 Ibid., 79.

12 Between 1979 and 1997, the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP) resettled 623,509 refugees. See Court Robinson, *Terms of Refuge: The Indochinese Exodus and the International Response* (New York: Zed Books Ltd, 1998), 295.

13 UNHCR, *The State of the World's Refugees 2000*, 86.

14 Ibid., 173.

15 Ibid., 180–81, 99.

16 Ibid., 88.

The substantial increase in the scale of resettlement commitments—and the continued need for such activities—spurred many participating countries to develop a more systematic approach to what had been primarily ad hoc efforts. Between 1975 and 1987, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and the United States passed national legislation to formalise the resettlement process. The basic legal frameworks created in the 1970s and 1980s, though modified over time, continue to inform the way most major resettlement countries process cases today.

### C. Global engagement in resettlement: Current scale and scope

Following the end of the Cold War, resettlement numbers initially declined before rebounding in recent years, driven in part by new displacement crises in Iraq and Syria. Today, resettlement programmes are growing in diversity: more countries participate in resettlement and they accept refugees from a greater variety of national and demographic backgrounds.

The number of refugees resettled has trended upward (see Figure 1). Between 2011 and 2015, the number of resettlement places globally rose by approximately 27,000 spots. Notable increases can be seen in 2004, when resettlement from Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, and Laos peaked; in 2009, with the resettlement of Iraqis, Burmese, and Bhutanese refugees; and in 2014–15 due to conflicts in Syria and Iraq.<sup>17</sup> Of the world's 15 million refugees, 107,051 were resettled in 2015<sup>18</sup>—81,893 via UNHCR referrals.<sup>19</sup> The countries that resettled the largest number of UNHCR-referred refugees in 2015 were the United States (52,853 refugees), Canada (10,236), and Australia (5,211).<sup>20</sup> Top countries of origin that year included: Syria (53,305), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (20,527), Iraq (11,161), Somalia (10,193), and Myanmar (9,738).<sup>21</sup> Since 2015, the Syrian crisis has spurred additional commitments either to increase resettlement overall or to designate a certain number of places for Syrians specifically.<sup>22</sup>

17 UNHCR, 'Populations Statistics Database', accessed 3 March 2017, <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/resettlement>.

18 UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), annex tables 1 and 23, [www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf).

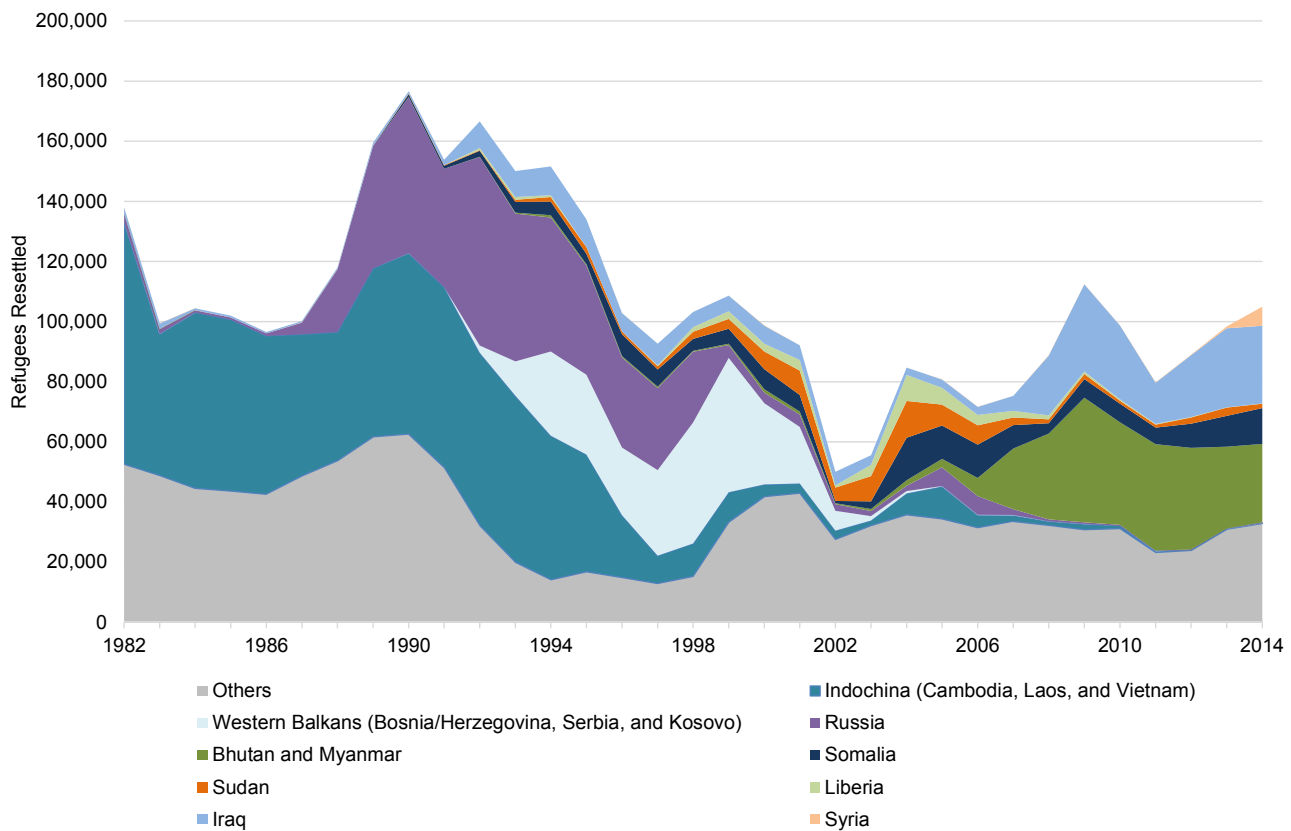
19 Most resettlement programs accept refugees primarily through referrals from UNHCR. However, the United States and Canada also accept referrals from international nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and some countries, such as Canada and Australia, operate private sponsorship programmes that allow individuals and community groups to nominate refugees for resettlement.

20 These numbers exclude resettlement through family reunification, private sponsorship, humanitarian admission, or other programmes outside the UNHCR resettlement framework. See UNHCR, 'Resettlement Fact Sheet 2015' (fact sheet, UNHCR, Geneva, accessed November 29, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/524c31a09/resettlement-fact-sheet-2015.html](http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/524c31a09/resettlement-fact-sheet-2015.html).

21 Ibid.

22 In Canada, these commitments include the pledge by the Trudeau government to resettle 25,000 Syrians in five months, as well as the 10,000 private sponsorship places made available in March 2016 as a result of enthusiastic support from civil society. In 2015, the European Union launched a resettlement scheme for 20,000 refugees. And the Obama administration increased the U.S. refugee admissions ceiling from 70,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to 85,000 in FY 2016, with a further increase to 110,000 for FY 2017, though this last figure was dropped to 50,000 by the Trump administration. See Reuters, 'Canada to Accept Additional 10,000 Syrian Refugees', *The Guardian*, 31 March 2016, [www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/31/canada-10000-syria-refugees-john-mccallum](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/31/canada-10000-syria-refugees-john-mccallum); European Commission, 'Commission Recommendation of 8 June 2015 on a European Resettlement Scheme' (C [2015] 3560 final, 8 June 2015), [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/asylum/general/docs/recommendation\\_on\\_a\\_european\\_resettlement\\_scheme\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/asylum/general/docs/recommendation_on_a_european_resettlement_scheme_en.pdf); the White House, 'Presidential Determination – Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017' (press release, the White House, Washington, DC, 28 September 2016), [www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/28/presidential-determination-refugee-admissions-fiscal-year-2017](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/28/presidential-determination-refugee-admissions-fiscal-year-2017); Zong and Batalova, 'Frequently Requested Statistics'.

**Figure 1. Total global refugee resettlement (both UNHCR and non-UNHCR referred), by nationality, 1982–2014**



Source: UNHCR, ‘Population Statistics Database’, accessed 3 March 2017, <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/resettlement>.

Though the top countries of origin for refugees change with the ebb and flow of conflicts and other displacement factors, another shift has recently taken place: the refugees resettled in any given year are now a more diverse group than they were 20 years ago. In 1995, four countries—Russia, Vietnam, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Iraq—were the origins of three-fourths of all refugees resettled; by comparison, seven countries of origin made up the same share in 2014.<sup>23</sup> Large- and moderate-scale initiatives<sup>24</sup> facilitated the resettlement of refugees from 34 countries in 1995, compared to 43 in 2014.<sup>25</sup>

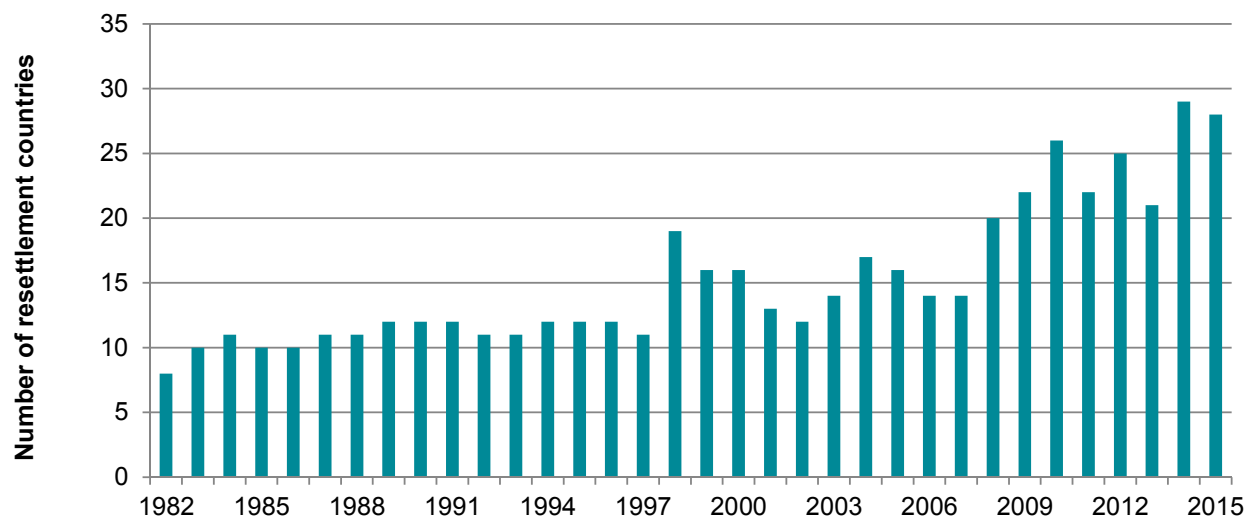
23 In 2014, three-fourths of refugees came from Bhutan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia, and Syria. Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis using data from UNHCR, ‘Population Statistics Database’.

24 Large- and moderate-scale initiatives include those resettling 50 or more refugees.

25 Increasing diversity can create challenges for receiving communities, such as the difficulty of finding case workers fluent in all languages spoken or providing enough support for refugee children of different linguistic and educational backgrounds to help them excel. See Randy Capps et al., *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), 10, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges).

The number of countries participating in resettlement worldwide has also increased. By 2015, 28 countries reported resettling refugees, up from 16 in 2005 (see Figure 2). While Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have long resettled refugees, EU Member States are also well represented among new resettlement countries (see Table 2); Germany and Belgium both established formal resettlement programmes in the last five years and have engaged in ad hoc resettlement and humanitarian admission initiatives in the context of the Syrian and Iraq wars.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 2. Number of countries reporting refugee resettlement (with or without UNHCR assistance),\* 1982–2015**



Notes: \* Data for EU/EEA countries are from Eurostat from 2008 on. Definitions of resettlement differ slightly between Eurostat and UNHCR and, as a result, the count of countries resettling based on Eurostat data may be slightly higher than recorded by UNHCR. For non-EU/EEA countries, resettlement numbers are from UNHCR.

Sources: UNHCR, 'Population Statistics Database'; UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf); Eurostat, 'Resettled Persons by Age, Sex and Citizenship Annual Data (rounded) (migr\_asyresa)', updated 26 April 2017, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>.

26 Mike Nicholson, 'Refugee Resettlement Needs Outpace Growing Number of Resettlement Countries', *Migration Information Source*, 1 November 2012, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugee-resettlement-needs-outpace-growing-number-resettlement-countries](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugee-resettlement-needs-outpace-growing-number-resettlement-countries).

**Table 2. National resettlement programmes and number of arrivals reported in 2015, by country**

Country	Year resettlement programme was established	Number of resettlement arrivals in 2015
Argentina	2005	N/A
Australia	1977	9,400
Austria	N/A	760
Belarus	N/A	15
Belgium	2013	275
Cambodia	N/A	5
Canada	1978	20,010
Denmark	1979	450
Finland	1985	1,005
France	N/A	620
Germany	2012	510
Hungary	N/A	5
Iceland	1996	15
Ireland	1999	175
Italy	N/A	95
Japan	N/A	20
Liechtenstein	N/A	20
Lithuania	N/A	5
Luxembourg	N/A	45
Netherlands	1983	450
New Zealand	1987	810
Norway	1970s	2,375
Philippines	N/A	5
Portugal	2007	40
Rep. of Korea	N/A	20
Romania	2008	0
Sweden	1950	1,850
Switzerland	N/A	610
United Kingdom	2004	1,865
United States of America	1975	66,520
Uruguay	2009	N/A

*Note:* EU/EEA country resettlement data are as reported to Eurostat. Non-EU/EEA countries are as reported to UNHCR. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

*Source:* UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*; Eurostat, 'Resettled Persons by Age, Sex and Citizenship Annual Data'; UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), Country Chapters, [www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html).

The design of resettlement programmes has also evolved over the decades as new forms of entry, including private sponsorship and humanitarian admission, have taken root in several countries. Canada introduced the possibility for private individuals and groups to sponsor refugees in the 1970s, allowing sponsors to nominate refugees for resettlement and to take on responsibility for meeting refugees' settlement and integration needs for their first year after arriving in Canada. Building on the Canadian experience, similar private sponsorship

initiatives have been piloted in Argentina, Australia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Switzerland.<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere, countries have experimented with nonpermanent humanitarian admission programmes; Germany, for example, recently implemented a temporary programme to grant entry to 20,000 Syrians from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria.<sup>28</sup> The Syria crisis has also prompted experiments with facilitating the movement of refugees through family reunification programmes, student visas, and labour mobility schemes, though these fall outside the UNHCR resettlement framework.<sup>29</sup> With the exception of the Canadian private sponsorship scheme, such programs are, however, relatively small in scale, and traditional resettlement remains the largest channel for refugees to move legally from countries of first asylum to other destinations.

### III. WHY RESETTLE? UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS AND GOALS OF RESETTLEMENT POLICY

Governments have numerous and diverse reasons for undertaking or expanding their resettlement commitments. These motivations range from a desire to offer safe and legal pathways to international protection, to solidarity and burden-sharing with first countries of asylum, to reducing (unauthorised) migration and smuggling. Moreover, every actor involved in resettlement efforts—including different ministries and executive agencies, as well as local authorities and nonprofit organizations—has its own goals and reasons for pursuing resettlement activities. This diverse mix of motivations both between national ministries and among nongovernmental or international actors can make developing targeted policies that address the core goals of each stakeholder extremely challenging.

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*Every actor involved in resettlement efforts—including different ministries and executive agencies, as well as local authorities and nonprofit organizations—has its own goals.*

While the existing literature on resettlement captures many of these motivating factors, little work has been done to date to disaggregate and analyse motivations by stakeholder type. Rather, the literature often portrays the rationale for undertaking resettlement as uniformly subscribed to by all parties involved; in reality, different stakeholders act out of (sometimes very) different motivations. Unpacking these differences and attributing specific motivations to the many actors who play a role in programme implementation is crucial to improving understanding of how countries approach resettlement and, ultimately, to evaluating the success of resettlement efforts.

27 Judith Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european).

28 Caroline Beaujet, Jenny Brown, Helen Hodgson, and Louise Bladen, *The Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis: An International Comparison* (London: National Audit Office, 2016), 15, [www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-response-to-the-Syrian-refugee-crisis-an-international-comparison.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-response-to-the-Syrian-refugee-crisis-an-international-comparison.pdf).

29 See, for example, Elizabeth Collett, Paul Clewett, and Susan Fratzke, *No Way Out? Making Additional Migration Channels Work for Refugees* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/no-way-out-making-additional-migration-channels-work-refugees](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/no-way-out-making-additional-migration-channels-work-refugees).

Efforts to develop targeted and effective resettlement programmes are complicated by the fact that these motivations are rarely clearly stated. Unless policy goals are made more explicit, policymakers and resettlement authorities will find it difficult to design coherent programmes that meet their underlying objectives.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly identified goals are also necessary if resettlement programmes are to be effectively evaluated. Without an explicit statement of intent, governments and stakeholders will find it difficult to define appropriate metrics and measure the ultimate success of their efforts. And the ability to demonstrate impact and success is not only an important exercise that can inform future programme design and funding—it is the key to maintaining public and political support for resettlement activities.

The sections that follow draw on information available via public statements and policy documents to provide an initial categorisation of the reasons why governments and other stakeholders participate in resettlement efforts.

## A. Value-based motivations

The practice of resettlement has been shaped by the evolution of the broader humanitarian and asylum system in the aftermath of World War II and by the liberal humanitarian values upon which that system was built. The reasons governments, international actors, and civil society give for undertaking resettlement are thus frequently moral or values based. For international humanitarian actors, such as UNHCR, values-based arguments are usually paramount, and many cite a sense of moral obligation to protect particularly vulnerable individuals and communities who may not have the financial or physical capacity to reach safety themselves. The *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, for example, describes resettlement as, first and foremost, a tool for protecting those whose safety and fundamental rights are at risk.<sup>31</sup>

Some governments echo this sense of moral imperative to aid individuals in need. This sentiment is clear, for example, in a 2016 statement by then U.S. secretary of state John Kerry: ‘The refugees we welcome to the United States will join previous generations who have come to this country to escape violence and persecution—threats to human life and dignity that remain all too real today. History celebrates such moments when we have overcome bias and fear, and opened our doors.’<sup>32</sup> Secretary Kerry’s statements illustrate that in the case of the U.S. resettlement programme, this sense of moral obligation is coupled with a sense that humanitarian principles and immigration form a part of U.S. national identity. The 1976 Canadian *Immigration Act* makes a similar connection by framing the newly created refugee programme as a core part of the country’s ‘humanitarian tradition’.<sup>33</sup>

Governments and other stakeholders may also cite a general responsibility to aid countries in distress, particularly countries of first asylum that host large numbers of refugees. This has at times been termed responsibility sharing or, in the context of the European Union, solidarity. In announcing the proposal of an EU resettlement initiative in July 2016, Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans, for example, explained that it would be ‘an effective way for the EU to live up to its collective responsibility to show solidarity with non-EU

30 Judith Kumin, for example, calls for the process of designing private sponsorship programmes to include pinpointing and clearly defining the policy objectives of the resettlement programme. See Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement*.

31 UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), [www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html).

32 U.S. Department of State, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2016), iv, [www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/docsforcongress/261956.htm](http://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/docsforcongress/261956.htm).

33 The Canadian *Immigration Act, 1976* enumerated the objectives of Canadian immigration policy, one of which was: ‘to fulfil Canada’s international legal obligations with respect to refugees and to uphold its humanitarian tradition with respect to the displaced and the persecuted.’ See Government of Canada, ‘Immigration Act, 1976-77’, Part 1(3)(g), updated 12 July 1996, [www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5c60.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5c60.html).

countries and help them cope with large numbers of people fleeing war and persecution.<sup>34</sup> At their core, both solidarity and responsibility sharing are centred on the idea that each country has a responsibility to do its ‘fair share’ when international protection is needed.

Finally, some actors may be driven by a sense of responsibility for the causes of displacement and thus responsibility to assist those who have been displaced. The United States, for example, was a leader in resettlement efforts during the Indochinese refugee crisis, in part due to its extensive involvement in the Vietnamese civil war (see Section II.B.). The U.S. government also massively expanded its intake of Iraqi refugees in the late 2000s in response to the displacement that resulted from the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Other coalition partners, including Germany and Norway, launched special resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes for interpreters and other personnel who assisted North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and coalition forces in Afghanistan.<sup>35</sup>

## *B. Strategic protection considerations*

Resettlement is also sometimes viewed as a means of increasing, or at least safeguarding, the protection space<sup>36</sup> in countries of first asylum and regions surrounding conflict. By taking responsibility for some of the most vulnerable individuals, such as those with acute medical needs, resettlement countries may hope to free up additional resources for refugees who remain in first-asylum countries. This oft-cited goal is also listed among the core functions of resettlement described in the *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*.<sup>37</sup>

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*By taking responsibility for some of the most vulnerable individuals ... resettlement countries may hope to free up additional resources for refugees who remain in first-asylum countries.*

For the governments of countries that run resettlement programmes, such efforts may also be undertaken with the aim of incentivising certain actions on the part of first-asylum countries. The March 2016 agreement between the European Union and Turkey, for example, promised to create resettlement places in EU Member States for Syrian refugees in exchange, in part, for movement by the Turkish government to open the country’s labour market to Syrians under temporary protection.<sup>38</sup> Resettlement countries might also seek to encourage first-asylum countries to keep their borders open to additional persons seeking safety or to prevent the forcible return of those already in the country (see, for example, Section II.B. on the Orderly Departure Programme). Countries may also see participation in resettlement, or increases in their refugee admissions quota, as a tool to encourage other countries to participate in the resettlement system. The United States, for example, has in the past committed to resettling more than 50 per cent of all refugees referred by UNHCR for resettlement annually; new commitments by other states can thus have a multiplier effect by increasing the size of the U.S. resettlement pledge.<sup>39</sup>

34 European Commission, ‘Enhancing Legal Channels: Commission Proposes to Create Common EU Resettlement Framework’ (press release, Brussels, 13 July 2016), [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-2434\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2434_en.htm).

35 For further details, see U.S. Department of State, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017*; Janne Grote, Maria Bitterwolf, and Tatjana Baraulina, ‘Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany’ (working paper 68, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg, July 2016), [www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/EMN/Studien/wp68-emn-resettlement-humanitaere-aufnahme.html](http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/EMN/Studien/wp68-emn-resettlement-humanitaere-aufnahme.html); Kristine Hirsti and Martin Herman Wiedswang Zondag, ‘Norge gir asyl til 21 afghanske tolker som jobbet for Forsvaret’, NRK, 27 February 2013, [www.nrk.no/norge/gir-asyl-til-21-afghanere-1.10929272](http://www.nrk.no/norge/gir-asyl-til-21-afghanere-1.10929272).

36 The term ‘protection space’ refers to the capacity of first-asylum countries to continue to accept refugees and provide them with access to housing, assistance, and essential services.

37 UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*.

38 European Council, ‘EU-Turkey Statement, 18 March 2016’.

39 U.S. Department of State, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017*.



At the international level, these efforts have often been described within the framework of SUR, or the ‘strategic use of resettlement’.<sup>40</sup> International actors and (traditional) resettlement countries that aim to use resettlement strategically hope to both assist the refugees being resettled and affect broader change (e.g., that support the remaining refugee population or host community in the first-asylum country). This may be done, for example, by inviting countries without a history of resettling refugees to participate in a larger multilateral resettlement strategy, thus multiplying the returns on their investment.<sup>41</sup> SUR was first used in 2007 to resettle Bhutanese refugees stuck in protracted displacement in Nepal. A core group of countries committed to resettling more than two-thirds of the 108,000 registered refugees in the hopes that Nepal and Bhutan would agree to locally integrate or repatriate the remainder. The effectiveness of SUR has, however, been disputed.<sup>42</sup> The large scale resettlement effort in Nepal, for example, has not resulted in significant numbers of refugees either returning to Bhutan or integrating in Nepal.<sup>43</sup>

In the European context, some actors may also see resettlement as a way to build up national and local capacity in new resettlement countries to receive and integrate refugees—as well as migrants more broadly. For European countries without a recent history of migration, participating in small-scale resettlement initiatives with EU support could present an in-road to building much needed integration and diversity management infrastructure. And in Canada, one of the objectives of the private sponsorship programme is to foster the development of welcoming communities that benefit *all* migrants arriving in the country by supporting their initial reception and longer-term integration. Such motivations are an explicit part of Canada’s Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative that was launched in December 2016 and seeks to promote the creation of private sponsorship programmes akin to the Canadian model in other countries.<sup>44</sup>

### C. National and domestic interests

While not necessarily condoned by international humanitarian actors, national governments may also have domestic or foreign policy interests in mind when choosing to pursue a resettlement policy. Two goals in particular stand out in a review of past practice:

#### 1. Foreign policy objectives

For national governments, resettlement can serve strategic foreign policy goals, such as stabilising a partner country, showing good will to an ally, or sending an ideological message. Some of the resettlement countries with the largest and most long-standing programmes have historically been driven to pursue such policies at least in part by broader geopolitical or ideological interests. The strongest evidence of such motives comes from the Cold War era: Vietnamese refugees and those fleeing communist countries made up the majority

40 The phrase ‘strategic use of resettlement’ (SUR) was formally defined by the Canadian-led 2003 Working Group on Resettlement as ‘the planned use of resettlement in a manner that maximises the benefits, directly or indirectly, other than those received by the refugee being resettled. Those benefits may accrue to other refugees, the hosting state, other states or the international protection regime in general.’ See UNHCR, ‘The Strategic Use of Resettlement’ (discussion paper prepared by the Working Group on Resettlement, UNHCR, Geneva, 2003), [www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/41597a824.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/41597a824.html).

41 Joanne van Selm, *Great Expectations: A Review of the Strategic Use of Resettlement* (Geneva: UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, 2013), [www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/evalreports/520a3e559/great-expectations-review-strategic-use-resettlement.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/research/evalreports/520a3e559/great-expectations-review-strategic-use-resettlement.html).

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 UNHCR, ‘Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative Promotes Canada’s Private Refugee Sponsorship Model’ (news release, Ottawa, 16 December 2016), [www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/12/58539e524/global-refugee-sponsorship-initiative-promotes-canadas-private-refugee.html](http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2016/12/58539e524/global-refugee-sponsorship-initiative-promotes-canadas-private-refugee.html).

of all resettled refugees until the 1990s.<sup>45</sup> The United States, in particular, has often prioritised for resettlement groups or individuals fleeing regimes or policies it opposed; since the mid-1990s, the United States has had special admissions programmes for Cuban nationals seeking entry to the country, for example.<sup>46</sup> And in Canada, the 1976 *Immigration Act* permitted the government to designate individuals from specific countries as eligible for special processing within the resettlement system—a status that was primarily used to facilitate the resettlement of individuals from communist countries in Eastern Europe.<sup>47</sup>

## 2. Asylum, migration, and border management goals

Resettlement has also at times been promoted as a way to manage, reduce, or prevent spontaneous refugee movements from a conflict region (including onward movement from the first country of asylum) by providing legal routes of entry for refugees.

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*The U.S. Central American Minors resettlement programme was introduced ... in the hope that creating a legal pathway to safety would stem the flow of unaccompanied children.*

Such policies have been most evident of late in the European context. EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Dimitris Avramopoulos, for example, cited migration management as a motivating factor behind the Commission proposal for an EU resettlement scheme, saying the programme would be ‘an integral part of the larger objective of ensuring that protection is offered to those who need it, reducing the incentives for irregular migration and protecting migrants from exploitation by smuggling networks and dangerous journeys to reach Europe.’<sup>48</sup> The March 2016 EU-Turkey statement, which traded increased security at the Greece-Turkey border for additional resettlement pledges in EU Member States, among other things, is another such example. On the other side of the Atlantic, the U.S. Central American Minors resettlement programme was introduced in 2014 in the hope that creating a legal pathway to safety would stem the flow of unaccompanied children from Central American countries across the U.S. southwest border.

Resettlement admissions may also be seen by policymakers and members of the public as more secure than asylum flows. In an era of growing anxiety that asylum and immigration streams could be infiltrated by individuals wishing to do harm, the ability to screen protection applicants prior to their arrival—as is done when refugees are channelled through resettlement rather than asylum systems—is seen by some as a crucial security measure.<sup>49</sup>

- 45 Michael Casasola, ‘The Indochinese Refugee Movement and the Subsequent Evolution of UNHCR and Canadian Resettlement Selection Policies and Practices’, *Refuge* 32, no. 2 (2016): 41–53, <http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/40270>.
- 46 U.S. Embassy in Cuba, ‘Refugee Program’, accessed 3 May 2017, <https://cu.usembassy.gov/embassy/refugee-program/>. While the Obama administration ended preferential policies for Cubans seeking asylum at U.S. land and sea borders in January 2017, the Cuban resettlement program remains in place.
- 47 David Matas, ‘The Self-Exiled Class’, *Refuge* 9, no. 4 (May 1990): 22–25, <http://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/viewFile/21596/20269>.
- 48 European Commission, ‘Enhancing Legal Channels’.
- 49 For example, the European Police Office (Europol) has raised concerns that the unmanaged mixed flow of migrants and refugees via smuggling routes could be used by terrorist networks to facilitate the return of foreign fighters to Europe. See Europol and International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), *Migrant Smuggling Networks* (The Hague: Europol and Interpol, 2016), [www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/europol-interpol-report-migrant-smuggling-networks](http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/europol-interpol-report-migrant-smuggling-networks). And two of the suspects in the November 2015 Paris attacks are believed to have entered Europe with refugees and migrants traveling by boat from Turkey to Greece. See Anthony Faiola and Souad Mekhennet, ‘Tracing the Path of Four Terrorists Sent to Europe by the Islamic State’, *Washington Post*, 22 April 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-europes-migrant-crisis-became-an-opportunity-for-isis/2016/04/21/ec8a7231-062d-4185-bb27-cc7295d35415\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-europes-migrant-crisis-became-an-opportunity-for-isis/2016/04/21/ec8a7231-062d-4185-bb27-cc7295d35415_story.html).

## D. Responding to external incentives or opportunities

Some governments, however, remain reluctant to engage in refugee resettlement for a variety of reasons. Many have cited concerns regarding the capacity of their society to receive resettled refugees (e.g., number of beds or places in reception centres or social housing) and to integrate them successfully into local communities. Debates about integration have mainly centred on the labour market potential of resettled refugees (e.g., employment rates and economic self-sufficiency) and possible effects on social cohesion. Security has also been a concern, particularly following terrorist attacks in European cities. Such debates have arisen in both new and more established resettlement countries. In the United States, growing public backlash against the resettlement programme has been driven by concerns about both the security of the programme and its effect on already strained local services and public resources.<sup>50</sup>

As a response, the United Nations, European Union, and other multilateral organisations have established several initiatives to incentivise the participation of otherwise unwilling countries. These often combine financial incentives, capacity-building activities (e.g., twinning projects that match experienced and new resettlement states to foster mentorship and knowledge exchange), and/or joint projects that allow parties to collaborate around common resettlement goals.<sup>51</sup> Joint programmes are often set up in response to large refugee crises; such efforts have included the UNHCR and EU initiatives to resettle Iraqi refugees<sup>52</sup> and the Joint Resettlement Scheme<sup>53</sup> that was adopted by the European Union in 2012 and took steps toward institutionalising resettlement at the EU level. Other examples include the Modelling of Orientation, Services, and Training (MOST) project, which ran from December 2006 to January 2008 and brought together resettlement and integration authorities from Finland, Ireland, Spain, and Sweden to exchange experiences.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Belgium and Luxembourg received guidance from the Netherlands, under the framework of the Durable Solutions in Practice project, before launching pilot resettlement programmes. According to officials involved in the projects, these twinning exercises were useful both for encouraging new resettlement countries to launch programmes and for creating a platform for information exchange among established resettlement providers.<sup>55</sup>

- 50 In the fall of 2015, significant numbers of U.S. state governors and local authorities reacted to terrorist attacks in Paris by calling for a halt to the U.S. resettlement programme. See Arnie Seipel, '30 Governors Call for Halt to U.S. Resettlement of Syrian Refugees,' National Public Radio, 17 November 2015, [www.npr.org/2015/11/17/456336432/more-governors-oppose-u-s-resettlement-of-syrian-refugees](http://www.npr.org/2015/11/17/456336432/more-governors-oppose-u-s-resettlement-of-syrian-refugees). For a broader, U.S.-based discussion of security concerns about refugees, see Kathleen Newland, 'The U.S. Record Shows Refugees Are Not a Threat' (commentary, MPI, Washington, DC, October 2015), [www.migrationpolicy.org/news/us-record-shows-refugees-are-not-threat](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/us-record-shows-refugees-are-not-threat). More recently, U.S. president Donald Trump issued two executive orders to limit the scope of the U.S. resettlement programme, citing security concerns regarding the vetting of refugees. See Carol Morello, 'Trump Signs Order Temporarily Halting Admission of Refugees, Promises Priority for Christians,' *Washington Post*, 27 January 2017, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-approves-extreme-vetting-of-refugees-promises-priority-for-christians/2017/01/27/007021a2-e4c7-11e6-a547-5fb9411d332c\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-approves-extreme-vetting-of-refugees-promises-priority-for-christians/2017/01/27/007021a2-e4c7-11e6-a547-5fb9411d332c_story.html). For a discussion of the strains resettlement can place on local services, see U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Refugee Resettlement: Greater Consultation with Community Stakeholders Could Strengthen Program* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2012), [www.gao.gov/assets/600/592975.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/592975.pdf).
- 51 Delphine Perrin and Frank McNamara, *Refugee Resettlement in the EU: Between Shared Standards and Diversity in Legal and Policy Frames* (Fiesole, Italy: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2013), [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29400/KnowReset\\_RR-2013\\_03.pdf](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29400/KnowReset_RR-2013_03.pdf).
- 52 In 2008, the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union invited Member States to voluntarily resettle particularly vulnerable Iraqi refugees. The council set a target of 10,000 resettlement places across all participating Member States. See International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe and International Rescue Committee (IRC), *10,000 Refugees from Iraq: A Report on Joint Resettlement in the European Union* (Brussels: ICMC Europe and IRC, 2010), [www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/10000\\_refugees\\_from\\_iraq\\_a\\_report\\_on\\_joint\\_resett\\_17063.pdf](http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/10000_refugees_from_iraq_a_report_on_joint_resett_17063.pdf).
- 53 European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Establishment of a Joint EU Resettlement Programme' (COM [2009] 447 final, 2 September 2009), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52009DC0447>.
- 54 Modelling of Orientation, Services, and Training Related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees (MOST), *Promoting Independence in Resettlement* (Helsinki: MOST Project, 2008), [www.resettlement.eu/resource/promoting-independence-resettlement-final-publication-most-project](http://www.resettlement.eu/resource/promoting-independence-resettlement-final-publication-most-project).
- 55 Perrin and McNamara, *Refugee Resettlement in the EU*.

Yet evidence on the effectiveness of incentive programmes is broadly lacking. To date, few projects have undergone rigorous evaluation, leaving policymakers without a solid evidence base to help them make informed decisions about how to most effectively address Member States' resettlement concerns and render participation more appealing. This is particularly salient given that current efforts by EU institutions to scale up resettlement across the European Union, which deploy a number of the incentives described above—ear-marking a share of the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) to support Member State resettlement efforts (i.e., financial incentive);<sup>56</sup> establishing an EU-wide resettlement scheme (i.e., joint initiative); and developing projects that promote peer support and mutual learning, such as the EU-FRANK project (i.e., capacity building).<sup>57</sup>

## IV. RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME DESIGN: TRADEOFFS AND CHALLENGES

Policymakers face numerous considerations and tradeoffs when resettling refugees. This, combined with the absence of an overarching global or regional approach to resettlement, has resulted in efforts that differ significantly across national contexts. Much of the literature to date has focused on cataloguing practical differences and identifying differing national models for approaching resettlement.<sup>58</sup> These extensive documentation efforts reflect the importance resettlement policymakers place on knowledge gathering, review, and dissemination—processes seen as critical to furthering the efforts of new and existent resettlement countries. While this inventory of practices and approaches does not engage directly with questions of what works, where, and why, it does elucidate some of the choices and tradeoffs governments face in designing and implementing an effective resettlement programme.

The sections that follow draws on these resources to identify the primary design issues governments confront and to consider how governments in the European Union and elsewhere have sought to address these questions. This discussion also considers where certain programme elements and challenges may benefit from greater collaboration and resource-sharing, whether within the European Union or at a more global level.

### *A. Selecting who should be resettled*

The question of who to resettle is very closely tied to the goals of a country's resettlement programme (see Section III) and the actors involved in its implementation. Given that resettlement programmes are inherently limited in scope, specific criteria are generally needed to focus efforts. These criteria for selection are generally shaped by both international and domestic priorities.

<sup>56</sup> European Commission, 'Commission Recommendation of 8 June 2015'.

<sup>57</sup> The EU Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project, which supported this study, brings together a network of Member States, EU agencies, and UNHCR to design and implement projects that will support Member States resettling refugees for the first time, while expanding the capacity of existing resettlement countries. The project is led by Sweden, with Belgium, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland acting as partner countries. See Migrationsverket, 'Projektet EU-FRANK ska underlätta ökning av vidarebosättningen till EU', updated 28 October 2016, [www.migrationsverket.se/Andra-aktorer/EU-fonder/Asyl--migrations--och-integrationsfonden-AMIF/Pagaende-projekt/EU-FRANK.html](http://www.migrationsverket.se/Andra-aktorer/EU-fonder/Asyl--migrations--och-integrationsfonden-AMIF/Pagaende-projekt/EU-FRANK.html).

<sup>58</sup> See, for example UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*; ICMC Europe, *Welcome to Europe! A Comprehensive Guide to Resettlement* (Brussels: ICMC Europe, 2013), [www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/welcome-to-europe-2013.pdf](http://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/welcome-to-europe-2013.pdf).

## 1. Priority setting at the international level

For many national programmes, UNHCR plays a critical role in identifying, selecting, and referring refugees for resettlement. Nearly all EU Member States, as well as the majority of other resettlement countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, and the United States) accept referrals from UNHCR. Many European countries go so far as to require refugees to have UNHCR recognised status to be eligible for resettlement.<sup>59</sup> The majority of the world's resettled refugees thus pass through UNHCR resettlement procedures.<sup>60</sup>

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*Individuals identified for resettlement are the most vulnerable members of the global refugee population.*

UNHCR continuously screens populations and localities across the globe to identify groups and individuals it deems in need of resettlement (generating what is referred to as the caseload). UNHCR determines that someone is in need of resettlement either because another durable solution<sup>61</sup> is not available or because specific vulnerabilities (e.g., health, sexual orientation, or separation from family) inhibit them from finding protection where they are.<sup>62</sup> These two factors—the lack of alternatives and danger of specific risks—mean that the individuals identified for resettlement are the most vulnerable members of the global refugee population. Resettlement cases are associated with one or more UNHCR-defined resettlement submission category. These categories include: individuals with legal or physical protection needs (such as those at risk of refoulement); survivors of violence or torture; those with complex medical needs; women and girls at risk; family reunification cases; children and adolescents; and groups with no alternative durable solutions.<sup>63</sup> In addition, UNHCR assigns each resettlement case a priority level (i.e., emergency, urgent, or normal).<sup>64</sup> It then refers emergency or urgent cases to resettlement countries that have earmarked places for these priority levels in their national programme.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. Selecting priority groups at the national level

In recent years, the number of resettlement places offered by states has amounted to between 10 per cent and 15 per cent of the cases identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement.<sup>66</sup> This means that national priorities and preferences play a significant role in selecting who, from within the pool of refugees referred by UNHCR, will be resettled.

59 European Migration Network (EMN), *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe: What Works?* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 2016), [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00\\_resettlement\\_synthesis\\_report\\_final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf).

60 In 2015, three-quarters of all resettled refugees (82,000 of 107,000) passed through UNHCR resettlement procedures. See UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*; UNHCR, *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2017* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html](http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/575836267/unhcr-projected-global-resettlement-needs-2017.html).

61 UNHCR identifies three 'durable solutions' to displacement for refugees: repatriation, resettlement, and local integration.

62 UNHCR, 'Chapter Five: Protection Considerations, and the Identification of Resettlement Needs' in *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), [www.unhcr.org/3d464e176.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3d464e176.html).

63 UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*; UNHCR, 'UNHCR Resettlement Submission Categories' (presentation on the *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, accessed 17 March 2017), [www.unhcr.org/558bff849.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/558bff849.pdf).

64 UNHCR, 'UNHCR Resettlement Submission Categories'.

65 EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*; European Parliament, 'Hearing on "EU Resettlement Framework"', updated 15 November 2016, [www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/events-hearings.html?id=20161107CHE00241](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/events-hearings.html?id=20161107CHE00241).

66 UNHCR, *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2017*.

Vulnerability<sup>67</sup> is a common selection criterion for national efforts, particularly for programmes run in collaboration with UNHCR. Indeed, the perception that resettlement secures a safe haven for the most vulnerable has become a major *raison d'être* for national initiatives. Some national or EU selection criteria are aligned with the submission categories used by UNHCR, with, for example, a focus on refugees from particular nationalities or groups, such as Syrians, and/or on those with specific needs, such as women and girls at risk.<sup>68</sup>

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*The tension between a country's desire to resettle the most vulnerable and its concerns about their postresettlement integration is a particularly challenging tradeoff.*

Other countries may choose selection criteria that differ from and can be more restrictive than those specified by UNHCR.<sup>69</sup> This is most commonly done to further particular national priorities or interests (see Section III). For example, several EU Member States (e.g., Austria, Germany, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and Slovakia) have specifically prioritised the resettlement of refugees who have fled for religious reasons.<sup>70</sup> Other countries have indicated they prefer to receive specific types of cases, such as families,<sup>71</sup> or would rather not resettle certain groups, such as single men.<sup>72</sup> Countries may also create geographical priorities based, in most cases, on specific situations or regions of national interest. Most EU Member States, for example, have prioritised the Middle East in their resettlement programmes,<sup>73</sup> and many have created special programmes for Syrians. The U.S. programme includes a special category (Priority 2) for nationalities identified by the U.S. government as a priority, such as Iraqis who have assisted the U.S. government and Cuban activists.<sup>74</sup>

At times, national priorities come into conflict with each other—or with the goals of UNHCR and other international actors. The tension between a country's desire to resettle the most vulnerable and its concerns about their postresettlement integration is a particularly challenging tradeoff. Individuals who have faced trauma or spent years in a first-asylum country without authorisation to work may find it extremely difficult to quickly become economically self-sufficient.<sup>75</sup> In recent years, policymakers in a number of resettlement countries have taken integration potential into account when deciding who to resettle—something UNHCR has resisted.<sup>76</sup> Denmark, for example, considers factors such as Danish language proficiency and educational back-

67 Vulnerability, as defined by the UNHCR Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF), is 'the risk of exposure of ... refugee households to harm, primarily in relation to protection threats, inability to meet basic needs, limited access [to] basic services, and food insecurity, and the ability of the population to cope with the consequences of this harm'. See UNHCR, 'VAF-Vulnerability-Models and Thresholds' (background document, UNHCR, Geneva, November 2014), <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=7932>.

68 For example, several EU Member States prioritise victims of torture or women and girls at risk. See EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

69 Sweden is one of the notable exceptions, in that it accepts referrals from UNHCR under all categories and does not use any additional national criteria. For a comprehensive overview of the national selection criteria used in EU resettlement countries, see EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*; EMN, 'Ad-Hoc Query on Resettlement Costs' (response to request for information by the Italian EMN national contact point, Brussels, European Commission, 2015), [https://emnbelgium.be/sites/default/files/publications/it\\_emn\\_ncp\\_ad-hoc\\_query\\_on\\_resettlement\\_costs\\_compilation\\_open\\_0.pdf](https://emnbelgium.be/sites/default/files/publications/it_emn_ncp_ad-hoc_query_on_resettlement_costs_compilation_open_0.pdf).

70 EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

71 Among the countries that grant preference to families are: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, and Spain. See *Ibid.*

72 Ireland has indicated a preference not to resettle single men. See *Ibid.*

73 *Ibid.*

74 U.S. Department of State, *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2017*.

75 For example, refugees resettled to the United States after having spent significant amounts of time in a refugee camp tend to have lower literacy rates upon arrival and lower employment outcomes over time. See Capps et al., *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*, 15–16.

76 Among the countries that take integration potential into account when selecting refugees for resettlement are Estonia, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, and Spain. Norway uses integration potential to prioritise cases when referrals exceed case capacity. In addition, Austria, France, Italy, and Poland take into account a refugee's links to the resettlement state (such as language), although they do not explicitly prioritise based on integration potential. See EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

ground in its selection.<sup>77</sup> Others, including the Netherlands, reserve the right to refuse or deprioritise cases viewed as lacking the potential to integrate.<sup>78</sup>

While UNHCR selection of cases for referral is shaped to some extent by these expressions of national preference, UNHCR does not accommodate all national requests. It does not, for example, comply with requests regarding the religion or integration potential of an individual refugee.<sup>79</sup> No evaluations to date have considered the extent to which UNHCR referrals match national criteria,<sup>80</sup> and UNHCR has reported that resettlement countries rarely offer the organisation feedback on the suitability of the candidates who are referred.<sup>81</sup> Ultimately, national programmes that mostly resettle UNHCR-referred refugees are limited, in terms of who they receive, by the caseload UNHCR identifies.

Some governments have chosen to operate resettlement streams that are entirely separate from the UNHCR referral process, often for special groups or situations. The U.S. Priority 2 programmes for Iraqis and Cubans, for example, allow refugees to apply for resettlement directly, without a UNHCR referral. Other programmes have used family connections or other criteria to identify refugees in priority groups. Through the German federal Humanitarian Admission Programme (HAP), which concluded in 2016, Syrians with family connections in Germany were considered for resettlement in addition to those referred by UNHCR.<sup>82</sup> Private sponsorship programmes, such as the one in Canada, also generally operate outside the UNHCR framework and allow for the selection of refugees who might not be eligible under UNHCR criteria.

While national governments may view the setting of selection priorities and operation of special resettlement channels as critical to ensuring that resettlement efforts align with national goals, such measures have at times received criticism from refugee advocates.<sup>83</sup> In particular, some refugee and human rights groups have expressed concerns that programmes that prioritise certain groups, such as specific religious minorities, can be discriminatory and may even exacerbate ethnic or religious tensions on the ground in host countries. The Lebanese government, for example, has been particularly critical of proposals from some EU Member States to prioritise Syrian Christians for resettlement, afraid that doing so will upset the delicate religious balance of the country.<sup>84</sup>

77 Government of Denmark, 'Quota Refugees', updated 12 September 2016, [www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming\\_to\\_dk/asylum/quota\\_refugees/quota\\_refugees.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/asylum/quota_refugees/quota_refugees.htm).

78 EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

79 UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*.

80 A 2011 evaluation of the Canadian resettlement programme, for example, indicated while Canadian authorities rely to a large extent on UNHCR referrals to identify refugees for resettlement, UNHCR is not always transparent about the criteria it uses for determining which cases to refer to Canada. See IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)* (Ottawa: IRCC, Evaluation Division, 2011), [www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/gar-rap/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/gar-rap/index.asp).

81 Participant discussions at the EU-FRANK Expert Exchange meeting, Malta, 22–23 February 2017.

82 Grote, Bitterwolf, and Baraulina, 'Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany'.

83 In 2015, Slovakia received sharp criticism from UNHCR for prioritising Christian refugees for resettlement. See Melanie Hall, 'Slovakia "Will Only Accept Christian Refugees"', Deutsche Welle, 20 August 2015, [www.dw.com/en/slovakia-will-only-accept-christian-refugees/a-18659254](http://www.dw.com/en/slovakia-will-only-accept-christian-refugees/a-18659254). And in January 2017, an executive order signed by U.S. president Donald Trump that prioritised the resettlement of religious minorities faced severe criticism from World Relief, a U.S. national resettlement agency, and from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; both organisations called on the president to not discriminate based on religion. See Emma Green, 'Where Christian Leaders Stand on Trump's Refugee Policy', *The Atlantic*, 27 January 2017, [www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/christians-refugees-trump/514820/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/christians-refugees-trump/514820/). A revised executive order signed in March 2017 removes the priority for religious minorities. See Sarah Pierce and Doris Meissner, 'Revised Trump Executive Order and Guidance on Refugee Resettlement and Travel Ban' (policy brief, MPI, Washington, DC, March 2017), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/revised-trump-executive-order-and-guidance-refugee-resettlement-and-travel-ban](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/revised-trump-executive-order-and-guidance-refugee-resettlement-and-travel-ban).

84 Lebanese foreign minister Gebran Bassil, for example, has raised concerns about the effect of such resettlement priorities on Christian minorities in the region. See Jamie Dettmer, 'Turkey, Syria Neighbors Insist EU Take More Refugees', VOA News, 20 May 2015, [www.voanews.com/a/turkey-other-syria-neighbors-say-eu-should-take-more-refugees/2779370.html](http://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-other-syria-neighbors-say-eu-should-take-more-refugees/2779370.html).

## *B. Balancing resource and capacity constraints with desired impact*

Balancing different resettlement priorities and goals can be challenging, particularly for small-scale programmes. At times, there may be tension between the principle of resettling the most vulnerable and the wish by receiving governments to have a strategic impact in a particular region or on particular migration management goals; refugees who fit the vulnerability criteria, such as those with complex health needs, may not be the same individuals who would seek to enter the country via other, often more dangerous, means. Countries that resettle several thousand refugees each year, such as the United States, may be able to balance multiple priorities. However, smaller programmes that pursue multiple goals at the same time and thus have to satisfy multiple sets of selection criteria within the small pool of refugees they resettle may run the risk of diluting their influence in any one refugee situation.

Cooperation on resettlement selection and prioritisation, as advocates of SUR argue, may thus be of particular value for smaller resettlement states looking to maximise their impact. The recent pledges across the globe to resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon illustrate how pooling resettlement places from multiple countries can increase the scale and impact of a particular resettlement effort.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, within the framework of the EU-wide resettlement scheme,<sup>86</sup> the European Union has identified ‘EU priority regions’ from which Member States are incentivised to resettle (i.e., North Africa, Middle East, and Horn of Africa). Considering the small size of Member State resettlement programmes, it may be most effective to pursue national and EU policy objectives, such as showing solidarity with first-asylum countries, in a collaborative manner.

However, without systematic and longitudinal evaluation of resettlement programmes, and especially of joint endeavours, it is difficult to ascertain whether and how (multiple) resettlement priorities can be met through joint efforts. With resettlement an increasingly prominent part of migration management strategies, solid assessment is required if it is to effectively fulfil its promise.

## *C. Ensuring efficiency while maintaining the integrity of the resettlement system*

How efficiently a resettlement process is managed can have significant long-term implications for both the refugees it resettles and for the integrity of the programme itself. Delays, for example, both waste resources and mean refugees spend extra time waiting for a resettlement decision or departure, adding to the stress and uncertainty many experience, particularly if circumstances in the first asylum country are difficult.<sup>87</sup> A protracted resettlement timeline also creates the risk that refugees who are desperate for a new life may take matters into their own hands and turn to smugglers to help them reach their destination. U.S. officials, for example, found that many refugees who were waiting in Turkey for resettlement disappeared when the Aegean

85 UNHCR, ‘Resettlement and Other Admission Pathways for Syrian Refugees’ (fact sheet, UNHCR, Geneva, updated 28 February 2017), [www.unhcr.org/573dc82d4.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/573dc82d4.pdf).

86 European Commission, ‘Commission Recommendation of 8 June 2015’.

87 The fact that many first-asylum countries do not allow refugees to work is particularly problematic. In such countries, extended periods spent waiting for resettlement thus also means significant time out of work, potentially making integration into the labour market at destination even more difficult. See Maria Vincenza Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets: Challenges and Policy Options* (Washington: DC: MPI, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integrating-refugees-host-country-labor-markets-challenges-and-policy-options](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integrating-refugees-host-country-labor-markets-challenges-and-policy-options).



route to Europe opened up in 2015.<sup>88</sup> For the sake of migration management systems as a whole, it is thus imperative that resettlement authorities ensure procedures are managed in as efficient and timely a manner as possible.

At the same time, national authorities are also responsible for safeguarding the integrity of resettlement streams by ensuring that those who are admitted are thoroughly vetted and match admission priorities. Such diligence is essential if public confidence in the resettlement programme is to be maintained. Doing so requires governments to institute often complex and costly screening procedures for selecting and adjudicating resettlement cases. Security concerns have featured prominently in the policy discussions of some resettlement countries, such as the United States, in recent years.<sup>89</sup> The United States requires that all admissions decision-making and vetting be done by specially trained national adjudicators and authorities who travel to first-asylum countries to conduct in-depth interviews and evaluations—a process that can be both resource- and time-intensive. The U.S. system is widely considered to have the slowest resettlement procedures, lasting 18 to 24 months on average.<sup>90</sup>

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*Sharing resources ... may be one option for maintaining thorough screening procedures while avoiding logistical delays and reducing costs.*

Close monitoring of resettlement streams in multiple countries and contexts can be highly resource intensive, especially for smaller programmes. Sharing resources, such as data and human resources (e.g., translators and adjudicators), between national programmes that seek to resettle from the same countries or populations may be one option for maintaining thorough screening procedures while avoiding logistical delays and reducing costs. In Europe, Member States have piloted joint resettlement selection missions, such as the programme adopted in 2012 through which Member State adjudication officers travel together to Jordan and Syria to screen Iraqi refugees.<sup>91</sup> Greater cooperation with or reliance on international organisations, such as UNHCR or IOM, can also increase efficiency. The Canadian programme chose to accept Syrian refugees on a prima facie basis in 2015 in order to speed up operations, relying entirely on UNHCR status determinations as a marker of suitability for resettlement.<sup>92</sup> Canada has also used group determinations in certain situations in the past.<sup>93</sup> And in Europe, some countries (e.g., Austria and the United Kingdom) have chosen to rely on

88 Human Rights First (HRF), *The Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Need for U.S. Leadership* (New York: HRF, 2016), [www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/HRFSyrianRefCrisis.pdf](http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/HRFSyrianRefCrisis.pdf).

89 In a 2015 preliminary report, the U.S. House of Representatives' Homeland Security Committee agreed that the United States lacked the necessary information to confidently screen refugees from Syria for potential security threats. In September 2016, the explosion of homemade bombs in New York and New Jersey reignited the debate over the integrity of the U.S. immigration and resettlement screening processes, with members of Congress again calling for enhanced security screening processes. And the Trump administration, through executive orders, has sought to restrict entry by refugees and certain immigrants. See U.S. House of Representatives, Homeland Security Committee, *Syrian Refugee Flows: Security Risks and Counterterrorism Challenges* (Washington, DC: U.S. House of Representatives, 2015), [https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HomelandSecurityCommittee\\_Syrian\\_Refugee\\_Report.pdf](https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HomelandSecurityCommittee_Syrian_Refugee_Report.pdf); Pierce and Meissner, 'Revised Trump Executive Order'.

90 The U.S. refugee security screening process is a multilevel and multistep process that incorporates data collection and investigation by the intelligence community and the Departments of State and Homeland Security. Syrian applicants undergo an enhanced review that includes additional checks and safeguards. See U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 'Refugee Processing and Security Screening', updated 3 December 2015, [www.uscis.gov/refugeescreening](http://www.uscis.gov/refugeescreening); U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 'Security Screening of Refugees Admitted to the U.S.', accessed 15 February 2017, <http://refugees.org/explore-the-issues/our-work-with-refugees/security-screening/>.

91 European Commission, 'Questions and Answers on the Establishment of a Joint EU Resettlement Programme' (press release, MEMO/09/370, Brussels, 2 September 2009), [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-09-370\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-09-370_en.htm).

92 See IRCC, '#WelcomeRefugees: Canada Resettled Syrian Refugees', updated 9 February 2017, [www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/index.asp); Stephanie Levitz, 'Canada's Refugee Effort Hailed as Model for World by Head of UN Agency', CBC News, 21 March 2016, [www.cbc.ca/news/politics/un-refugee-private-government-sponsor-1.3501400](http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/un-refugee-private-government-sponsor-1.3501400).

93 For example, a prima facie designation was previously used for Iraqi refugees in Syria. See IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)*.

dossier submissions by UNHCR when making their determinations; under dossier procedures, the resettling country decides whether or not to accept a case for resettlement based primarily on the information provided by UNHCR, forgoing additional interviews via, for example, selection missions.<sup>94</sup> But such approaches may be unsuitable if a country is particular about the selection criteria applied or the security screening measures employed. In the United Kingdom, while dossier cases are used to identify candidates for resettlement, these individuals remain subject to national-level security review.

One area that has lent itself to cooperation between states is the travel phase of resettlement. Many resettlement countries coordinate with IOM to assist refugees travelling on commercial flights at embarkation, transit, and arrival airports and, where needed, arrange flight escorts. IOM occasionally charters flights to bring refugees to their destination. In addition, IOM conducts predeparture health assessments on behalf of several resettlement countries to ensure the refugees are fit to travel and can receive any necessary health assistance upon arrival.<sup>95</sup> Because these technical tasks require specialisation and are largely consistent across resettlement countries, they are ready opportunities for the development of economies of scale.

## *D. Fostering the success of beneficiaries after resettlement*

Once refugees have been resettled, programmatic focus turns to facilitating their integration into a new society. In addition to its benefits for refugees and their host communities, successful integration is also critical to the sustainability of resettlement efforts. Members of the public must perceive refugees as becoming part of and contributing to the new society, or support for the resettlement of additional newcomers will wane. Investments in language learning, economic self-sufficiency, and social inclusion are thus crucial. Yet integration outcomes are deeply intertwined with other aspects of the resettlement system—including the duration of the process and, perhaps most critically, who is selected for resettlement. Nevertheless, policymakers have numerous tools at their disposal to support the success of refugees.

Some of the most central questions governments face concern when and where in the resettlement process to invest. While the managed and orderly nature of resettlement, as compared to other forms of humanitarian arrival, makes it possible for refugees to begin the integration process even before leaving the country of first asylum, the situation on the ground may render it difficult. The subsections that follow examine the integration resources available to governments at various points of the resettlement process, as well as the limitations and choices they face in utilising them.

### 1. Predeparture investments

In designing a resettlement programme, governments may choose to use the period of time preceding departure to prepare refugees for travel to and settlement in the host society. Providing clear and complete information will help refugees understand what to expect and how to fully participate once the process begins. Preparation will also benefit the service providers who assist them by preventing uncertainty, apprehension, or lack of knowledge (e.g., about what documentation to present to which authorities while travelling) from delaying

<sup>94</sup> EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

<sup>95</sup> IOM, 'Resettlement Assistance', accessed 1 March 2017, <http://eea.iom.int/index.php/what-we-do/resettlement>. One example of the role IOM has played in predeparture preparations is its work with the German resettlement programme, conducting medical examinations of refugees in Turkey. See IOM, *Saving Lives and Building Livelihoods: Germany and IOM* (Geneva: IOM, 2014), <https://publications.iom.int/books/saving-lives-and-building-livelihoods-germany-and-iom>.

the journey and complicating the process. In addition to smoothing the initial resettlement, predeparture investments also have the potential to facilitate, and perhaps speed up, the integration of resettled refugees.<sup>96</sup>

The predeparture phase thus holds great potential as a staging ground for success after resettlement. To date, resettlement countries have tried to capitalise on this potential by providing predeparture resources that range from the dissemination of information brochures to introductory and information sessions that last anywhere from a brief two hours up to a full week.<sup>97</sup> These longer sessions often provide an introduction to the culture of the settlement country and support with securing swift access to the labour market. Norway's NORCO programme is one well-regarded example; the programme consistently offers tailored courses covering a wide range of relevant themes, unlike other orientation programmes that tend instead to rely on information brochures or short, ad hoc training activities (see Box 1).

### Box 1. NORCO: The Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme

Norway's NORCO programme provides predeparture cultural orientation to refugees selected for resettlement, as well as training to the Norwegian municipalities that will host them. The objectives of this programme, which is delivered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), are twofold: (1) to create awareness of Norwegian society and life to beneficiaries of the Norwegian resettlement programme; manage their expectations about arrival, reception, and settlement in Norway; minimise possible culture shock; and answer any questions they may have; and (2) to organise 'refugee country seminars' for Norwegian reception and integration service providers in order to raise awareness of the countries and cultures of the resettled refugees.

NORCO's four-days course for refugee adults and children over the age of 16 covers a general introduction to Norway and then focuses on a variety of themes, such as employment, cost of living, law and order, family structure and gender roles, Norwegian culture and values, social interactions, and housing. The duration of the course can be extended to five days if interpreters are used. NORCO also offers a separate two-day course for children.

Since its introduction in 2003, more than 8,000 refugees have participated in NORCO trainings, and 820 municipal workers have taken part in 26 different refugee country seminars.

Source: IOM Oslo, 'The Norwegian Cultural Orientation Program (NORCO)' (presentation, IOM Oslo, accessed 19 March 2017), [www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/IOM%20Preparing%20Refugees%20for%20Norway\\_CO%20programme%20IWG\\_200515.pdf](http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/IOM%20Preparing%20Refugees%20for%20Norway_CO%20programme%20IWG_200515.pdf).

96 IOM, 'Resettlement Assistance'; IOM, *IOM's Supporting Role in Pre-Departure Orientation* (Vienna: IOM, 2014), [www.iomvienna.at/sites/default/files/pictures/Pre%20departure%20orientation\\_%20IOM's%20supporting%20role\\_FINAL%20VERSION.pdf](http://www.iomvienna.at/sites/default/files/pictures/Pre%20departure%20orientation_%20IOM's%20supporting%20role_FINAL%20VERSION.pdf); UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*; ICMC Europe, *Welcome to Europe!* 91–93.

97 In 2009, the IOM Labour and Facilitated Migration Unit compiled an overview of the predeparture training programmes that IOM provided as part of resettlement programmes across the globe between 1998 and 2009. See IOM, *IOM Migrant Training Programme Survey 1998–2009* (Geneva: IOM, Labour and Facilitated Migration Unit, 2009), [www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/facilitating/cic\\_survey.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/activities/facilitating/cic_survey.pdf). For an overview of EU Member State practices with regard to predeparture information and training, see EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*, 27–28. For details on the Canadian and U.S. cultural orientation programmes, see Government of the United States of America, 'Country Chapter: USA' in *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, ed. UNHCR (Geneva: UNHCR, 2014), [www.unhcr.org/3c5e5a764.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e5a764.html); Government of Canada, 'Country Chapter: Canada' in *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, ed. UNHCR (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/3c5e55594.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e55594.html).

Policymakers face a series of choices when seeking to design effective predeparture programming, a number of which hinge on questions of timing. The predeparture phase may last anywhere from two weeks to several months, depending on the specificities of the resettlement programme and the ease with which travel documents for the person and any dependents can be arranged. Often the exact length of this period is difficult to predict. If refugees must wait weeks or months,<sup>98</sup> it may be logical to make the most of this time by providing in-depth orientation courses. If, however, only a few days pass between the notification of final approval and departure (as is common in the U.S. resettlement programme, for example) refugees may not have the time or emotional capacity to focus on such courses as they prepare for their imminent departure. On the other hand, if orientation information is provided long before departure, its value may be negated by the length of time between the course and actual resettlement as refugees may forget much of what they have learned.

Because competing demands are often made on refugees' time in the run-up to resettlement, policymakers must consider whether predeparture conditions lend themselves to effective learning and, hence, whether investments made in predeparture activities are likely to be cost effective. New Zealand, for example, has limited its investments in predeparture measures and instead provides six weeks of residential training and orientation services after refugees arrive in the country—a decision attributed to the limited capacity of refugees to absorb substantial amounts of information while preparing for departure.<sup>99</sup>

Even if predeparture training is deemed to be effective, programme decisionmakers must still consider whether outcomes are worth the costs (i.e., cost effectiveness) and how specific training methods and economies of scale can reduce these costs (i.e., cost efficiency). Online programme delivery may be one way to achieve economies of scale, as it is able to reach a large number of individuals without large investments in infrastructure and staffing in multiple locations. In Canada, for example, the settlement services provider Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Canada) offers refugees selected for resettlement in Quebec online assistance with identifying potential employers, building job search skills, and filing for professional recertification before they depart.<sup>100</sup>

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*More evidence is needed to understand which types of preparation and information effectively facilitate refugee travel and give them a head start in searching for employment.*

However, the literature to date offers few answers when it comes to the appropriateness and design of predeparture resources, leaving policymakers and other stakeholders with little evidence on which to base their decisions. This stems partly from the fact that while the majority of resettlement programmes provide predeparture activities, these are often limited both in scope (e.g., information leaflets) and timescale. Examples of more comprehensive predeparture services are less common, and thorough evaluations of either type, rarer still.<sup>101</sup> More evidence is needed to understand which types of preparation and information effectively facilitate refugee travel and give them a head start in searching for employment, education for their children, and housing.<sup>102</sup> Beyond the content of training modules, information is also needed on the effects of duration, methods, and trainer profile on refugee outcomes. As in other areas of resettlement, orientation programmes would also benefit from a clearer, more deliberate statement of intent—in this case, one framed around learn-

98 This timeline was confirmed by several EU Member State representatives at the February 2017 EU-FRANK Expert Exchange. For example, experts indicated that up to six months may pass between the selection of refugees for resettlement (following the selection mission) and their transfer to Finland.

99 Author conversations with New Zealand resettlement authorities at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement Working Group on Integration, the Hague, February 2016.

100 Services Pré-Départ Canada, 'Les Services Pré-Départ', accessed 1 March 2017, <https://predepart.rdee.ca/>.

101 The most recent evaluation of the Canadian resettlement programme, for example, was extremely comprehensive but did not include an analysis of the cultural orientation programme. See IRCC, *Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)*. According to participant conversations at the February 2017 EU-FRANK Expert Exchange, an external evaluation of the Finnish cultural orientation programme is planned for 2018.

102 Julie M. Kornfeld, 'Overseas Cultural Orientation Programmes and Resettled Refugees' Perception', *Forced Migration Review* 41 (2012): 53–54, [www.fmreview.org/preventing/kornfeld.html](http://www.fmreview.org/preventing/kornfeld.html).

ing outcomes. A cost-benefit analysis of offering in-depth predeparture training (similar to that of NORCO) would be of particular interest to countries embarking on resettlement for the first time, as well to others seeking to scale up existing programmes. Such an analysis would need to look closely at whether it is more effective and efficient to offer certain reception and integration services (such as skills assessment) at the predeparture stage or reserve them until after arrival in settlement countries.

At present, much of the literature consists of descriptive overviews of what resettlement countries have delivered within the predeparture phase. A 2016 European Migration Network (EMN) study on resettlement<sup>103</sup> and the 2013 European Resettlement Network handbook,<sup>104</sup> for example, are limited to an overview of which EU resettlement programmes currently organise predeparture activities; the content of these programmes; their organisational frameworks; and actors involved. Other sources of information are the governments and actors involved in the facilitation of predeparture activities, such as IOM;<sup>105</sup> these stakeholders often record which predeparture activities they put in place or fund, who delivers them, and, in most cases, what outputs were generated (e.g., how many persons participated in a cultural orientation course or how many hours of training a certain provider delivered). Evaluations of the impacts these programme elements have had on refugee outcomes, however, remain scarce.

## 2. Support after arrival

Whether arriving via asylum or resettlement streams, refugees face numerous challenges integrating into their new homes.<sup>106</sup> Because they are generally among the most vulnerable, resettled refugees usually arrive with few financial resources, limited host-country language capabilities, and no social network or contextual knowledge to help them navigate their new communities. Immediately after arrival, refugees are in need of housing and financial support to enable them to purchase food and other goods. In the longer term, they will require assistance in learning the local language, entering the labour market, making social connections, and accessing education for their children.

Resettlement countries generally provide assistance to refugees through one or more of the following three channels: mainstream social services, general immigrant integration services, and refugee support programmes. In most resettlement countries, refugees receive some type of financial or in-kind assistance for a period of time after arrival; most also receive help securing housing and health care, at least initially, and have access to language training, employment services, and cultural orientation courses. The specific terms and extent of these supports, however, differ considerably from country to country.<sup>107</sup> A few countries provide special services for resettled refugees, beyond those available to the broader asylum or immigrant populations;<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

<sup>104</sup> ICMC Europe, *Welcome to Europe!*

<sup>105</sup> IOM, *IOM Migrant Training Programme Survey 1998–2009*.

<sup>106</sup> For a review of the specific integration challenges refugees face, see Desiderio, *Integrating Refugees into Host Country Labor Markets*.

<sup>107</sup> A 2013 study commissioned by the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs as well as a 2016 review by the EMN both give an overview of the services available to resettled refugees in Europe. However, neither report sheds light on how, if at all, the integration support resettled refugees receive differs from what is available to refugees who have arrived in the European Union via spontaneous flows. See European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, *Comparative Study on Best Practices for the Integration of Resettled Refugees in the EU Member States* (Brussels: European Union, 2013), [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/474393/IPOL-LIBE\\_ET%282013%29474393\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/474393/IPOL-LIBE_ET%282013%29474393_EN.pdf); EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

<sup>108</sup> The Canadian Refugee Assistance Program, for example, provides additional levels of support to resettled refugees. See IRCC, 'The Refugee System in Canada', updated 16 June 2016, [www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/canada.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/ENGLISH/refugees/canada.asp). In the United Kingdom, resettled refugees receive income assistance and support by a case worker—services not available to asylum seekers. See EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

however, little research has been conducted to date on how the service and support needs of resettled refugees differ from those of asylum seekers or other immigrant groups, or how these needs are best addressed.<sup>109</sup>

Beyond training, social assistance, and other direct supports, several other policies influence refugee integration. First, policies that determine what legal status resettled refugees receive can significantly shape their ability to settle into a new society. Traditionally, resettlement has been thought of as a permanent solution to displacement, and most national programmes have granted resettled refugees permanent residence status. Over the past decade, however, humanitarian admissions and other alternative protection schemes have proliferated, particularly in the wake of acute displacement crises in Iraq and Syria. Many of these initiatives offer temporary, rather than permanent, residence and do not grant the same rights and benefits afforded to resettled refugees.<sup>110</sup> When designing a new resettlement initiative, policymakers must weigh the merits of offering permanent versus temporary settlement status. While political leaders may find it easier to sell temporary settlement to sceptical members of the public, the fact that most refugee situations become protracted means that refugees admitted under temporary regimes may still spend years or even decades in the resettlement country. Failing to acknowledge this potential outcome may risk creating unrealistic expectations that could backfire in future election cycles.

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*Policies that determine what legal status resettled refugees receive can significantly shape their ability to settle into a new society.*

Policies that regulate access to housing can also have a major impact on postarrival success. Many resettlement countries, particularly those also coping with the spontaneous arrival of asylum seekers, face a shortage of affordable housing in urban centres where services are accessible and employment easier to find.<sup>111</sup> As a result, some resettlement authorities have been forced to settle refugees in suburban and rural areas, where living costs are cheaper but services or job opportunities less accessible. In Sweden, for example, the Public Employment Service was responsible for settling refugees in areas where they are likely to find employment. But an extensive housing shortage, coupled with a sharp increase in the number of refugees in need of accommodation in 2015 and 2016, has forced Swedish authorities to instead settle refugees wherever they can find available housing.<sup>112</sup>

Other factors may also play a role in the selection of a settlement location. In Canada and the United States, authorities try to place refugees, when possible, in localities where they have family or friends, or where there

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109 The comprehensive evaluations that do exist to date do not compare the outcomes of refugees who arrived through asylum channels versus those who are resettled. See, for example, IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)*; European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, *Comparative Study on Best Practices for the Integration of Resettled Refugees*; Labour and Immigration Research Centre, *New Land, New Life: Long-Term Settlement of Refugees in New Zealand* (Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, 2012), [www.mbie.govt.nz/publications-research/research/migration/new-land-new-life-longterm-settlement-refugees-main-report.pdf](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/publications-research/research/migration/new-land-new-life-longterm-settlement-refugees-main-report.pdf); Nicolien Rengers, Peter Geerlings, and Ruthy Cortooms, *Meedoen: Een onderzoek naar participatie, welbevinden en begeleiding van hervestigde vluchtelingen* (The Hague: Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers, 2015), [www.coa.nl/sites/www.coa.nl/files/paginas/media/bestanden/3576.1188\\_rapport\\_evf\\_monitor\\_web\\_02.pdf](http://www.coa.nl/sites/www.coa.nl/files/paginas/media/bestanden/3576.1188_rapport_evf_monitor_web_02.pdf).

110 For example, the German Humanitarian Admission Programme for Syrian refugees ran from 2013 to 2015 and admitted 20,000 Syrians on two-year residence permits. See Grote, Bitterwolf, and Baraulina, 'Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany', 5-6.

111 In Canada, for example, large resettled refugee families may struggle to afford the high cost of housing in urban areas. Meanwhile, those placed in smaller communities may not have access to the same range of services available to those in cities. See Carla Turner, 'Refugee Agencies Making Headway in Housing Syrians, But Thousands Still Need Homes', CBC News, 8 March 2016, [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/refugees-housing-moving-in-1.3476893](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/refugees-housing-moving-in-1.3476893).

112 See Susan Fratzke, 'Sweden' in *Forced Migration in the OIC Member Countries: Policy Framework Adopted by Host Countries* (Ankara: Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Coordination Office, 2016), 147-74, [http://ebook.comcec.org/Kutuphane/Icerik/Yayinlar/Analitik\\_Calismalar/Yoksullugun\\_Azaltılması/Toplantı8/index.html](http://ebook.comcec.org/Kutuphane/Icerik/Yayinlar/Analitik_Calismalar/Yoksullugun_Azaltılması/Toplantı8/index.html).

is an existing ethnic community; such policies are undertaken on the assumption that having access to a social network and others who speak the same language will facilitate integration. Most European countries take a different approach. Concerned about segregation and facing resource constraints due to the influx of asylum seekers, many European governments have policies in place to distribute refugees throughout the country, with the aim of not overburdening any one locality.<sup>113</sup> With any placement policy, there is a risk that if assignments are not carefully made, refugees will choose to relocate to a more desirable locality. Secondary movement after resettlement has been an issue not only within countries, but also between EU Member States.<sup>114</sup> Even in the United States, where individual preferences and existing networks are taken into account when placing refugees, secondary migration between U.S. states and cities is common,<sup>115</sup> raising questions about the extent to which such movements can in fact be prevented. Data on refugee movements after resettlement is, however, extremely limited in most countries, making it difficult for policymakers to understand the decisions, factors, and trends that drive secondary movement. Better data on this topic could be collected as part of follow-up studies on refugee outcomes (see Section V).

Inherent to discussions about refugee distribution are questions about the relative responsibilities and decision-making power of national and local governments. Many of the critical services refugees rely on after resettlement, such as education and employment assistance, are provided by local or regional authorities; as a result, local actors bear many of the costs of integration.<sup>116</sup> While national governments often provide some supplemental funding to offset these costs, municipalities do not always consider it sufficient to cover the extent of their investments.

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The role of local actors in approving the settlement of refugees in their localities varies enormously from country to country. In some countries, such as Denmark, Sweden, and the United States,<sup>117</sup> municipalities are obliged to receive resettled refugees; in others, such as the Czech Republic and Finland, towns and cities are allowed to choose whether refugees will be resettled there.<sup>118</sup> Coordination between national and local actors in preparation for resettlement is also extremely varied. While local actors in some countries are allowed to participate in selection interviews (Finland) or predeparture orientation programmes (Sweden),<sup>119</sup> in others (the United States), local actors have complained that they are given too little information, often too late, to

113 Most EU Member States that operate resettlement programmes use geographic distribution policies (e.g., Belgium, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden). See EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*.

114 According to participant statements at the February 2017 EU-FRANK Expert Exchange, the secondary movement of resettled refugees has been observed in countries such as Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. Such movements, these experts observed, may make policymakers hesitant to support resettlement as the investments made in resettlement and integration services may be lost and tensions with neighbouring countries may arise if refugees choose to move on from their original settlement location. The European Commission has also acknowledged this problem. See European Parliament, 'Parliamentary Questions, 6 January 2017: Answer Given by Mr Avramopoulos on Behalf of the Commission', updated 13 January 2017, [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2016-008140&language=EN](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2016-008140&language=EN).

115 Eleanor Ott, *Get Up and Go: Refugee Resettlement and Secondary Migration in the USA* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2011), [www.unhcr.org/4e5f9a079.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/4e5f9a079.pdf).

116 Kate Hooper, Maria Vincenza Desiderio, and Brian Salant, *Improving the Labour Market Integration of Migrants and Refugees: Empowering Cities through Better Use of EU Instruments* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-labour-market-integration-migrants-and-refugees-empowering-cities-through-better](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/improving-labour-market-integration-migrants-and-refugees-empowering-cities-through-better).

117 A recent executive order by the Trump administration, however, directs national resettlement authorities to give a greater role to local jurisdictions in approving the placement of refugees.

118 ICMC Europe and SHARE, *Building a Resettlement Network of European Cities and Regions* (Brussels: ICMC Europe, 2015), [www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/building-a-resettlement-network-of-cities-and-regions.pdf](http://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/building-a-resettlement-network-of-cities-and-regions.pdf).

119 Government of Finland, 'Country Chapter: Finland' in *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, ed. UNHCR (Geneva: UNHCR, 2014), [www.unhcr.org/3c5e57f07.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e57f07.html); Government of Sweden, 'Country Chapter: Sweden' in *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook*, ed. UNHCR (Geneva: UNHCR, 2016), [www.unhcr.org/3c5e5a219.html](http://www.unhcr.org/3c5e5a219.html).

adequately prepare for the arrival of refugees.<sup>120</sup> Ultimately, poor preparation can interfere with refugees' settlement and integration if it limits the supports available to them or the effectiveness of these services.

Perhaps most challenging for policymakers, however, is the basic question of how to define successful integration. Economic self-sufficiency has often been used as a proxy for successful integration and is frequently prioritised in refugee integration programmes. The United States, for example, aims for refugees to be self-supporting within six to eight months of arrival; in Canada, refugees are expected to find employment within a year. However, the extreme vulnerability of many resettled refugees raises questions about the extent to which quick self-sufficiency is a realistic expectation and an appropriate benchmark for success.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, some analysts have highlighted the risk of overemphasising economic integration at the expense of investments in social integration, such as building personal connections with neighbours and community members or learning the host-country language.<sup>122</sup> Such investments can be difficult to make if refugees are under significant pressure to find a job quickly and become self-supporting.

## V. KNOWLEDGE-SHARING AND EVALUATION: IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

In order to successfully navigate this maze of tradeoffs and programmatic decisions, policymakers require accurate and comprehensive data and knowledge about the effectiveness of resettlement initiatives. Yet monitoring and evaluation are not a standard, let alone consistent, practice within resettlement programmes around the globe. One of the few exceptions is the Canadian programme, which has completed at least two evaluations of its government-assisted refugee programme to date.<sup>123</sup>

This overall lack of evaluation is likely a result of several factors. Resettlement states may not have a tradition of monitoring and evaluation in general, limiting the extent to which evaluation is viewed as a priority. Perhaps more problematic, though, is the fact that many countries lack quality data about their resettlement programmes upon which an evaluation could be conducted.

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*Monitoring and evaluation are not a standard, let alone consistent, practice within resettlement programmes around the globe.*

Administrative data is generally the gold standard for tracking outcomes in populations over time. But even when a commitment is made to evaluate a resettlement programme (on either a recurring or nonrecurring basis), the administrative data needed are not available in many countries. In some, such as the United States, administrative data sets are not linked due to privacy concerns and/or lack of administrative capacity, limiting

<sup>120</sup> GAO, *Refugee Resettlement*.

<sup>121</sup> Capps et al., *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Meghan Benton, *Towards a Whole-of-Society Approach to Receiving and Settling Newcomers in Europe* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/towards-whole-society-approach-receiving-and-settling-newcomers-europe).

<sup>123</sup> In addition to the programme's commitment to making this a regular practice, these evaluations outperform others in terms of quality as they cover most resettlement phases; investigate the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the programme; and seek to document the process that leads from inputs to outputs and outcomes. Each evaluation also clearly demarcates what data are presently missing, what elements of the programme require improvement, and how these improvements can be pursued in the next programme stage. See IRCC, *Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)* (Ottawa: IRCC, 2016), [www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/evaluation/resettlement.asp); IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)*.



the usefulness of the data for research purposes. Administrative data also frequently do not identify individuals by immigration status or, if they do, do not distinguish between resettled refugees and other categories of individuals who have entered the national asylum system (e.g., between asylum applicants, refugees, and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection). When this is the case, it is impossible to study the situation of resettled refugees as a group distinct from the overall refugee or migrant population. Exceptions can be found in Sweden and Canada, where authorities have established specialised administrative databases for the purpose of tracking immigrant outcomes that specifically identify resettled refugees.<sup>124</sup>

Survey data may also be of limited use. As with administrative data, national labour market and income surveys often do not include questions about immigration status (e.g., those in the United States) or do not distinguish between different types of immigrants (e.g., the standard European Labour Force Survey). Where surveys are conducted among resettled refugees for evaluation purposes, the data collected usually offer a snapshot of outcomes for a very specific period of time. The United States, for example, administers a panel survey of resettled refugees five years after their arrival, but difficulties with selecting and retaining refugee respondents over time mean the longitudinal data cannot necessarily be taken as representative of the refugee population as a whole.<sup>125</sup> In the absence of reliable longitudinal data, some researchers have sought to construct an outcome trajectory based on cross-sectional data from select cohorts of resettled refugees; the reliability and validity of those findings, however, remain limited.<sup>126</sup>

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*Data collection should be accompanied by comprehensive evaluations that consider the effects of specific policies, procedures, and practices.*

As a result, the monitoring that does occur is often restricted to descriptive data on the number of persons resettled, their demographic profile, and the financial and human resources resettlement efforts required to implement the programme (see Box 2). As such, monitoring and evaluation of resettlement programmes at present offer above all an assessment of project inputs and outputs (e.g., of resources expended and the number of persons resettled).

There is thus a need in most countries for better collection of longitudinal data and research that tracks the outcomes of resettled refugees in a range of integration dimensions (such as language proficiency, educational attainment, employment, and social connections) over a longer timeline. Data collection should be accompanied by comprehensive evaluations that consider the effects of specific policies, procedures, and practices relative to their stated goals. Such analyses should aim to pinpoint how core programmatic decisions (e.g., settlement to a particular locality) and services accessed (e.g., predeparture cultural orientation) have affected refugee outcomes. Doing so is essential if policymakers are to improve the design of resettlement programmes and ensure that they achieve their policy goals in a cost-efficient manner.

124 These include the STATIV database in Sweden and the Longitudinal Immigrant Database (IMDB) in Canada.

125 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement, *Annual Report to Congress Fiscal Year 2014* (Washington, DC: HHS, 2014), [www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/orr\\_annual\\_report\\_to\\_congress\\_fy\\_2014\\_signed.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/orr_annual_report_to_congress_fy_2014_signed.pdf).

126 See, for example, Pieter Bevelander and Nahikari Irastorza, *Catching Up: The Labor Market Outcomes of New Immigrants in Sweden* (Washington, DC and Geneva: MPI and International Labour Office, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/catching-labor-market-outcomes-new-immigrants-sweden](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/catching-labor-market-outcomes-new-immigrants-sweden). This study assesses outcomes for four groups of migrants arriving in Sweden between 1993 and 2011, separated according to their years of arrival into four-year cohorts. While the report succeeds in mapping particular trends in terms of labour outcomes, the authors note that only comprehensive microdata allows for the analysis of labour-market integration outcomes by individual characteristics.

## Box 2. Types of information on resettlement

This box gives an overview of the primary data sources on resettlement at present, their thematic coverage, formats, and presumed audience or target group.

**Government-issued information.** National and local authorities generate materials to inform the wider public of their resettlement policies, including the broad rationale for engaging (or not), the ad hoc or more permanent nature of the programme they have set up, and the target groups that should benefit from it. This is often accompanied by an overview of the stages of resettlement, with reference to the roles different actors play. Government authorities also produce documentation to account for public expenditures for both national and international funds (e.g., for AMIF, the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund). These types of information are usually made available on government websites or as brochures, annual and/or programme reports, and presentations.

**EU-level information.** A similar focus can be discerned at the European level, albeit with the view of describing Member State and EU institutional policy and practice to facilitate coordinated action in the area of resettlement. Publications generally outline the policy and legislative framework, the financial impetus put in place to stimulate Member State participation in resettlement, the number of Member States involved, and the degree to which agreed-upon resettlement quotas are attained. Common formats include policy briefs, declarations, memos, periodic updates on particular policy initiatives (e.g., the EU Agenda on Migration), and annual reports such as those published by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the European Migration Network (EMN), and staff communication documents of the competent directorates general.

**Intergovernmental organisation resources.** Actors with a mandate to engage in resettlement also generate material on the topic. Both IOM and UNHCR have dedicated pages on their websites that detail their involvement in resettlement, the regions in which they are or have been active, and the number of cases they have dealt with. This information serves the dual objective of informing and accounting for public funds. In the case of UNHCR, such information is also made available with the aim of increasing global participation in resettlement. Hence, the annual and country reports UNHCR and IOM produce have dedicated sections on resettlement, as do their databases and statistical overviews. UNHCR has also produced a *Resettlement Handbook* that expands the level of detail provided in government publications on the purpose of resettlement, who is eligible, the stages of resettlement, the actors involved, and their respective roles and activities. Only a few states attain a similar level of detail in their publications (e.g., Canada in its explanatory note on the Refugee Assistance Programme). At present, UNHCR therefore provides the most up-to-date, accurate, and detailed information on national programmes across the globe.

**Asylum Information Database (AIDA) and European Resettlement Network (ERN).** At the European level, these two initiatives come closest to the model of the UNHCR Country Chapters on Resettlement and have a similar aim—to provide stakeholders with the most accurate, up-to-date, and detailed information on resettlement in the European Union. However, both initiatives, which are primarily driven by nongovernmental organisations, fall somewhat short of that objective; AIDA has limited the scope of the information it provides on resettlement, while the ERN has struggled to keep its resources up to date and has limited its dissemination to those who sign up as a member of the network.

The sections that follow examine the state of evaluation in resettlement countries across three critical areas: strategic impact, cost, and integration outcomes.

## A. Strategic impact

Perhaps the most glaring gap in nearly every resettlement country—including evaluation stars such as Canada and Sweden—is the lack of consideration given to whether a resettlement programme is successfully meeting its policy goals. Even if the goals of a programme are clearly articulated, little thought is usually given to how success should be defined or measured.

The lack of attention to and investment in goal-setting and evaluation may be due, at least in part, to the difficulty of measuring something like strategic impact. This is particularly the case where policies aim to influence dynamic, multidimensional situations such as conditions in first-asylum countries or the willingness of another state to engage in resettlement. Furthermore, for smaller resettlement programmes, officials may not yet feel an urgent need to clearly define programme goals and evaluation metrics.

However, without a thorough assessment of programme effectiveness, policymakers will find it difficult to make the case for resettling more refugees or for viewing resettlement as a means of achieving strategic policy goals (e.g., managing migration flows). Emerging and existing resettlement countries alike could take steps to address this challenge by identifying potential goals for resettlement efforts; discussing these with key stakeholders at the international, national, and local level;<sup>127</sup> and, subsequently, establishing a hierarchy of general, specific, and operational programme goals.<sup>128</sup> This final step will help identify impact and outcome indicators, give appropriate weight to each, and decide what data should be gathered to facilitate evaluation.

While impact indicators will require longitudinal data collection (e.g., on how the protection space in a country has evolved or how spontaneous flows from a region have changed), other policy goals can be tested in the short term. It would be possible, for example, to evaluate whether refugee selection criteria accurately reflect policy objectives, and whether their application has resulted in the selection of refugees in a way that furthers these objectives. Yet with the exception of Canada, few countries seem to have considered questions such as this in their evaluation efforts.<sup>129</sup>

## B. Efficiency and costs

A second gap in research and analysis of resettlement programmes regards the twin issues of cost and resource efficiency. The current literature offers few answers to basic questions such as ‘what does it cost to resettle a person?’ or ‘what costs will be incurred when setting up a new resettlement programme?’ Being able

<sup>127</sup> Judith Kumin suggests a similar approach with regard to the setup and elaboration of private sponsorship programmes. See Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement*, 6.

<sup>128</sup> For one approach to developing a coherent set of programme objectives, see Liaise Kit, ‘Establishing a Hierarchy of Objectives (General, Specific and Operational)’, accessed 3 March 2017, [www.liaise-kit.eu/ja-activity/establishing-hierarchy-objectives-general-specific-and-operational-0](http://www.liaise-kit.eu/ja-activity/establishing-hierarchy-objectives-general-specific-and-operational-0).

<sup>129</sup> A 2011 evaluation began by assessing whether the Canadian programme is aligned with federal government priorities, referring to the objectives detailed in the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA). The report then described the programme selection criteria, UNHCR and other referral agencies’ use of them to select individuals for resettlement, and Canada’s high acceptance rate of those referred. It also notes that, at the time of writing, the government collected only limited feedback from stakeholders within Canada on the degree to which the profile of the refugees resettled was in line with the programme selection criteria; such information, the evaluation continued, would be key to assessing the relevance and effectiveness of refugee selection vis-à-vis broader Canadian resettlement objectives. See IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)*.

to answer such questions is critical not only to efficient and effective management of public funds, but also to global efforts to open more safe and legal pathways to protection.

For states that are new to resettlement, authorities need information on both the expertise and funds required to setup and implement an effective programme. National authorities may, for example, have questions regarding initial setup costs as well as subsequent costs per resettled refugee or for a particular resettlement phase. And local authorities may require estimates of the number and characteristics of the additional individuals who will soon be using their services (e.g., health care, job training, and social housing). Accurate and more widely shared financial information is thus crucial if governments are to make informed decisions about whether to engage in resettlement and how, once initiated, to make the programmes sustainable. Policymakers that put their faith in inaccurate assessments of cost are likely to find their political capacity to renew or maintain resettlement activities undermined.

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*The current literature offers few answers to basic questions such as ‘what does it cost to resettle a person?’*

Existing resettlement countries also stand to benefit from accurate financial data and analysis. Pertinent evaluations could consider both issues of cost efficiency (e.g., could subcontracting services to private entities reduce spending and, if so, at what cost?) and cost effectiveness (e.g., is the number of persons resettled proportionate to the financial investment made?). Providing a satisfactory, and balanced, answer to these questions will determine to a certain extent the ability of government leaders to convince the public and parliament that a continuation, or even expansion, of a resettlement programme is a sound investment.

For EU Member States and others faced with spontaneous refugee movements, another important question is how the costs associated with resettling refugees compare to those associated with spontaneous arrivals. In the wake of the 2015–16 EU refugee crisis, the call for legal and safe pathways to international protection has become louder.<sup>130</sup> Solid analysis is required of the degree to which existing reception and integration systems can be used to meet the needs of resettled refugees. Operational actors have argued that using spare capacity in reception facilities for resettlement cases could have the benefits of retaining buffer capacity in terms of staff, infrastructure, and knowhow.<sup>131</sup> However, evaluations of resettlement programmes have noted that the more complex resettlement caseload—which includes a larger proportion of vulnerable persons and households with children—often requires more resource-intensive support than do spontaneous arrivals.<sup>132</sup>

Despite the clear value of comprehensive analysis of resettlement costs, little information is currently available. The financial figures that are published usually concern the overall costs, or overall cost estimations, for the resettlement of an annual quota. For example, a 2011 evaluation of the Canadian Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Programme (RAP) only notes that the RAP budget was CAD 48.5 million, with 75 per cent going directly to GARs in the form of income support payments and 25

130 See, for example, statements by Austrian minister of foreign affairs Sebastian Kurz: ‘Our goal is that we decide who can come to Europe, and we decide who we help, that we don’t let the smugglers decide... If we really want to help the people in Syria, we should invest in more humanitarian aid and we should work with resettlement programs to get those who really are in need to come to Europe.’ See Carol Morello, ‘Austrian Officials Say Europe, Not Smugglers, Must Decide Which Migrants Make It’, *Washington Post*, 4 April 2016, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/austrian-officials-says-europe-not-smugglers-must-decide-which-migrants-make-it/2016/04/04/ec18d318-fa91-11e5-886f-a037dba38301\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/austrian-officials-says-europe-not-smugglers-must-decide-which-migrants-make-it/2016/04/04/ec18d318-fa91-11e5-886f-a037dba38301_story.html).

131 Michael Kegels, *Getting the Balance Right: Strengthening Asylum Reception Capacity at National and EU Levels* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2016), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/getting-balance-right-strengthening-asylum-reception-capacity-national-and-eu-levels](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/getting-balance-right-strengthening-asylum-reception-capacity-national-and-eu-levels).

132 See, for example, IRCC, *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)*, 30. This evaluation found that since the adoption of IRPA in 2002 and the resettlement of more vulnerable persons to Canada, the number of hours needed for orientation and medical health services had risen significantly.

per cent spent on RAP services.<sup>133</sup> In the run-up to the launch of a new UK resettlement scheme for 20,000 Syrians, then prime minister David Cameron estimated that the effort would cost GBP 589 million for the period 2016–21;<sup>134</sup> however, the government provided little detail as to how this estimate was created or what it included.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, the opposition Labour Party complained about this lack of transparency and requested a comparison of the proposed costs with those of other parts of the asylum system.

Similarly, the European Union offers a lump sum reimbursement to Member States to support the admission of individual refugees under national resettlement programmes, but few details are available on how this sum was calculated.<sup>136</sup> As a result, it is hard to divine whether these sums are intended as mere financial incentives or as precise reimbursements of the investments an EU Member State would make to resettle each person. Neither the regulation establishing the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF)<sup>137</sup> nor its implementing regulation<sup>138</sup> specify what part of the resettlement process or programme these sums are intended to cover or what calculations informed them.

The fact that IOM has been involved in national resettlement programmes from the outset and has provided services for different resettlement phases and via different service packages should mean it is well placed to shed light on cost calculations. However, at present information on what national governments pay for IOM services is fragmented and does not allow for a disaggregation of cost per type of service and per resettled refugee.<sup>139</sup>

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the EMN<sup>140</sup> have attempted to address the paucity of costs data, mainly via questionnaires directed at Member State governments. Both inquiries, however, concluded that Member States often do not have the data to respond to requests for cost breakdowns and, if they do, the methodologies used by each to calculate costs differ and at present do not allow for comparison. The OECD study<sup>141</sup> concluded that expenditures on resettlement process and resettled refugees are often subsumed under the umbrella category of asylum or even migration, precluding disaggre-

133 Ibid.

134 Lexi Finnigan, 'Resettlement of 20,000 Syrian Refugees Estimated to Cost Half a Billion Pounds', *The Telegraph*, 14 April 2016, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/13/resettlement-of-20000-syrian-refugees-estimated-to-cost-half-a-b/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/13/resettlement-of-20000-syrian-refugees-estimated-to-cost-half-a-b/).

135 The total estimated cost of the scheme is: GBP 99 million in 2016–17, GBP 129 million in 2017–18, GBP 149 million in 2018–19, and GBP 83 million in 2020–21. See Ibid.

136 In 2012, council decisions amending the 2008–13 European Refugee Fund (ERF) stipulated the levels of financial support EU Member States were to receive for their engagement in resettlement. For the 2014–20 period, these figures were revised to EUR 6,000 for each person resettled and EUR 10,000 for each person resettled from an EU priority or vulnerable group. See 'Decision 281/2012/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 March 2012 Amending Decision No 573/2007/EC Establishing the European Refugee Fund for the Period 2008 to 2013 as Part of the General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows"', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2012 L 92/1, 30 March 2012, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32012D0281>.

137 'Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 Establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and Repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2014 L 150/168, 20 April 2014, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/financing/fundings/pdf/overview/regulation\\_eu\\_no\\_5162014\\_of\\_the\\_european\\_parliament\\_and\\_of\\_the\\_council\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/financing/fundings/pdf/overview/regulation_eu_no_5162014_of_the_european_parliament_and_of_the_council_en.pdf).

138 'Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 801/2014 of 24 July 2014 Setting Out the Timetable and Other Implementing Conditions Related to the Mechanism for the Allocation of Resources for the Union Resettlement Programme Under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2014 L 219/19, 25 July 2014, [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/20150302\\_implementing\\_regulation\\_on\\_resettlement\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/20150302_implementing_regulation_on_resettlement_en.pdf).

139 For an overview of predeparture training that IOM provided resettlement countries between 1998 and 2009. See IOM, *IOM Migrant Training Programme Survey 1998–2009*.

140 EMN, *Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe*. The Italian EMN National Contact Point also filed an ad-hoc query in June 2015 to gather information on how EU Member States spend the funds received across resettlement phases. See, EMN, 'Ad-Hoc Query on Resettlement Costs'.

141 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Cooperation Directorate, *ODA Reporting of In-Donor Refugee Costs: Members' Methodologies for Calculating Costs* (Paris: OECD, 2016), [www.oecd.org/dac/stats/RefugeeCostsMethodologicalNote.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/RefugeeCostsMethodologicalNote.pdf).

gation and assessment of different types of costs (e.g., processing, reception, education) and approaches (e.g., reception facilities versus housing allowance).

The patchy and inconsistent nature of much of the existing information on resettlement expenses makes comparing the costs of resettling and supporting refugees across countries—let alone with other types of protection—a hazardous endeavour. Conclusions reached on the basis of such data are difficult to verify, but quick to take on a life of their own and are often treated as facts. To take an example from the U.S. context, a 2015 study conducted by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)<sup>142</sup> estimated the costs of resettling a refugee from the Middle East to the United States; although the study does place caveats on the initial estimate, it subsequently compares this figure with other cost calculations, notably the cost of hosting a refugee in the country of first asylum, without noting the problems associated with comparing figures generated using different methodologies. Better collection of cost data for resettlement across countries, based on agreed upon methodologies, would allow for a better evaluation of the relative cost effectiveness of various policy tools. It is worth, however, bearing in mind that even with better and more comparable methodologies, some benefits and costs may be inherently difficult to calculate, including the psychological and emotional benefits of resettlement to individuals and families who would otherwise be left in limbo in first asylum countries.

### C. Integration outcomes

While integration outcomes have perhaps been the most studied and evaluated aspect of resettlement programmes, solid data and analysis still remain scarce. In particular, there is a need for more granular analysis of the degree to which the outcomes of an individual, group, or cohort of resettled refugees are affected by, for example, profile before departure, selection criteria, predeparture orientation and training, settlement in a particular locality, and support received upon arrival.

To date, research has primarily considered the integration of resettled refugees divorced of an analysis of how the resettlement process itself may affect outcomes. Typically, these reports chart the demographic profile of resettled refugees, including trends over time, and then assess how they fare on various dimensions of integration, such as employment rates or language acquisition. Most studies use a mixture of subjective and objective indicators<sup>143</sup> to measure integration, with a heavy reliance on subjective indicators. A significant proportion of the (limited) evaluations of national resettlement programmes have adopted a similar focus and approach.

The problem with these analyses is that they tend to ignore or overlook an important question: to what degree are settlement outcomes the result of, or at least influenced by, the design and implementation of the resettlement programme? For example, both the United States and Canada set self-sufficiency as a top priority for resettled refugees and have, in a spirit of policy and programme coherence, incorporated this objective into different phases of the resettlement programme. Sweden and other European resettlement countries take a much different approach, giving refugees significantly longer to settle in to their new homes before requiring them to be self-supporting.<sup>144</sup> Hence, an analysis that detaches integration outcomes from the design and implementation of these resettlement programmes is likely to overlook key causal factors that link the two.

142 Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, *The High Cost of Resettling Middle Eastern Refugees* (Washington, DC: Center for Immigration Studies, 2015), 1, [http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/camarota-refugees-15\\_0.pdf](http://cis.org/sites/cis.org/files/camarota-refugees-15_0.pdf).

143 Subjective indicators rely on the perception and judgment of the refugees themselves or of the service providers who work with them, as gauged through interviews or questionnaires. Indicators, such as whether the person has employment or has attained a certain proficiency in the local language (e.g., via test with standard scoring) are considered a more objective manner of measuring integration.

144 Sweden, for example, provides refugees with two years of public assistance and employment training after arrival. See Randy Capps et al, 'Integrating Refugees in the United States: The Successes and Challenges of Resettlement in a Global Context', *Statistical Journal of the IAOS* 31, no. 3 (2015): 341–67, <http://content.iospress.com/articles/statistical-journal-of-the-iaos/sji918>.

Without detailed information on how policies affect outcomes, policymakers and practitioners will find it extremely difficult to make necessary adjustments to programme design.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that when the integration outcomes of resettled refugees are evaluated, these studies are conducted without reflection on programme objectives and eligibility criteria. As described in Section III, one of the primary aims of resettlement programmes in Europe and North America is to resettle the most vulnerable cases; where this objective is reflected in practice, using standard metrics for measuring integration (e.g., economic self-sufficiency, level of education, and employment) may not be appropriate to capture the integration trajectory and successes or failures of the programme.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the scale of refugee movement resulting from the Syrian conflict, policymakers have increased use of resettlement as a means of strengthening the global protection regime and better managing migration flows. As of February 2017, 34 countries committed 242,755 resettlement, humanitarian, or other admissions places for displaced Syrians.<sup>145</sup> Within Europe, this has translated to the adoption of an EU-wide resettlement scheme, a legislative proposal for a regulation in this regard,<sup>146</sup> and a renewed effort to expand the number of resettlement places across the European Union via peer learning and support activities, such as those delivered by EU-FRANK and the ERN.

Action at the EU as well as the global level, however, requires solid grounding in evidence of what works, where, and why. Resettlement is highly context specific, rendering the need for detailed, reliable data even more important. But the majority of reports on resettlement to date are descriptive in nature, with only a few notable exceptions. Critical analysis of what has been done under the banner of resettlement and to what effect is largely absent. This is remarkable at a time when emphatic calls for significantly more or less resettlement echo in a variety of policy contexts.

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*Action at the EU as well as the global level, however, requires solid grounding in evidence of what works, where, and why.*

This dearth of analysis stems from the absence of a monitoring and evaluation tradition concerning resettlement policies and programmes,<sup>147</sup> combined with the narrow focus of much existing research on the integration of resettled refugees. Only a small proportion of the resettlement programmes across the globe have been subjected to thorough evaluation and, even then, often only in relation to a singular event or point in time. External analysts who approach the subject find few data sources other than government reports that enumerate programme inputs and outputs (e.g., expenditures and persons resettled), but fall short of capturing the process that led from one to the other. For example, questions about whether UNHCR referral cases are in line with state-determined selection criteria and, ultimately, help attain the objectives of national—and now EU-wide—resettlement programmes remain unanswered. In order to pinpoint the successes of resettlement programmes and areas in need of improvement, far more detailed and well-rounded assessment is imperative.

Improved data collection and analysis will be equally beneficial to states with an interest in setting up or expanding national resettlement programmes. Many currently look to authorities in other states for information on what types of procedures and partnerships have proven effective, and what pitfalls to be mindful of. While

<sup>145</sup> UNHCR, 'Resettlement and Other Admission Pathways for Syrian Refugees'.

<sup>146</sup> European Commission, 'Enhancing Legal Channels'.

<sup>147</sup> Capps et al, *The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees*.

investments in peer-learning are welcome, relying solely on such efforts comes with some risk. First, without evaluation of knowledge-sharing initiatives, their usefulness in terms of having a sustained impact on the capacity of new resettlement states cannot be ascertained. Second, without sound evaluation of existing resettlement programmes and their (long-term) impact, initiative participants will be sharing untested practices that may or may not be effective. Third, in view of the diverse range of motivations and goals that stakeholders seek to pursue via resettlement, unpacking these goals is key if the mentor state is to share practices that are relevant to the mentee-state programme designers seeking advice.

In order to design and implement resettlement policies that are targeted and effective, policymakers should consider investing in further research and data gathering in the following areas:

- ***Identify—and agree on—the strategic goals of a resettlement programme.*** This should be one of the first steps in the design and implementation process. Without clearly specified goals, it is impossible to evaluate the success of a particular resettlement initiative and make needed course adjustments; it will also make it impossible for policymakers to assign resettlement the appropriate role and weight in pursuit of broader migration and international protection goals.
- ***Conduct longitudinal research on the process and outcomes of resettlement activities.*** Such research should place particular emphasis on generating data that can be compared across national contexts. Longitudinal data is a sine qua none for testing the long-term goals set by policymakers, whether for strategic impact in a conflict region or improved integration outcomes among resettled refugees. This research should include an in-depth exploration of how differences or shifts in the resettlement process affect outcomes and associated costs. This knowledge has the potential to support both good design and long-term sustainability of resettlement efforts.
- ***Evaluate the process of resettlement itself and how this influences resettlement outcomes.*** Solid research into how resettlement is done and to what effect will not only help emerging resettlement states select practices most suited to their objectives, but will also offer existing resettlement states insight into how elements of the process (e.g., delays in selection and last-minute notification of departure) can undermine the very aims they seek to pursue. To facilitate this and enable comparison of outcomes for different groups over time, resettlement authorities should ensure that data collected before resettlement (e.g., by UNHCR and its implementing partners) are interoperable with those maintained in resettlement countries.
- ***Improve the documentation and analysis of the costs of resettlement.*** Assessment of costs should include the initial setup of a programme and subsequent costs per resettled refugee, and should highlight steps that can be taken to operate in a cost-efficient and cost-effective manner. This is of particular interest for large-scale or joint initiatives, such as the EU-wide resettlement scheme, which may allow for economies of scale. Solid cost calculations have the potential to benefit the planning of national, regional, and local resettlement authorities, promising more informed decisions about the initiation and maintenance or expansion of resettlement efforts.
- ***Invest in comparative, analytical assessments of resettlement efforts.*** Most current research on resettlement is primarily descriptive in nature. There is a need for more analysis at the EU and global level that identifies the degree to which lessons learned in one national resettlement programme are transferable to others. This may provide resettlement countries with the necessary guidance to select those practices that best fit the goals they have set for themselves as well as the geographical, legal, institutional, and socioeconomic contexts in which they operate.

The renewed interest in resettlement provides a key opportunity to begin addressing these knowledge gaps. Doing so will help develop a next generation of resettlement programmes in which solid evidence steers design and implementation and whose goals are clearly defined vis-à-vis broader migration and international protection strategies.



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