

Refugee Sponsorship Programmes

A Global State of Play and Opportunities for Investment

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December 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A contradictory pair of trends is challenging humanitarian protection systems worldwide: even as the number of people displaced across international borders and in need of protection has soared to an all-time high, the number of refugees that countries resettle each year has dwindled. Finding new ways for refugees to reach safety and rebuilding public consensus in resettlement countries around the idea that offering protection is important are more urgent than ever. Governments and civil-society actors in different parts of the world have increasingly turned to refugee sponsorship (also called ‘private sponsorship’ in some contexts), either as a complementary pathway within traditional resettlement schemes or as an alternative means of conducting resettlement altogether. Though refugee sponsorship initiatives take a variety of forms, the common element is a transfer of some degree of responsibility—at times, for identifying and preparing refugees to travel, and often for helping them settle and integrate into a new society—from the government to private citizens and civil-society groups (often, faith- or community-based organisations).

As sponsorship schemes proliferate—from Canada and Europe to Latin America and Oceania—now is a critical moment to make sure that new programmes get it right and that long-running schemes have the support they need to continue to exist, and perhaps to grow. While government investment and buy-in are essential to the long-term sustainability of any protection pathway, philanthropic investments can catalyse the creation of new programmes and support the longevity and quality of existing ones. Particularly where refugee sponsorship programmes are initially set up as pilots, governments may be reluctant to make significant investments until they have proof that the model can succeed. For new initiatives, private funding can thus play an important role in covering start-up costs until public support can be secured.

A comprehensive mapping and analysis of international protection pathways in Europe, the Americas, and Oceania suggest a variety of ways private funders can support sponsorship programme development and capacity:

- **Support the development of tools, guidebooks, and template documents for sponsorship programme operation and design.** Making such resources available can lower the start-up costs of creating new programmes or be used to fill gaps in the infrastructure of existing programmes. Private funding can be used to create training materials or online resources to inform the individuals or groups who volunteer to sponsor refugees of their responsibilities as sponsors or to provide information about refugees’ rights. Funding could also support the development of training materials for the civil-society organisations responsible for overseeing sponsors, or guidance and template documents for governments on, for example, how
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to create sponsorship agreements or match sponsors and refugees.

- ▶ **Fund critical programme infrastructure.** Private funding can help set up or expand the infrastructure needed to make sponsorship programmes successful. This may include hotlines for sponsors, staff positions within civil-society organisations to support and monitor sponsorship relationships, platforms to coordinate among the civil-society organisations that oversee sponsors, or safety-net funds to support refugees should their relationship with their sponsors fail. Funding could also be used to create peer-support networks between sponsors or civil-society groups to facilitate peer learning.
- ▶ **Cover staff time to be spent on programme design.** Designing the legal and programmatic framework for a sponsorship initiative requires an extensive investment of time and energy—resources that governments or their civil-society partners may not always have readily available. Funding from private sources can free up valuable staff time to develop a programme model that is robust, tailored to a particular context, and has a good chance at succeeding.
- ▶ **Invest in the development of an evidence base for sponsorship initiatives by strengthening monitoring and evaluation.** Whether pilot projects are eventually turned into permanent programmes depends in part on whether they are grounded in a sound understanding of what does and does not work when it comes to designing and running a successful programme. Evidence of a programme’s success will also be needed to make the case for continued investments in it, and perhaps even programme expansion. To fill both needs, private funding could support research and the evaluation of sponsorship programmes and their component parts.

When determining how best to invest in refugee sponsorship, private funders should consider several factors. First, they will need to be flexible and tailor their investments to the national context. There is no one-size-fits-all model for sponsorship, and a fully fledged sponsorship programme may not be possible in all contexts. Private funders can, however, support the core goal of sponsorship initiatives—involving the public more directly in refugee protection—in other ways, such as expanding the role of volunteers in welcoming refugees who arrive through asylum or mainstream resettlement channels. Second, a funding strategy should be set with an eye to the broader policy and governance context. Gaps in general and integration-focused social services, such as employment services, can

affect the outcomes of sponsorship programmes, and additional funding could help strengthen these services or provide supplementary ones.

Finally, while new sponsorship programmes have generated a great deal of attention, funders should also attend to the needs of existing programmes. Long-standing initiatives, including the sponsorship scheme in Canada, face important capacity and funding gaps that could limit their effectiveness or sustainability. To ensure the capacity of refugee protection systems at a global level, strengthening these programmes should be viewed as a priority equal in importance to setting up new schemes.

I. INTRODUCTION

While the number of refugees in need of protection globally is at an all-time high,¹ governments and, importantly, publics in many asylum countries have become less willing to provide refuge to those seeking protection. From Australia to the United States to some EU Member States, governments have tightened their borders, and in some cases, walked back their commitments to refugee resettlement. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of resettlement spots countries made available in 2018 was less than half the number in 2016 (and the 2017 number was similarly low).²

With protection needs high and generosity low, a dual challenge has emerged: a need to find more channels for refugees to access safety (or make existing channels more accessible, including those for labour and study) and to rebuild public consensus around the importance of offering humanitarian protection. In response, interest has grown among civil society, international organisations, and some governments in ‘complementary’ pathways as a way to strengthen and expand refugee protection alongside more traditional resettlement channels.³ Many of these complementary pathways aim to make protection available to new groups of refugees (e.g., extended family of refugees who have received protection) and to tap into private resources that allow governments to expand their resettlement commitments.

Among the pathways that have received the most attention is refugee sponsorship. Such programmes share responsibility for helping refugees settle and integrate into their new country between the government and local community groups. For its advocates, sponsorship holds the promise of both increasing public support for refugee

protection and improving integration outcomes by creating closer relationships between refugees and receiving communities.

Interest in refugee sponsorship has grown rapidly: between 2016 and 2019, ten countries from different world regions have launched or announced community sponsorship programmes. These programmes, and the global sponsorship movement as a whole, are at a critical phase. Governments and civil-society stakeholders in other countries will be closely watching the outcomes of these new sponsorship experiments. Successes may encourage others to adopt a similar approach, while failure may not only doom a particular pilot programme but also discourage other countries from launching their own sponsorship initiatives.

With the stakes high, governments and their civil-society partners may feel out of their depth when implementing a refugee sponsorship programme—a model considerably different from how many countries have traditionally managed resettlement and social services more broadly. Civil-society organisations, particularly at the local level, often lack the funding or experience to effectively engage with government in sponsorship efforts. And for their part, governments may lack the policy tools and expertise to oversee sponsors and constructively and efficiently share responsibilities with civil society. There is thus considerable potential for missteps, particularly as initiatives are piloted and fine-tuned.

To avoid or overcome these hurdles, it is imperative that sponsorship programmes are equipped with the resources, knowledge, and infrastructure necessary to succeed. But with many governments and civil-society organisations already facing tight budgets, some are unable to field the level of investment needed. Private funders can thus play a crucial role in supporting the development of new sponsorship initiatives and support existing ones. Well-placed private investments can help to shape programmes from the ground up, ensure their long-term sustainability, and encourage governments to step up their financial investments following the successful launch of pilot programmes.

Based on an in-depth mapping and analysis of refugee sponsorship programmes in Europe, Oceania, and the Americas, this policy brief identifies the central needs of these programmes. It then sets out recommendations for private philanthropic actors interested in supporting the development and sustainability of sponsorship programmes, in the interest of increasing the quality of protection and number of admission places for individuals in need.

II. THE STATE OF REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP GLOBALLY

Interest in complementary pathways to protection for refugees, including sponsorship programmes, is booming. In addition to Canada, the country with the oldest sponsorship programme, Argentina, Australia, Belgium,⁴ France, Ireland, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Spain, and the United Kingdom have all launched or committed to starting refugee sponsorship programmes. Several other South American countries, including Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, are considering how sponsorship could fit with their resettlement plans. And in the United States, the voluntary agencies that manage refugee settlement on behalf of the government⁵ are exploring ways to incorporate elements of sponsorship into the existing resettlement system by expanding the role that community groups play in welcoming and integrating refugees.

Defining what, exactly, qualifies as refugee sponsorship can be highly subjective (see Box 1), and the models adopted by these programmes vary substantially.⁶ The original model of refugee sponsorship, Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, places a great deal of responsibility with sponsors (including full financial responsibility) and maintains limited oversight of sponsorship relationships after refugees arrive. Sponsors in the Canadian programme can also nominate the refugees they will sponsor, and in practice, many refugees are sponsored by extended family members.⁷

Most new refugee sponsorship programmes have adopted a 'community sponsorship' model. These programmes place an emphasis on involving members of the local community in refugees' integration, particularly its social and emotional dimensions. Sponsors are groups of private individuals, sometimes convened under the auspices of a faith group or other community organisation. In community sponsorship programmes, refugees are generally identified for resettlement through UNHCR vulnerability assessments, rather than individual nominations, and sponsors are matched with arriving refugees by government resettlement offices. Often, these programmes involve some sort of cost sharing between the government and the sponsors, which means refugees are eligible for some level of public financial assistance. Governments tend to be actively involved in monitoring sponsorship relationships, including vetting and training sponsors. Community sponsorship programmes operate or are under development in Argentina, Germany, Ireland, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

Box I. What is refugee sponsorship?

At the heart of refugee sponsorship is a shift in the roles of government, civil society, and community groups and individuals in ensuring refugee protection and integration. Government agencies may transfer responsibility to private actors for some elements of the nomination and resettlement of refugees, and expand the role that civil-society organisations, community groups, and private individuals play in welcoming refugees and helping them settle into their new communities. By drawing on their personal knowledge and networks to help refugees get jobs and find housing, sponsors and volunteers can help to fill resource gaps that otherwise may have hindered resettlement programmes from operating effectively.

There is no one way of doing refugee sponsorship, and the roles played by government and civil society in the implementation, management, and monitoring of sponsorship programmes vary significantly across national contexts. Generally, private groups and individuals take responsibility for some combination of the following: identifying and nominating refugees for resettlement (known as ‘naming’), providing refugees with mentorship and guidance after their arrival, and financially supporting refugees during the first one to two years after resettlement. Some countries, most notably Canada, have adopted a full sponsorship model, where sponsors name refugees for resettlement and are completely responsible for providing both financial support and more general settlement assistance. Others, such as the United Kingdom, match private support with ongoing assistance from the government, including for some costs such as housing. Given these differences, sponsorship programmes have taken on various names in different countries. For example, these schemes are sometimes referred to as community sponsorship, humanitarian corridors, or private sponsorship for refugees.

Sources: ICF and Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes as a Possible Pathway to Safe Channels for Admission to the EU, Including Resettlement* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 2018), 28, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1dbb0873-d349-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-77978210>; Susan Fratzke, *Engaging Communities in Refugee Protection: The Potential of Private Sponsorship in Europe* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/engaging-communities-refugee-protection-potential-private-sponsorship-europe.

A variation on the community sponsorship model exists in France, Italy, and, until 2018, in Belgium. These ‘humanitarian corridors’ programmes operate based on agreements between government and civil-society groups (mainly faith-based organisations). In contrast with community sponsorship, civil-society groups in these programmes are responsible for identifying refugees for resettlement, funding and arranging their travel, and supporting them after arrival. Sponsorship happens at an organisational (rather than individual or community) level, and the organisation that signed the agreement with the government is also responsible for managing the refugees’ arrival and settlement.

A third model exists in Australia, which requires that refugees admitted through the sponsorship component of its Refugee and Humanitarian Programme have a background that will facilitate their quick entry into employment. Sponsored refugees must be of working age, able to speak English, and either have a job offer or a reasonable chance of finding employment quickly.⁸ In addition to community organisations, businesses may also sponsor refugees.

In Australia, sponsors’ responsibilities include covering a refugee’s visa application charges, airfare, medical screening, accommodations, and settlement services for the first 12 months after arrival. Sponsors must also provide an income-tested Assurance of Support that legally obliges to repay the government for any social security payments made to a working-age refugee they sponsor during the refugee’s first year in Australia.⁹

While the number of countries operating sponsorship programmes has risen, the number of places created by each of these programmes has remained fairly small (see Table A-1 in the Appendix). With the exception of Canada, most have admitted just a few hundred people. In part, this is due to the fact that many programmes, including all of those launched to date in Europe, are either pilot initiatives (the community sponsorship programmes) or were created on a time-limited basis (the humanitarian corridor programmes).¹⁰ Governments have expressed a desire to keep these programmes small, at least initially, in order to test the feasibility of the concept and gauge civil-society interest. While this leaves open the possibility that

the pilots may eventually be expanded, it also creates the risk that they could be discontinued if they are not viewed as successful. Thus, for sponsorship programmes to fulfil their promise of supplementing existing forms of refugee protection, there is a need to ensure sound programme design and implementation, as well as to fully document their outcomes.

III. FOUR THINGS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMMES NEED TO SUCCEED

For a sponsorship programme to be successful and sustainable, several core conditions must be in place. First, the programme must have the interest and support of government, civil society, and the broader public. Second, officials and civil-society members involved in setting up and running the programme must understand the legal frameworks and processes that need to be created and maintained to give the programme a firm foundation. Finally, programmes need infrastructure to vet, support, and monitor sponsors, and the resources to operate that infrastructure. Mapping these needs and related gaps in a particular context can help private funders interested in supporting refugee sponsorship design a well-targeted investment strategy.

A. *Interest and support*

At the foundation of any refugee sponsorship programme must be interest and support from three groups: the public and individuals who will be willing to serve as sponsors, government at both the political and administrative levels, and civil-society groups willing and able to coordinate with government to manage the programme.

The need for public interest is obvious. Without engaged community members who are willing to serve as sponsors, sponsorship would be impossible. The ways in which individuals become motivated to sponsor refugees vary. Individuals may choose to volunteer as the result of public campaigns or in response to specific events: for example, widespread media coverage of the death of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy, off the coast of Turkey motivated large numbers of previously uninterested private citizens in Canada (where some of the boy's family members lived) to come forward to sponsor refugees.¹¹ Public

information campaigns can be useful for connecting with potential sponsors, particularly those who are otherwise unaffiliated with a service or volunteer network. More often, however, members of the public connect with sponsorship opportunities through community institutions that serve as gatekeepers, such as religious or nonprofit organisations (e.g., Caritas in the United Kingdom or the Red Cross in Ireland).

Obtaining the buy-in and interest of these gatekeeper organisations—who can help to recruit sponsors, provide them with support, and conduct oversight—is thus critical. In countries with established, government-run resettlement operations, however, traditional faith and service organisations have at times been apprehensive of sponsorship schemes. Some organisations fear that in the long term, sponsorship could result in a transfer of resettlement obligations and costs from government to civil society. Others have expressed concern that handing over responsibilities to private community members will reduce the quality of services and care and jeopardise the consistency with which they are made available to all arriving refugees. Established community service organisations in Germany, for example, expressed such fears during the process of setting up their country's sponsorship programme.¹² The process of creating a sponsorship programme should thus be collaborative, fully engaging civil society as a stakeholder, in order to ensure that their concerns and priorities are reflected in the final model that is adopted.

In addition to civil society and the general public, government must also be committed to a sponsorship programme, and willing to devote attention, political capital, and resources to it, if it is to succeed. An energised minister or state secretary—or even an influential and well-placed civil servant—can be instrumental in driving the creation of a new programme, by ensuring that it remains a policy priority and redirecting staff time and financial resources to support it. In Ireland, for example, the creation of the Community Sponsorship Ireland pilot in 2019 was driven by the head of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme in collaboration with the minister for justice and equality, both of whom were highly committed to implementing sponsorship in Ireland.¹³

The key to mobilising support across both government and civil society is often finding a sponsorship model that fits with their priorities and the national context. Some governments have concerns regarding turning responsibility for key integration tasks over to civil society or private individuals, or how this could be squared with the existing welfare system; this has, for example, been a concern in Sweden, which has a well-developed integration and social welfare system.¹⁴ Similarly, in countries with an existing and well-regarded refugee resettlement system, it will

be important for governments to define how sponsorship fits alongside existing resettlement pathways and what its added value will be. For example, in the Netherlands, which has a well-established resettlement programme and also received a substantial number of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016, stakeholders have expressed doubts about having to manage yet another humanitarian entry channel.¹⁵ Programmes will need to be designed in a way that takes these concerns into account.

While generating support is a critical element of setting up a new programme, sustaining that support over time is equally essential, especially when so many programmes begin their lives as pilot projects. One important way to sustain support over time is to ensure programmes are designed in a way that sets them up for success, and that success is documented and communicated to key stakeholders. Robust research on the integration outcomes of sponsored refugees, and the impacts of sponsorship on host communities, either through official monitoring and evaluation or private research efforts, can help to provide evidence of what works and what does not, and ultimately improve programme design. Yet sustained and systematic support for monitoring and evaluation of these programmes is often lacking. Some countries that are newer to refugee sponsorship, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, have, however, made evaluation a priority by building robust evaluation plans directly into their programmes. And in the United Kingdom, the government announced in June 2019 that the sponsorship pilot project would be made permanent,¹⁶ after a review of the results of initial monitoring.

B. Knowledge

Creating a sponsorship programme from scratch can seem like a daunting task, in part because of the knowledge required about the environment in which it will operate. Government officials and civil-society partners will need to carefully think through the policy and legal frameworks that need to be in place to bring a sponsorship programme to life, and to ensure its quality and sustainability over time.¹⁷

The required policy framework includes laws, where necessary, that allow refugees to enter the country through legal immigration channels and that stipulate the status they will receive upon entry. Programmes also require policies that specify who is eligible for admission and/or targeted for sponsorship and that set out an application procedure. In addition to the broader legal framework that governs refugee admissions, sponsorship programmes need specific policies specifying who is eligible to be a sponsor (e.g.,

based on financial resources, evidence of planning and preparation to receive refugees, and experience working with vulnerable groups), and procedures for how sponsors will be vetted. Policies should also set out what will be expected of sponsors and which responsibilities will remain with the government. Without clear guidelines, there is a risk that sponsors may not understand or give sufficient thought to what is required of them and take on more than they are able handle. Unclear guidelines for sponsors under Germany's Humanitarian Admission Programme, for example, contributed to confusion among sponsors regarding their responsibilities. Eventually, more than one-third of refugees sponsored under the programme chose to apply for asylum rather than rely on their sponsor for support.¹⁸

In addition to creating effective laws and procedures, both government and civil-society organisations need to know how to operate such schemes on the ground. This includes:

- ▶ understanding how sponsorship relationships function in practice (being able to anticipate problems and address them effectively when they arise),
- ▶ knowing how to generate public interest (what motivates sponsors and attracts positive public attention), and
- ▶ being able to manage relationships and communicate effectively with partners (including government, civil society, and UNHCR).

These roles and responsibilities are often uncharted territory for both government officials used to directly administering resettlement programmes and civil-society representatives who may be used to playing a more adversarial or watchdog function relative to governments. Knowing where responsibilities lie, and having recourse to trusted sources should problems or questions arise, are critical elements to ensure the success of sponsorship programmes.

C. Infrastructure

Sponsorship programmes require three types of infrastructure: training and ongoing support for sponsors, public services that refugees can access when needed, and clear channels of communication between all parties involved in the resettlement and integration process. Having this infrastructure in place will help sponsorship programmes run smoothly and ensure that relationships between refugees and their sponsors, as well as the broader host community, unfold in a positive way.

Because sponsorship programmes specifically devolve responsibility for supporting a vulnerable population—refugees—to private individuals and community organisations who may not have experience in this area, it is critical to ensure that sponsor relationships are properly monitored, managed, and supported. To be effective, sponsors need to know how to communicate across cultural differences, how to recognise signs of trauma and provide appropriate support, what public services are available to refugees and how to access them, how to avoid behaviours that could be paternalistic or lead to dependency, and how to support refugees in achieving self-sufficiency—among many other things. Without proper training, sponsors can become overwhelmed or burned out, and refugees may receive inappropriate information or become frustrated.

Training opportunities for sponsors can either be provided by governments directly or through a community or nongovernmental organisation (with or without government support). In the United Kingdom, the government has funded the Reset network to deliver training to sponsors.¹⁹ And in Canada, several civil-society initiatives have emerged at the local level, such as Refugee 613,²⁰ to develop and provide training resources for sponsors during and after the 2015 special Syrian resettlement programme.

Training should be supplemented with easily accessible supports available on an ongoing basis. These should include a central contact point for both sponsors and refugees to ask questions or raise concerns,²¹ peer-support networks for sponsors, as well as a process for monitoring and overseeing sponsor relationships to safeguard the wellbeing of refugees and connect them with alternative resources in the event that the relationship falters.²²

The second key form of infrastructure is a country's public services, both those tailored to refugees and more general services for new immigrants and the broader population, such as health care and unemployment support. In successful sponsorship programmes, these state services generally complement the support provided by sponsors. For example, sponsored refugees in Canada can still use the free language classes and employment services designed for recently arrived immigrants and refugees. But some countries lack a broader integration service infrastructure to support arriving refugees, and sponsors may need to shoulder greater responsibilities. In both Eastern Europe and South America, for example, countries have relatively little social welfare infrastructure, let alone infrastructure to take on critical integration tasks such as supporting language learning, helping newcomers find employment, and providing affordable and safe housing.

Even where public services are extensive and integration infrastructure does exist, there have been some problems

with cross-cultural communication or similar challenges when staff members are not adequately prepared to address refugees' needs. In South America, for example, a UNHCR evaluation of resettlement programmes noted that local governments were not always familiar with the rights and needs of refugees, and as a result, some refugees were denied access to local social services.²³ While sponsorship programmes may be able to help fill some of these gaps, it is important to note that without critical integration and social service infrastructure, there may be no safety net to assist refugees if sponsorship relationships fail. Sponsorship under these circumstances also places much more responsibility, and potentially stress, on sponsors, which must be taken into account when designing the programme.

Finally, to ensure that sponsorship is carried out as a true public-private partnership, open and regular communication is critical. Coordination platforms and private convenings are needed to bring together government and civil-society stakeholders at the national level to discuss how programmes have fared so far and where adjustments need to be made. When such forums for dialogue are convened regularly and over an extended period of time, they can help to build trusting relationships that can form the basis of fruitful collaboration. For example, the Reset network in the United Kingdom, a civil-society organisation representing sponsors, has played an integral role in facilitating communication between the government and civil society (including by creating a more streamlined application procedure for sponsors).²⁴

D. Resources

Sponsorship programmes, like any legal pathway, carry costs for both setup and ongoing administration, as well as for the support provided to refugees. Even where sponsors bear some of the costs for receiving and integrating refugees, some expenses will still accrue to government and to the civil-society bodies that provide oversight and management of the programme. Either the government, or a community organisation delegated by them, must review and vet applications from would-be sponsors, for example. Moreover, training, monitoring, and coordinating sponsors all require staff time and financial support. Whether these costs are born by government, civil society, or directly by sponsors varies across existing programmes. The UK government, for example, funds the sponsor coordination platform Reset,²⁵ while in Germany, the creation of the Neustart im Team (NesT) platform was funded privately with the aim of securing government funding for it if the sponsorship pilot proves to be a success.²⁶

Start-up costs can be significant. Designing policies and procedures to manage the programme requires a significant time investment on the part of the administrative officials creating the programme and their civil-society partners. Ahead of the start of the German and Irish sponsorship pilot programmes, for example, government officials in both countries expressed concerns about not having sufficient staff capacity to set up the programmes.²⁷ In the United Kingdom, civil-society groups benefited from a grant from private funders that allowed them to dedicate significant time to developing a well-thought-out proposal for a sponsorship model that they and their partners in government used as the basis for developing their programme, thus taking some of the burden of programme design off of overstretched government officials.²⁸

IV. A ROADMAP FOR INVESTMENT IN SPONSORSHIP

To date, much private philanthropic investment in community sponsorship has focused on the ‘horizontal’ expansion of sponsorship to new countries. This has involved efforts to secure political and civil-society buy-in and to support programme designers as they create the legal and procedural frameworks that allow refugee sponsorship programmes to operate. As resettlement numbers have fallen worldwide, promoting new pathways such as sponsorship has become an even more important task. But this should not overshadow other areas in critical need of investment: the infrastructure for operating such programmes often lacks the level of support necessary to ensure its effectiveness, and building up this infrastructure is becoming ever more urgent as more countries complete the initial steps of programme design and move into the implementation phase.

As stakeholders in countries new to refugee sponsorship press forward with their pilots, private funders can play a critical role in filling these gaps and making sure programmes are sustainable over time. While governments clearly have an important role to play in the investment, development, and maintenance process, private funding can complement public investment. Support from private funders could be used to cover the costly initial design phase of a programme (such as building the policy framework and procedures), for example, while the government agrees to provide longer-term operational support once

the design is complete. Similarly, pilot projects could be supported by private actors, with government agreeing to take over financial responsibility once the model has been proven.

This section sets out recommendations for how private philanthropic actors could best target their investments to support the setup of effective and sustainable refugee sponsorship programmes. The roadmap begins with recommended investments to support the most important actors in sponsorship programmes—the sponsors themselves—before turning to strategies for supporting the civil-society and government actors involved.

A. Support for sponsors

Sponsors are the lynchpin in any sponsorship programme, and the sustainability of such programmes rests, largely, on their willingness to participate and their ability to carry out their responsibilities. Yet enabling private individuals and community groups to take up responsibilities that have traditionally been the domain of professional service providers is a sizeable task—and one that is well out of the comfort zone of many governments and their civil-society partners. Predictably, it is also an area where many new and established programmes have struggled.

Support mechanisms for sponsors thus form the most critical investment need globally, though they have seen limited investment to date. This includes a need for guidance to help programme designers and managers understand how to establish a successful sponsor support infrastructure (capacity building), but also for assistance to help national and local actors implement and operate these mechanisms. Sponsor support is a time- and resource-intensive task, and the funding and staff to provide such support often do not exist, particularly at the local level. In the United States, for example, the federal funds provided to refugee resettlement agencies does not include any funding for volunteer or sponsor coordination or community engagement, and local agencies thus often lack the resources to support these activities.²⁹

Private funding could be used to support sponsors in four ways:

1. Develop information materials and trainings

Private funding can support the development of materials and training curricula that provide critical information and

skills to sponsors. Training should cover the obligations sponsors will be taking on; the rights and resources available to the refugees they are sponsoring; and how to foster strong refugee-sponsor relationships.

To support such training and knowledge building, private philanthropy can invest in the creation of products and initiatives including:

- ▶ **Written information.** Such documents could outline sponsors' and refugees' basic rights and responsibilities, available services, and support resources, to be provided through web portals, brochures, posters, or handbooks. They should be developed in partnership with relevant governmental agencies to ensure the information is accurate and thorough.
- ▶ **Sponsor training curricula.** The civil-society organisations overseeing and training individual sponsor groups can adapt the standard curricula, which should provide guidance on what topics to cover, how to make the training memorable and engaging, and how best to convey difficult concepts (such as cultural difference).
- ▶ **In-person training.** These sessions could be used to foster deeper understanding of particularly challenging concepts such as intercultural communication through activities such as role playing). They also present an opportunity to build local networks that sponsors will need to draw on to fulfil their commitments (e.g., connections to local service providers and other sponsors).
- ▶ **Online training resources.** Videos, interactive webinars, and other online tools could cover information about the various stages of the sponsorship process. These may be particularly useful in countries where refugees are being sponsored in more remote or rural areas as the distance could make it difficult and expensive to hold in-person training.

Many training resources will need to be context specific, and thus developed and implemented at the national or even the subnational or local level to ensure the information provided is accurate and targeted enough to be of use to sponsors. But some more general materials could be developed for use across national contexts, including on the basics of concepts such as 'who is a refugee', information on refugees' countries of origin and cultural backgrounds, or even the basics of cross-cultural communication and understanding. Developing common training materials on these topics in multiple languages that can be adapted and disseminated across different sponsorship countries

may help to improve the range of supports that civil-society organisations are able to offer to refugees' sponsors.

2. Support the setup and operation of hotlines and central contact points

It is important for both sponsors and refugees to have a known and trusted point of contact who can provide them with reliable guidance, particularly regarding legal or financial matters. Without a central and authoritative source of information, sponsors may turn to less reliable sources that may provide false or misleading information.³⁰ For this reason, some sponsorship programmes have created a central contact point, help desk, or hotline that sponsors can call to ask questions. Central information sources should also be made accessible to refugees, with staff prepared to address their concerns and offer support in multiple languages. One such resource could be found in Portugal, where the High Commissioner for Migration operated a 24-hour phone line to answer questions from both sponsors and refugees.³¹ Private funding could be instrumental in setting up such hotlines where they do not already exist or helping to continue or expand the reach of existing hotlines.

3. Create sponsor networks for emotional support and peer learning

In addition to formal training, sponsors can benefit from opportunities to connect with and learn from their peers. Formal mentoring between experienced and new sponsors could help sponsors to better understand their roles and provide guidance and support when unexpected challenges arise. While mentorship pairings are likely to be the most successful when they involve sponsors operating in similar contexts,³² for programmes testing sponsorship for the first time, pairing new sponsors with mentors in experienced sponsorship countries could also be helpful. Formal conferences or convenings for sponsors at a national or regional level, supported by private funders, could be another way for sponsors to share best practices and lessons learned.

Informal networks between sponsors can prove equally beneficial. Sponsorship can be an emotionally exhausting endeavour, and sponsor 'burnout' is a very real risk. Informal gatherings where sponsors can share their experiences are a critical source of psychological and emotional support. These gatherings are most effective when organised at a local level.³³ Investments in these sorts of informal activities carry a very low cost—perhaps as simple as rent-

ing a room and providing refreshments—but they can have tremendous payoff in terms of the support they provide sponsors.

4. Fund sponsorship safety nets

Occasionally, sponsorship relationships do fail, and when they do, mechanisms need to be in place to ensure refugees get the support they need and to reduce the liability for sponsors.³⁴ One option would be to create a central fund that could be tapped into in cases where sponsorships break down. Such a fund would be particularly important in places such as South America, where there are few public social safety nets that refugees can turn to if sponsors are no longer able to help them. Where the central government is not able or willing to create such a fund itself, private philanthropy could step in. Such funds would need to be established at the national or, at most, regional level and could help refugees cover basic living expenses, such as rent.

B. Support for civil-society organisations

Civil-society organisations take on a critical role in sponsorship programmes. In addition to being the actors most often responsible for directly overseeing sponsors, governments frequently seek them out as partners to ensure that programmes are designed in a way that fits sponsors' capacity and meets refugees' needs. Civil-society organisations are not always prepared or equipped to take on these roles, however, particularly in countries where the government has traditionally been responsible for most direct service provision in resettlement programmes (such as in northern Europe). And even in places where civil society is used to managing service provision, community engagement and sponsor support efforts may be new terrain. Or, such organisations may be insufficiently resourced to perform these tasks effectively.

Private funders may therefore consider investing in the following areas:

- ▶ **Training on outreach and relationship building.** Organisations that seek to partner with governments to create sponsorship programmes could benefit from such support, particularly during the critical initial phase of programme development when civil society and governments are setting the parameters of their working relationships and developing trust. Peer sup-

port for such organisations through mentorship, study visits, or convenings with more experienced actors in other countries would be helpful to pass along lessons learned in how to work collaboratively with government.

- ▶ **National support platforms or civil-society networks.** These could coordinate the work of organisations overseeing sponsors and facilitate communication between civil society and the government. Their specific functions may vary, but such platforms could directly provide or facilitate sponsor training on behalf of member organisations (by providing training curricula and materials); train member organisations on how to recruit and manage sponsors, public communications, and advocacy; assist with monitoring of sponsorship relationships and conducting independent programme evaluations; and consult with government on programme design and implementation. Coordination platforms in some countries are supported by the national government (such as the Sponsorship Agreement Holders Council in Canada and Reset in the United Kingdom), but others rely on private funding (such as NesT in Germany).
- ▶ **Training on strategic communication and community engagement.** Encouraging local buy-in is essential to the success and sustainability of sponsorship programmes. Civil-society organisations are not always equipped to effectively engage in strategic communication or build local coalitions in support of sponsorship programmes. This is particularly likely to be the case where these organisations are used to a more operational role. Formal training, peer support, or mentorship could help them adapt, and such activities could be funded through a national or international support platform.
- ▶ **Support for civil society during the programme design phase.** Civil-society organisations play a critical role in the design of sponsorship programmes and should be able to act as partners to government in this undertaking (or, indeed, take a leading role in programme design, as is happening in New Zealand).³⁵ However, doing so can take significant amounts of staff time and resource. Grants to cover the time an organisation spends developing a workable programme model can be instrumental in catalysing a new sponsorship programme. In the United Kingdom, such a grant allowed a group of civil-society organisations to devote several months to the development of a fully fledged sponsorship model that informed the design of the country's programme.

► **Funding for monitoring and evaluation.** This type of support would build knowledge about sponsorship programme operations and impact as part of or in addition to government monitoring. Civil-society organisations may be in a position to gather data more effectively on certain programme elements, such as impact on sponsors and communities, and support from private funders can enable them to do so. External actors, such as universities and research institutes, could also be involved in monitoring and evaluating sponsorship programmes. For example, in the United Kingdom, the government focuses on collecting primarily quantitative data, while Reset, in collaboration with the University of Birmingham, uses qualitative indicators and collects personal stories in order to allow for a more holistic understanding of how sponsored refugees fare and why.³⁶

C. Support for governments

Sponsorship initiatives are impossible without the buy-in of government actors and a well-designed legal and policy framework. In addition to giving the programme their blessing and establishing its legal mandate, governments must carry out critical tasks such as processing refugees' applications and granting them admission and legal status, overseeing the programme to ensure that refugees are not exploited or neglected, and evaluating the programme's results. Efforts to encourage governments' political and financial support for refugee sponsorship have already received substantial investment.³⁷ But even so, there remain a few areas where additional support from private funders may be valuable.

► **Extending peer-support networks for government officials.** The number of countries with refugee sponsorship programmes continues to grow and expand to include an increasingly diverse range of states. Previous research on peer-support mechanisms for countries engaged in refugee resettlement has shown that matching government representatives who operate in similar contexts is important to the success of such efforts.³⁸ With this in mind, private funders may wish to back the growth of peer-support networks involving countries with similar social service systems and resettlement histories.

► **Developing information and resources to inform programme design.** Doing so could help governments interested in setting up sponsorship programmes, as well as those looking to refine existing programmes. And as new programmes emerge in the United King-

dom, New Zealand, Germany, and elsewhere, there will also be value in updating and expanding existing handbooks and guidance materials to reflect information from these new contexts.³⁹

► **Ensuring research, monitoring, and evaluation capacities.** Without evidence that their programmes work, governments may not be able to generate the political will to sustain investment in refugee sponsorship or convert pilot initiatives into permanent pathways. Similarly, without early warning that a programme is faltering in a particular area, the success of the entire initiative could be jeopardised. Governments have long struggled to successfully monitor and evaluate traditional resettlement programmes, and sponsorship programmes present an even greater challenge due to their multi-stakeholder design.⁴⁰ Private philanthropy could further monitoring and evaluation in two ways: by supporting capacity building for governments to learn to effectively monitor and evaluate their own programmes; or, where governments are unable to conduct effective evaluations themselves, by funding private research institutes to evaluate programmes independently.

V. CONCLUSION

Around the world, refugee resettlement infrastructure is in urgent need of investment, both to fortify existing protection channels and to expand resettlement to meet growing needs. By involving private citizens more directly in refugee reception and integration, sponsorship holds the promise to improve public support for resettlement and allow countries to expand their resettlement commitments. This community-based approach to refugee protection is at a critical moment. An increasing number of countries have adopted or are considering sponsorship models, but such programmes need careful planning and sufficient investment in order to succeed.

Private philanthropic organisations can play a crucial role in supporting the development of sustainable refugee sponsorship programmes. While private efforts to date have focused primarily, and with great successes, on generating new interest in sponsorship globally and in supporting the development of policy frameworks nationally, there is a need for greater investment in the broader infrastructure required to implement such programmes at the national and local levels.

To have maximum impact, private funders may wish to consider four guiding principles:

- ▶ ***Stay flexible and tailor investments in sponsorship based on the national context.*** There is no one-size-fits-all model for refugee sponsorship, and indeed, a fully fledged sponsorship programme may simply not be possible in all contexts. Rather, it will be important to look for effective ways to bring the main added value of sponsorship—community engagement in welcoming refugees—to a country’s resettlement programme, even if this means investing in programmes that do not look like traditional sponsorship.
- ▶ ***Consider broader, non-sponsorship capacity and needs when choosing where to invest.*** The success of sponsorship programmes depends not just on programme infrastructure, but also on the wider integration and service infrastructure on which refugees will depend, in addition to the support of their sponsors. In some contexts, such as South America, this infrastructure does not exist or is rudimentary. This creates risks for sponsorship efforts (and indeed, it has hindered past efforts to create resettlement programmes in such areas). In countries where broader governance or service capacity is lacking, philanthropic investments could productively support initiatives such as safety-net funds for refugees who face unexpected needs, or efforts to build up a broader integration service infrastructure.
- ▶ ***In challenging political climates, look for alternative ways to support sponsorship.*** Where the political climate is not conducive to launching a refugee sponsorship programme in the short term, funders may be able to support a community-based approach

to refugee protection in other ways. Local pilot programmes that create sponsor-like relationships for refugees who are already in the country—either having claimed asylum after arrival or having arrived via government-supported resettlement. Such pilot initiatives can build knowledge and capacity among civil-society actors, test aspects of a sponsorship model, and demonstrate the value of community involvement.⁴¹ Depending on the political context, philanthropic organisations could also consider supporting efforts to productively engage with opposition political leaders, who may be willing to introduce policies more favourable to sponsorship if they take office in the future.

- ▶ ***Don’t neglect the needs of existing sponsorship programmes.*** While supporting the creation of new sponsorship initiatives has attracted a great deal of attention and investment, sponsorship efforts in Canada and co-sponsorship arrangements in the United States face important funding and capacity gaps, particularly at the local level. These countries have historically taken in more than half of refugees resettled worldwide, though the U.S. share has shrunk with the downsizing of its resettlement programme since 2017.⁴² Fortifying these resettlement and sponsorship programmes should be a top priority, alongside the creation of new sponsorship opportunities.

As displacement trends and the needs of both existing and emerging refugee sponsorship schemes continue to evolve, private philanthropy can provide critical support for sponsors, civil-society organisations, and government actors. Their investments, if strategically targeted and attuned to the national context, can make a difference for the quality and sustainability of sponsorship programmes.

APPENDIX

Table A-1. Refugee sponsorship programmes, by country

Country	Programme name or type	Description	Scale (admissions to date or quota)	Years of operation
Argentina	Humanitarian visa programme for Syrian refugees, involving private and community sponsorship	A group of three individuals or a sponsoring organisation (such as a local government, NGO, or religious organisation) may sponsor refugees for admission on humanitarian visas, with a commitment to provide settlement and integration support after arrival.	443 Syrian refugees sponsored	2014 as family reunification/ sponsorship programme; 2015 as family reunification and private sponsorship programme; 2016-present as family reunification, private sponsorship, and community sponsorship programme
Australia	Community Support Programme (CSP; previously, Community Proposal Pilot) under the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme (RHP)	Australian sponsors, recognised by an Approved Proposing Organisation, can either name or be matched with a refugee to support.	326 refugees sponsored in 2017–18; annual quota of 1,000 for community sponsored refugees under the overall national RHP quota	2013–17 (Pilot); 2017–present (CSP)
Belgium	Humanitarian corridor programme	Local NGOs and faith-based groups name refugees and organise their transfer to and reception in Belgium.	Quota of 150 Syrian refugees from Lebanon and Turkey	2017–18
Canada	Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program	Sponsorship Agreement Holders, civil-society organisations, or groups of five sponsors nominate refugees and support them after admission.	18,077 refugees sponsored in 2017; more than 288,000 since 1978	1978–present
France	Humanitarian corridor programme	Civil-society and faith-based organisations name beneficiaries with family or social links to France and support them after arrival.	Quota of 500 refugees from Syria or Iraq; 129 refugees admitted by July 2018.	2017–present
Germany	Neustart im Team (NesT; Community sponsorship programme)	With the support of a network of civil-society actors, sponsoring organisations and recognised groups of five individual sponsors are matched with refugees under Germany's resettlement quota.	Quota of 500 refugees in 2019	2019–present
Ireland	Community Sponsorship Ireland under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme	Groups of five who register with a local refugee support organisation are matched with refugees admitted under Ireland's resettlement quota.	Applications accepted on a rolling basis, beginning in August 2019	2019–present
Italy	Humanitarian corridor programme	A coalition of approved faith-based NGOs identify refugees for admission and organise their transfer to and reception in Italy.	Quota of 1,500 refugees from Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan	2015–present

Table A-1. Refugee sponsorship programmes, by country (cont.)

Country	Programme name or type	Description	Scale (admissions to date or quota)	Years of operation
New Zealand	Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category Pilot Programme	Four approved community organisations were matched with resettled refugees to support after arrival.	23 refugees from 6 families	2017–18
Spain	Basque community sponsorship programme	Recognised community organisations are matched with Syrian refugee families under Spain's resettlement quota.	29 refugees in six families admitted to date	2019–present
United Kingdom	Community Sponsorship (under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme)	Recognised community groups, sponsors, and sponsoring organisations are matched with refugees under the UK resettlement quota.	More than 200 refugees by the end of 2018	2016–present
United States	Co-sponsorship (under the mainstream resettlement system)	Recognised voluntary agencies sponsor resettled refugees. Some agencies work with local community groups, such as churches, to provide additional sponsorship-like support.	N/A	1975–present (traditional resettlement)

IOM = International Organisation for Migration; NGO = nongovernmental organisation; UNHCR = UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Sources: Sponsor Refugees, 'The Story of Community Sponsorship in the UK', accessed 22 November 2019, www.sponsorrefugees.org/the_story; UK Home Office, 'Apply for Community Sponsorship', updated 25 July 2019, www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship; Irish Department of Justice and Equality, *Community Sponsorship Ireland: Initial Policy Framework* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 2019), <http://integration.ie/en/ISEC/Community%20Sponsorship%20Policy%20Framework%20WEB.pdf/Files/Community%20Sponsorship%20Policy%20Framework%20WEB.pdf>; UK Home Office, 'Community Sponsorship Scheme Launched for Refugees in the UK', updated 19 July 2016, www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk; German Ministry of the Interior, 'Einladung: Pilotprogramm "Neustart im Team (NesT)"', updated 6 May 2019, www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/termine/DE/pressetermine/pilotprogramm-NesT.html; UNHCR, 'Arranca en España el primer programa de patrocinio comunitario con seis familias refugiadas sirias', updated 29 March 2019, www.acnur.org/noticias/noticia/2019/3/5c9e2a604/arranca-en-espana-el-primer-programa-de-patrocinio-comunitario-con-seis.html; Settlement Services International, 'SSI News Blog, Community Support Program', accessed 22 November 2019, www.ssi.org.au/36-services/1293-community-support-program; New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, 'Amendments to the Immigration New Zealand Operational Manual' (Amendment Circular No. 2017/14, 21 December 2017), www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/amendment-circulars/amendment-circular-2017-14.pdf; Argentine National Directorate of Migration, 'Disposición 4683/2016' (provision, Buenos Aires, 5 September 2016), www.refworld.org/es/pdfid/5a8de1c34.pdf; Argentine National Directorate of Migration, 'Disposición 1025/2019' (provision, Buenos Aires, 27 February 2019), www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/disposicion_1025_2019_0.pdf; Argentine National Directorate of Migration, 'Estadísticas Programa Siria' (fact sheet, Buenos Aires, 2019), www.migraciones.gov.ar/pdf/programasiria/estadisticas-programasiria-dnm-nuevo.pdf; International Catholic Migration Commission Europe, IOM, and UNHCR, *Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement* (Brussels: European Resettlement Network+, 2017), <https://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/ERN%2B%20Private%20Sponsorship%20in%20Europe%20-%20Expanding%20complementary%20pathways%20for%20refugee%20resettlement.pdf>; Hiram Ruiz, *Evaluación de Programas de Reasentamiento en Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay y Uruguay* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), 28, www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2016/10252.pdf; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 'Table 4: New Permanent Residents Admitted in 2017', updated 31 October 2018, www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/annual-report-parliament-immigration-2018/new-permanent-residents-admitted.html; Jennifer Hyndman, William Payne, and Shauna Jimenez, *The State of Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: Trends, Issues, and Impacts* (Toronto: York University, 2016), https://refugeereseach.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/hyndman_feb%20%80%9917.pdf; Refugee Council USA, 'Resettlement Process', accessed 1 December 2019, <https://rcusa.org/resettlement/resettlement-process/>; ICF and Migration Policy Institute Europe, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes as a Possible Pathway to Safe Channels for Admission to the EU, Including Resettlement* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 2018), <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1dbb0873-d349-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-77978210>; Sant'Egidio, 'Des réfugiés syriens arrivent en Belgique par des couloirs humanitaires', updated 22 September 2018, www.santegidio.be/fr/29-refugies-syriens-arrivent-en-belgique-par-des-couloirs-humanitaires/.

ENDNOTES

- 1 According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of mid-2018, more people had sought refuge outside their home countries than at any point in the last 30 years—and this figure does not include the significant number of people displaced by the crisis in Venezuela since mid-2018. See UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends 2018* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019), www.unhcr.org/en-us/statistics/unhcrstats/5c52ea084/mid-year-trends-2018.html.
- 2 UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends 2018*.
- 3 Such pathways provide regular avenues for refugees to access protection in a destination country and complement traditional refugee resettlement schemes. Among others, complementary pathways may include refugee sponsorship schemes, labour mobility schemes, study mobility programmes, family reunification channels, humanitarian visa, or humanitarian admission programmes. See UNHCR, ‘Complementary Pathways for Admission to Third Countries’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.unhcr.org/complementary-pathways.html.
- 4 The Belgian government ran a pilot refugee sponsorship programme in 2017–18 for 150 persons from Lebanon and Turkey, who entered Belgium on a humanitarian visa. At the time of writing, the possibility of adding a community sponsorship component to the Belgian resettlement programme was being examined. Author email exchange with a Belgian government official, 21 November 2019.
- 5 In the United States, refugees must be formally sponsored by a recognised voluntary agency (or ‘volag’) in order to receive admission. The purpose of these agencies is to provide refugees with certain minimum benefits and services, and they receive a small amount of financial support from the federal government to do so (USD 2,125 per refugee in 2018). How these services are provided is largely left up to each agency; while most agencies employ professional case workers to assist arriving refugees, several have also employed a ‘co-sponsorship’ model that pairs refugees with local community groups, often church congregations, to provide orientation and additional support over and above federal funding. For more information, see Refugee Council USA, ‘Resettlement Process’, accessed 21 November 2019, <https://rcusa.org/resettlement/resettlement-process/>; Priscilla Alvarez, ‘America’s System for Resettling Refugees Is Collapsing’, *The Atlantic*, 9 September 2018, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/09/refugee-admissions-trump/569641/; Matthew La Corte, ‘The Case for Expanding Community Sponsorship for Refugees’, Niskanen Center, 19 November 2018, <https://niskanencenter.org/blog/the-case-for-expanding-community-sponsorship-of-refugees/>.
- 6 For a more in-depth discussion of sponsorship and the forms it can take, see ICF and Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes as a Possible Pathway to Safe Channels for Admission to the EU, Including Resettlement* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 2018), 28, <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1dbb0873-d349-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-77978210>; Susan Fratzke, *Engaging Communities in Refugee Protection: The Potential of Private Sponsorship in Europe* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/engaging-communities-refugee-protection-potential-private-sponsorship-europe; Judith Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2015), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european.
- 7 Jennifer Hyndman, William Payne, and Shauna Jimenez, ‘The State of Private Refugee Sponsorship in Canada: Trends, Issues, and Impacts’ (policy brief, York University Center for Refugee Studies, Toronto, December 2, 2016), http://refugeeresearch.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/hyndman_feb%E2%80%9917.pdf.
- 8 Government of Australia, Department of Home Affairs, Immigration and Citizenship, ‘Community Support Program (CSP) – Eligibility’, updated 17 January 2019, <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/refugee-and-humanitarian-program/community-support-program/how-to-apply>.
- 9 The Assurance of Support provision was an addition made during the transition from the Community Proposer Pilot (which ran from 2013 to 2017) to the current Community Support Programme when it was discovered that a high number of refugees were accessing social assistance. Author interview with a representative of the Humanitarian and International Protection Policy Section, Immigration and Citizenship Policy Division, Australian Department of Home Affairs, 20 March 2018. See also Australian Department of Home Affairs, ‘Community Support Program (CSP)—How You Can Help’, accessed 21 November 2019, <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/refugee-and-humanitarian-program/community-support-program/how-can-you-help>.
- 10 The UK Home Office announced in June 2019 that its community sponsorship programme would become a permanent part of the government’s resettlement commitment starting in 2020. See UK Home Office, ‘New Global Resettlement Scheme for the Most Vulnerable Refugees Announced’ (news release, UK Home Office, London, 17 June 2019), www.gov.uk/government/news/new-global-resettlement-scheme-for-the-most-vulnerable-refugees-announced.
- 11 See Nicholas Keung, ‘How Alan Kurdi’s Tragic Death Changed Thousands of Lives’, *The Toronto Star*, 1 September 2016, www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2016/09/01/how-alan-kurdis-tragic-death-changed-thousands-of-lives.html.

- 12 Participant comments at the conference ‘Resettlement und komplementäre Zugangswege: Neue Wege—neue Länder’, Caritas and UNHCR Germany, Frankfurt, 13–14 May 2019.
- 13 Author interview with the Director of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme, Department of Justice and Equality, April 2018.
- 14 ICF and MPIE, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*, 75.
- 15 Author interview with a Dutch government official, March 2018.
- 16 UK Home Office, ‘New Global Resettlement Scheme’.
- 17 See ICF and MPI Europe, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*; Kumin, *Welcoming Engagement*; Fratzke, *Engaging Communities in Refugee Protection*.
- 18 Author email communication with an official in the Immigration Law Division, German Federal Ministry of the Interior, April 2016.
- 19 Reset, ‘About Us’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.resetuk.org/about.
- 20 Refugee 613, ‘About Refugee 613’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.refugee613.ca/pages/about-refugee-613.
- 21 In Canada, the Ottawa-based community group Refugee 613 created a WhatsApp group that allows refugees and sponsors to submit questions in English or Arabic to staff at Refugee 613 and the local YMCA-YWCA Newcomer Information Centre. See Refugee 613, ‘Settlement Information on Your Phone! Refugee613’, accessed 18 January 2019, www.refugee613.ca/pages/coming-soon.
- 22 Where it is done, monitoring usually entails site visits and periodic interviews with refugees and sponsors over the course of the sponsorship arrangement. These are sometimes done by government authorities, and other times by a civil-society group. In Portugal, the Refugee Support Platform (PAR), a civil-society platform mandated by the government to oversee local sponsorship groups, conducts regular visits with refugees in their homes to ensure that they are receiving sufficient support. See Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados, ‘Vemos, ouvimos e lemos. Não podemos ignorar’, accessed 21 February 2019, www.refugiados.pt/.
- 23 See Hiram Ruiz, *Evaluación de Programas de Reasentamiento en Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Paraguay y Uruguay* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2015), 28, www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2016/10252.pdf. See also Marcia Vera Espinoza, ‘The Limits and Opportunities of Regional Solidarity: Exploring Refugee Resettlement in Brazil and Chile’, *Global Policy* 9, no. 1 (2018): 91–92.
- 24 Reset, ‘Advice and Support’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.resetuk.org/community-sponsorship/support.
- 25 Reset, ‘Reset: Communities and Refugees’, accessed 15 July 2019, www.resetuk.org/.
- 26 Participant comments during the closed-door roundtable ‘Strengthening the Foundation for Community-Based Refugee Sponsorship in Europe’, organised by MPI Europe in collaboration with the European Asylum Support Office and the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, Brussels, 25–26 February 2019. The Neustart im Team (NesT) platform is funded by Bertelsmann AG.
- 27 Information collected in March 2018 through interviews with representatives of national authorities in Germany and Ireland. See also ICF and MPIE, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*.
- 28 Participant comments during the roundtable ‘Strengthening the Foundation for Community-Based Refugee Sponsorship in Europe’.
- 29 Susan Fratzke and Emma Dorst, *Volunteers and Sponsors: A Catalyst for Refugee Integration?* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2019), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/volunteers-sponsors-refugee-integration.
- 30 In Germany, for example, the lack of a central source for information led to several cases of sponsors receiving incorrect information about the duration of their obligations or their legal liability for the sponsored refugees. Interview with a representative of the Ministry of Interior of Hamburg, Germany, March 2018. See also ICF and MPIE, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*.
- 31 This hotline was part of the Portuguese sponsorship scheme that was operated in the context of the intra-EU relocation scheme, which officially concluded at the end of 2017. Interview with an official of the Portuguese High Commissioner of Migration, March 2018. See also ICF and MPIE, *Study on the Feasibility and Added Value of Sponsorship Schemes*.
- 32 Previous research on peer support and mentorship programmes in the context of resettlement, for example, has found that carefully matching mentor and mentee resettlement programmes—with consideration given to factors such as programme design and level of experience—is critical to the success of these initiatives. See Hanne Beirens and Aliyyah Ahad, *Scaling up Refugee Resettlement in Europe: The Role of Institutional Peer Support* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2018), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/scaling-refugee-resettlement-europe-role-institutional-peer-support.
- 33 In Toronto, for example, the Together Project, a local sponsor support and training group, brings together sponsors once a month for informal meetings, which the group describes as having been highly successful in supporting sponsors’ wellbeing. For information about this group, see Together Project, ‘About Us’, accessed 21 November 2019, <https://togetherproject.ca/about-us/>.
- 34 In Germany, for example, sponsors under the previous Humanitarian Admission Programme remained legally liable for sponsored refugees for five years, even if their financial circumstances left them unable to fulfil their responsibilities. Some sponsors, many of whom had come to Germany as refugees themselves, became indebted to the state as a result. See Christoph Tometten, ‘Resettlement, Humanitarian Admission, and Family Reunion: The Intricacies of Germany’s Legal Entry Regimes for Syrian Refugees’, *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2018): 1–17; Marcus Engler, *Sicherer Zugang: Die humanitären Aufnahmeprogramme für syrische Flüchtlinge in Deutschland* (Berlin: Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration, 2015), www.svr-migration.de/publikationen/sicherer-zugang/.

- 35 In August 2018, New Zealand’s minister of immigration reached out to civil-society organisations and sponsor groups seeking feedback on the Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) programme and recommendations for converting the pilot into a permanent resettlement pathway. For more information on this process, see South West Baptist Church, ‘Resettlement Programme’, accessed 12 February 2019, www.swbc.org.nz/community/resettlement-programme/; Core Community Partnership, ‘Proposal to Confirm Community Sponsorship as a Permanent Pathway for Resettlement’ (proposal to Minister of Immigration Iain Lees-Galloway, n.p., 12 November 2018), www.swbc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/20181112-Community-Sponsorship-Proposal.pdf.
- 36 University of Birmingham, ‘Community Sponsorship Evaluation (UK)’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/superdiversity-institute/community-sponsorship-evaluation/index.aspx.
- 37 The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, for example, has been extensively engaged in reaching out to governments globally to promote refugee sponsorship programmes.
- 38 See Beirens and Ahad, *Scaling up Refugee Resettlement in Europe*.
- 39 NesT, ‘Downloads’, accessed 21 November 2019, www.neustartimteam.de/downloads/; Reset, ‘Advice and Support’.
- 40 Hanne Beirens and Susan Fratzke, *Taking Stock of Refugee Resettlement: Policy Objectives, Practical Tradeoffs, and the Evidence Base* (Brussels: MPI Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/taking-stock-refugee-resettlement-policy-objectives-practical-tradeoffs-and-evidence-base.
- 41 In Brazil, for example, although there is no formal private sponsorship programme, the government has implemented some elements of such a programme by working with churches, nongovernmental organisations, and businesses to foster the integration of Venezuelan migrants and asylum seekers, who are being relocated from communities near the border to regions across the country. Participating organisations shelter the Venezuelans for a certain period of time and help them find employment. The initiative, which started in April 2018 as a small, informal arrangement, has quickly been scaling up; the government has also developed a legal framework to support the operation. Author interview with Public Policy and Government Management Specialist, National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) Brazil, 17 January 2019.
- 42 Jynnah Radford and Phillip Connor, ‘Canada Now Leads the World in Refugee Resettlement, Surpassing the U.S.’, Pew Research Center, 19 June 2019, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/19/canada-now-leads-the-world-in-refugee-resettlement-surpassing-the-u-s/.

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Ms. Kainz holds a master's degree in refugee and forced migration studies, with distinction, from the University of Oxford, where she specialised in protection gaps and global refugee and migration governance. She received a bachelor's degree in Scandinavian studies and political science, magna cum laude, from Humboldt University Berlin. She also spent two years studying at the University of Malmö as well as the University of Gothenburg, and completed intensive language courses in Arabic and Persian.

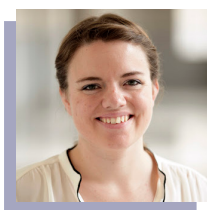


Hanne Beirens is Director of MPI Europe. She specialises in EU policies related to asylum and migration, human trafficking, labour migration, and youth.

Prior to joining MPI as Associate Director in 2015, Dr. Beirens worked as a Lead Managing Consultant for ICF Consulting, where she focused on impact assessments, feasibility studies, and evaluations for the European Commission, with a particular focus on EU asylum and migration policy, as well as developing products within the European Migration Network (EMN), including pan-European studies and the EMN annual report. Topics covered include reception facilities for asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, and non-EU harmonised protection statuses.

Earlier, Dr. Beirens worked as a Research Fellow at the Institute for Applied Social Studies of the University of Birmingham, evaluating services, organisations, and community-based initiatives pursuing the integration of asylum seekers, refugees, and third-country nationals. She also has worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and as an independent consultant for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO).

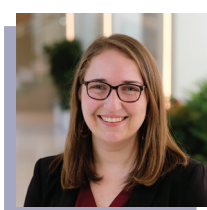
She holds a master's degree in race and ethnic relations (with distinction) and a PhD in sociology and ethnic relations on the participation of minors in armed conflict, both from the University of Warwick (UK).



Emma Dorst is the Network Relationships Coordinator at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, where she provides support for local resettlement agencies and the communities they serve.

Ms. Dorst has collaborated with MPI's International Programme since 2015, supporting projects related to asylum and resettlement policies. She previously served as a Grant Writer and Communications Coordinator for the International Partnership for Human Rights in Belgium and Ukraine, before joining the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC.

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

She has interned with MPI, the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition, the Ohio Commission on Hispanic and Latino Affairs, and the Center for Democracy in the Americas.

Ms. Bolter holds a bachelor's degree in American studies and Spanish area studies from Kenyon College, where she focused on relations between the United States and Latin America.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank Migration Policy Institute Europe intern Maria Gargano for her excellent research support and Lauren Shaw for her invaluable support in editing this policy brief.

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Design: April Siruno, MPI
Layout: Liz Heimann

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Suggested citation: Fratzke, Susan, Lena Kainz, Hanne Beirens, Emma Dorst, and Jessica Bolter. 2019. *Refugee Sponsorship Programmes: A Global State of Play and Opportunities for Investment*. Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe.

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