
PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PREDEPARTURE ORIENTATION FOR RESETTLING REFUGEES



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May 2019



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was commissioned as part of the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project. The project is financed by the European Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) and led by Sweden. Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are partner countries. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

The authors thank Migration Policy Institute Europe colleagues Timo Schmidt, for his excellent assistance with the graphics for this report, and Hanne Beirens, for her invaluable comments and feedback. In addition, the authors thank the following interviewees for sharing their time, insights, and comments over the course of the project: Sanja Alikalfic, Kofi Amankwah, Crina Antea, Louise Bélanger, Katharina Benedetter, Luis Bernardo, Karen Clark-Verbisky, Rosa-Lie Craps, Jo De Backer, Ariane den Uyl, Dmytro Dmytrenko, Rob Dubbelman, Philipp Freudenthaler, Stephany Hardy, Maija Heinilä, Elisabeth Hochenegger, Caroline Jennewein, Rachel Kidd, Yusuf Koroglu, Barbara Kurz, Geertrui Lanneau, Laura Leino, Caroline Liebenberg, João Lima, Marjo Mäkelä, Lubna Makhoul, Vinciane Masurelle, Lauren Messing, Rachel O'Connor, William Kweku Paintsil, Katherine Rehberg, Nicolien Rengers, Antonette Reuser, Jaana Suokonautio, Terhi Tuominen, Constança Turquin, Lisette van de Gazelle, Hanna Viljamaa, Maria Voica, and Sarah Ward.

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Cover Design: Danielle Tinker, MPI
Layout: Liz Heimann

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Suggested citation: Fratzke, Susan and Lena Kainz. 2019. *Preparing for the Unknown: Designing effective predeparture orientation for resettling refugees*. Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Moving to a new country can be both an exciting and, often, incredibly stressful experience. While migration presents the opportunity to build a new life—and in some cases, to benefit from different educational or work opportunities or to find new friends—newcomers must also learn to navigate public-service bureaucracy and unfamiliar social situations. Perhaps hardest of all, migration can mean being separated from valued friends and family. For refugees resettling to a new country, these challenges may be amplified by a lack of familiarity with basic features of life in a high-income country (such as how to use a bankcard), limited or disrupted education, and mental or physical health issues. Moreover, refugees generally have little choice regarding where they will settle, which can contribute to a feeling of powerlessness or apprehensiveness about life after resettlement.

Predeparture orientation programmes, also referred to as cultural orientation, are intended to build refugees' confidence and feelings of control, as well as their ability to cope with unfamiliar situations and to navigate everyday life in the resettlement country. Orientation programmes also aim to help refugees develop realistic expectations of life after resettlement and understand what will be expected of them after arrival. Having the knowledge and skills to navigate the resettlement process confidently is crucial to ease their transition into a new community. Evidence from evaluations of predeparture programmes, and insights shared by programme designers, trainers, and service providers in interviews with the authors of this report, suggests that predeparture orientation does, in fact, play an important role in preparing refugees for resettlement. An evaluation of Canada's Syrian resettlement programme, for example, noted that Syrian refugees resettled through the 2015–16 emergency resettlement initiative (who did not receive in-person predeparture orientation due to the truncated timeline of the emergency programme) were less prepared to begin life in Canada, when compared with other refugee groups (who normally receive several days of training).

Predeparture orientation programmes ... are intended to build refugees' confidence and feelings of control, as well as their ability to cope with unfamiliar situations and to navigate everyday life in the resettlement country.

Exactly how predeparture orientation programmes are designed and delivered vary enormously across resettlement states. Some programmes are extremely brief, lasting just a few hours (as Portugal's predeparture programme initially did, though it has been expanded), while others are spread out over several days or even weeks (e.g., those conducted by the Netherlands). Most countries provide orientation during the period between the interview national resettlement agencies conduct to select refugees for resettlement and their departure, but some do a shorter training during the interview or wait to provide nearly all of the orientation until after arrival (as in New Zealand).

The organisations with which countries contract to design and deliver orientation to refugees also vary. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is the primary provider for many countries because of the agency's extensive experience providing predeparture (and postarrival) orientation programmes and their existing operational capacity in many countries of first asylum. However, some countries (such as the Netherlands and Belgium) have opted to deliver most or all of the training themselves because of the value they place on having trainers who are personally familiar with the resettlement country. Other countries have chosen a blended model, wherein government agencies, IOM, and national nonstate actors collaborate on different aspects of programme design and delivery. In Finland, the Finnish Immigration Service has the overall responsibility for the design and management of predeparture orientation, but contracts with IOM Helsinki to implement the orientation in close cooperation with the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak). And in Norway, IOM develops the training and designs the curriculum in partnership with national authorities, and identifies, trains, and employs trainers who live in the resettlement country and have a refugee or immigrant background.

A number of programmatic and context-specific considerations shape a resettlement country's decision of which model to use. Factors such as the amount of time between selection for resettlement and departure, and the financial resources available to support an orientation programme, will likely dictate how long it can be. In countries where it is difficult or dangerous for refugees to travel, orientation may need to take place right after the selection interview or immediately prior to departure. In Turkey, for example, because refugees often need to travel from the far south of the country to Istanbul for their selection interview—and each is required to hold a permit from the Turkish government to do so—many resettlement countries offer their orientation programmes either in conjunction with the interview or just before departure.

Regardless of the exact model, successful orientation programmes share several common features:

- ***The curriculum is intended to build useful skills and positive attitudes, not just to convey information.*** While it may be tempting to use the orientation period to teach refugees as much as possible about the resettlement country, research suggests that it is also important to focus on encouraging refugees to be open to new experiences and motivated to invest in their lives after resettlement. Teaching refugees words and greetings in the resettlement country's language can increase their confidence in their ability to navigate life in their new communities. Likewise, providing them with the skills to cope with unfamiliar social or cultural situations and to avoid or mediate potential conflicts is also valuable.
- ***Orientations are delivered in a credible and accessible manner.*** To avoid miscommunication and ensure that refugees are able to follow the material provided in the orientation, trainers should tailor the information to refugees' specific needs and skills. Orientations should be delivered using a range of instructional techniques to actively engage participants and—either directly as trainers or indirectly via Skype or video testimonies—incorporate the experiences and expertise of previously resettled refugees.
- ***Training occurs in an environment that is free of stress and distractions.*** If participants are stressed, distracted, or uncomfortable, they are likely to benefit less from an orientation. Programme designers and trainers should carefully consider when during the predeparture period to schedule sessions, create a safe and friendly learning environment, and provide child care so parents or older siblings can focus fully on the information and skills being discussed.
- ***Postarrival service providers are actively engaged in the predeparture process.*** Rather than viewing orientation as a one-off exercise prior to departure, policymakers should seek to partner with reception and integration service providers to use this time to learn more about the profiles of resettling refugees and to better prepare for their arrival. While some resettlement states facilitate contact between refugees and municipal representatives via Skype or in person during orientation, others involve predeparture orientation trainers in postarrival integration courses to ensure refugees meet a familiar face after their journey. Postarrival service providers can also share valuable feedback with trainers about how refugees fare in their receiving communities, which can be used to improve future predeparture orientations.
- ***The predeparture period is used to prepare receiving communities as well as resettling refugees.*** Just like refugees, the communities into which they are about to settle have information needs. To better prepare them to welcome newcomers into their midst, some resettlement states organise seminars for municipal employees, neighbours, or entire communities to brief them about the country's resettlement process, the conflict situation or living conditions in refugees' countries of origin, and what information refugees have received prior to departure. Such seminars are also an opportunity to mitigate concerns, clear up questions, and organise volunteer support ahead of refugees' arrival.

Investing in predeparture orientation can bring important benefits to refugees, resettlement programmes, and communities alike. But a word of caution is warranted. With resettlement programmes under intense pressure from policymakers to demonstrate that refugees are integrating into their new communities—and quickly—it may be tempting to look to predeparture orientation as a tool to speed up the integration process. However,

no orientation programme, no matter how effective, will be able to teach refugees everything they need to know about life in a foreign country, or to completely change their attitudes or cultural behaviours, in the space of just a few days. And resettlement programme officials should not expect predeparture orientation to reduce the need for intensive postarrival reception and integration services. What predeparture orientation can provide, however, is the confidence, skills, and information that refugees need to smoothly navigate their first few weeks in the resettlement country—creating a solid foundation upon which reception and integration services can build.

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of moving to and settling in a new country is often challenging and stressful. Newcomers must learn to navigate complex social benefits and service systems, and eventually, find employment and become self-supporting—all while learning to express themselves effectively in a new language. Physically navigating a new city, adapting to a new climate, confronting unfamiliar or even uncomfortable social situations or behaviours, and parting with close family and friends add additional layers of difficulty. These challenges can be compounded for resettling refugees, who may have previously lived in very remote regions or camps, and may thus be unfamiliar with common features of life in a high-income country, such as how to use a bank-card, a microwave, or a metro system. In addition, trauma, family separation, and health issues can limit the resources refugees have to face the extensive emotional, psychological, and intellectual demands that resettlement places upon them.¹ The resulting strain is well documented.²

The form, content, and delivery of predeparture orientation programmes vary substantially depending on the refugees' situation and the resources, constraints, and priorities of the resettlement country.

For policymakers in receiving countries, much of the success of a resettlement programme depends on ensuring that refugees have the knowledge and psychological and emotional resources to acclimate quickly and successfully to their new homes by finding work, learning the language, and forming friendships within their new community. For this reason, many resettlement countries invest in orientation programmes that provide refugees with basic information on how to navigate key aspects of life in their new country, including how to access core services, what rights and benefits they are entitled to, and how to cope with stressful situations and culture shock—and perhaps most importantly, such programmes seek to encourage them to be excited about their journey and motivated to invest in building a new life. This type of training, often referred to as predeparture or cultural orientation,³ can serve a vital role in empowering refugees with the information and skills they need to become part of their new communities.

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- 1 This analysis of the demands and stresses resettlement places on refugees draws on the theory outlined in Dermot Ryan, Barbara Dooley, and Ciarán Benson, 'Theoretical Perspectives on Post-Migration Adaptation and Psychological Well-Being among Refugees: Towards a Resource-Based Model', *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21, no. 1 (2008): 1–18.
 - 2 See, for example, Fredrik Lindencrona, Solvig Ekblad, and Edvard Hauff, 'Mental Health of Recently Resettled Refugees from the Middle East in Sweden: The Impact of Pre-Resettlement Trauma, Resettlement Stress and Capacity to Handle Stress', *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 43, no. 2 (2008): 121–31; Sara Shishehgar et al., 'Health and Socio-Cultural Experiences of Refugee Women: An Integrative Review', *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19, no. 4 (2017): 959–73; Isok Kim, 'Beyond Trauma: Post-Resettlement Factors and Mental Health Outcomes among Latino and Asian Refugees in the United States', *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 18, no. 4 (2016): 740–48.
 - 3 This report uses the term 'predeparture orientation' to refer to orientation and training activities provided to refugees before they travel to the resettlement country. A few resettlement states use other terms; Canada, for example, refers to their trainings as 'Canadian Orientation Abroad' to reflect the government's multicultural approach to immigration policy. Others use the term 'cultural orientation', in reference to the information often provided on the host-country culture.

The form, content, and delivery of predeparture orientation programmes vary substantially depending on the refugees' situation and the resources, constraints, and priorities of the resettlement country. For example, while some countries choose to provide extensive orientation courses to refugees prior to resettlement, often in addition to some form of postarrival orientation and support (e.g., the Netherlands), others primarily invest in orientation activities after refugees have arrived (e.g., New Zealand). Some countries use International Organisation for Migration (IOM) trainers on the ground in first-asylum countries (as Portugal does), while others prefer to have sessions run by trainers from the resettlement country or their own agency staff (e.g., Belgium). And entirely different training models often apply for refugees who are resettled on an emergency basis or without an in-person interview with the resettlement country (e.g., through dossier processing).

This report examines how resettlement countries—in Europe and elsewhere—design and implement predeparture orientation programmes. It begins by setting out the core elements and goals of such programmes, and then provides a roadmap to help policymakers navigate the choices and tradeoffs inherent in designing and implementing them. It draws on interviews with 35 resettlement policymakers, staff of agencies that implement predeparture orientation programmes, and reception and integration service providers in seven case-study countries: Austria, Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Romania.⁴ The report concludes by offering recommendations for the delivery of effective predeparture orientation.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE GOALS OF PREDEPARTURE ORIENTATION

The overarching aim of predeparture orientation programmes is to reduce the stress of resettlement and lay a foundation for integration. To accomplish this, orientation programmes generally operate with several goals in mind. First, programmes seek to inform refugees about what they can expect from the resettlement process and how to navigate it. This may include information on how to pass through customs and passport control, for example, or what registration or documentation processes refugees will need to complete after they arrive in the resettlement country.

Second, most programmes attempt to help refugees develop a realistic picture of what life will be like in their new homes, such as whether they will live in a small town or a large city, what foods will be sold in local supermarkets, what assistance will be available to help them find a job, or how much money they will have to live on each month. Such information can help refugees to feel that they are making an informed decision about their futures, which can have psychological benefits. Studies show that feelings of control and coherence (being able to explain and predict life events) are important when adapting psychologically to a new environment.⁵ Moreover, sharing information about the resettlement country can help to counter the misin-

4 Additional interviews were conducted with resettlement policymakers and practitioners in New Zealand and the United States, as well as with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs and international agencies including the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The authors also conducted an in-person observation of a predeparture orientation training for refugees preparing to be resettled from Uganda to the Netherlands. The seven case-study countries were selected to represent a diverse range of resettlement-country contexts and experience levels, including both countries new to resettlement and those with more established programmes. While two of the countries included in this study are not currently operating resettlement programmes (e.g., Austria and Denmark), it is still possible to draw lessons from these countries' past experiences.

5 See Lindencrona, Ekblad, and Hauff, 'Mental Health of Recently Resettled Refugees from the Middle East in Sweden'.

formation and rumours that are common within communities of refugees waiting to resettle.⁶ In a number of resettlement countries, reception and integration service providers report that refugees regularly arrive without understanding that the level of social support they will receive will be low, that the possibilities to have family members join them will be limited, and that it may take several years for them to find work.⁷ Providing information on these topics prior to resettlement can prevent unrealistic expectations and disappointment.

Finally, some orientation programmes also seek to inform refugees about what will be expected of them as newcomers in the resettlement country. These responsibilities and expectations may be tied closely to the core values of a country, as expressed through its integration policies. The U.S. predeparture orientation programme, for example, places a great deal of emphasis on the expectation that refugees obtain employment and become self-supporting as soon as possible after arrival, a primary goal of the resettlement programme.⁸

Providing information on these topics prior to resettlement can prevent unrealistic expectations and disappointment.

While most predeparture programmes focus on orientation—what refugees need to know and be able to do to ease the initial adjustment process—many resettlement programmes are beginning to consider whether this time could also be used to jumpstart the integration process. The United States and the Netherlands, for example, have invested in expanding language training during the predeparture period. And countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom have begun to explore whether refugees awaiting resettlement could use online services to start credential recognition or job search processes even before they depart.

Even when predeparture orientation is offered in its most basic form, formal evaluations and observations by resettlement officials provide evidence of the importance of this type of programming for refugees' success after arrival. An evaluation of the Canadian emergency resettlement programme for Syrians (2015–16), for example, found that refugees who received only written information about Canada prior to departure arrived without critical information regarding the resettlement process and without an accurate understanding of what

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- 6 Author interview with João Lima, Reception and Integration Specialist, Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal, 8 February 2018; author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, Head of Unit/Programme Coordinator, IOM Norway, 26 February 2018; author interview with Maria Voica, Project Coordinator, IOM Romania, 19 February 2018; author interview with Yusuf Koroglu, Predeparture Orientation Trainer, and Dmytro Dmytrenko, Regional Head of Resettlement and Movements, IOM Turkey, 28 February 2018; author interview with Sanja Alikalfic, Resettlement Officer, UNHCR Turkey, 13 March 2018; author interview with Kofi Amankwah, Director, Department for Settlement and Qualifications, Directorate for Integration and Diversity Norway (IMDi), 1 March 2018; author interview with Laura Leino, Refugee Programs Support, Finnish Red Cross, 5 February 2018; author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala, Uganda, 2–5 April 2018.
- 7 Author interview with Barbara Kurz, Project Manager, Caritas Austria, 17 January 2018; author interview with Laura Leino, Finnish Red Cross; author interview with Terhi Tuominen, Social Worker, City of Tampere, Finland, 27 February 2018; author interview with Lisette van de Gazelle, Policy Officer, Municipality of Sittard-Geleen, the Netherlands, and Rob Dubbelman, Coordinator, Dutch Refugee Council Limburg, 15 February 2018; author interview with Lubna Makhoul, Programme Advisor for Integration Courses, Municipality of Nome, Norway, 27 April 2018; author interview with João Lima, Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal; author interview with Luis Bernardo, Project Officer, Portuguese Refugee Council, 23 March 2018; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 'Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative', updated 21 December 2016, www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/rapid-impact-evaluation-syrian-refugee-initiative.html.
- 8 Author interview with Lauren Messing and Katherine Rehberg, Predeparture Orientation Coordinator and Deputy Director, Church World Service, Resettlement Support Center Africa, 8 May 2018.

their lives would be like in Canada.⁹ And in Austria, an evaluation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of the first two years of the national resettlement programme (2013–14), during which refugees were only given written information, found that refugees themselves believed the information they received prior to departure was insufficient and recommended a more detailed orientation.¹⁰ These and other experiences¹¹ suggest that providing at least some orientation prior to departure is invaluable for resettling refugees.

Longstanding resettlement countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, all provide predeparture orientation to refugees, as do emerging resettlement countries in Asia and Latin America.

In line with these findings, the majority of resettlement countries opt to include orientation in their resettlement processes. Of the 21 European countries that resettled refugees through UNHCR in 2017,¹² 13 provided some form of predeparture orientation.¹³ Globally, longstanding resettlement countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, all provide predeparture orientation to refugees,¹⁴ as do emerging resettlement

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- 9 The Canadian government's Syrian Refugee Initiative ran from 4 November 2015 to 1 March 2016. Because the programme was intended as an emergency evacuation, refugees were only provided with written information on Canada while at the airport prior to departure, instead of the multiday Canadian Orientation Abroad that is usually given to resettling refugees. The written information included a handbook usually given to all immigrants to Canada as well as a self-learning workbook. A rapid impact evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative included service provider observations of how prepared Syrian refugees were at arrival, as compared with refugees who received the full orientation. The evaluation recommended that a full orientation always be given in the future, even if it delays resettlement departure. See Government of Canada, 'Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative'.
- 10 In the first Austrian resettlement programme, refugees were given written information prior to departure and a full orientation after arrival. See Katerina Kratzmann, *Resettlement and the Humanitarian Admission Programme in Austria* (Vienna: IOM, 2016), 77, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-01a_austria_resettlement_study_national_report_en.pdf. As a result of an evaluation by UNHCR, the Austrian government worked with IOM to introduce a two-day, in-person predeparture training, which reportedly helped ensure that refugees had much more realistic expectations and were more prepared than those in previous cohorts who received no orientation. Author interview with Barbara Kurz, Caritas Austria.
- 11 Other evidence of the importance of orientation programmes comes from Finland. Finnish government evaluations from 2004 and 2007 found that resettled refugees who participated in predeparture orientations had not only developed more realistic expectations, but also adopted a more positive attitude about their lives and the integration process in Finland. Similarly, a 2018 evaluation of the orientation revealed its overall positive impact on refugees, who found it very useful, especially the Finnish language component. Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Senior Advisor, Finnish Immigration Service, 18 January 2018; author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, Migrant Training and Integration Project Coordinator, IOM Finland, 24 January 2018; Linda Bäckman, *External Evaluation of the Cultural Orientation of the Quota Refugees* (Turku: Migration Institute of Finland, 2018).
- 12 UNHCR, 'Europe Resettlement - January to December 2017' (fact sheet, UNHCR, Geneva, March 2018), <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/62558>. Although Austria and Romania did not receive UNHCR submissions in 2017, they provided predeparture orientations to refugees their national authorities had selected for resettlement; as a result, they are included in this figure.
- 13 These countries are Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. This information is based on interviews conducted for this study and the overview of national resettlement programmes compiled by the European Resettlement Network (ERN)/SHARE Network. See ERN, 'National Resettlement Programmes', accessed 12 November 2018, <https://resettlement.eu/country>.
- 14 A notable exception is New Zealand, where policymakers have opted to limit the provision of predeparture information to showing a video to resettling refugees, and instead to focus on providing an in-depth, six-week orientation in a centralised reception facility in Auckland. See Immigration New Zealand, 'Rebuilding the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre', accessed 15 April 2019, www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlement-strategy/rebuilding-the-mangere-refugee-resettlement-centre.

countries in Asia and Latin America, such as South Korea and Chile.¹⁵ The design and implementation of these programmes—from when and where they take place to who delivers them—vary considerably from country to country, as will be discussed in the next section.

III. DESIGNING AN ORIENTATION PROGRAMME

While there is broad agreement that providing predeparture orientation is important, determining how to do so effectively and efficiently can be a daunting proposition, particularly for a country new to operating a resettlement programme. The resettlement process is itself logistically complicated—resettlement agencies and their partners must conduct selection interviews, arrange health checks, and book flights—and providing predeparture orientation adds another step to this process. To do so, resettlement agencies or their partners must identify qualified trainers, agree on a curriculum, secure a space to hold the training, and arrange for refugees to travel to the training site (or for a trainer to go to them)—all within the narrow window between when refugees are selected for resettlement and when they depart for their destination country, the length of which is often unpredictable.

How resettlement officials manage these challenges depends to a large extent on the operational circumstances in first-asylum and destination countries, as well as the goals of the particular orientation programme. The subsections that follow map the central decisions programme designers must make and present a menu of possible answers to these questions, based on the practices of the countries examined for this study.

A. *What content should the orientation cover?*

One of the most important factors in determining the design of an orientation programme is the scope of the content to be covered. Most orientations aim to address three types of needs:¹⁶

- **Knowledge.** What do refugees need to know to navigate the resettlement process and, eventually, succeed in their new communities?
- **Skills.** What do refugees need to be able to do for resettlement to be successful?
- **Attitudes.** What mindset and expectations will help refugees navigate the transition and integration process?

Orientation programmes differ in the extent to which they emphasise each of these three elements in their curricula, and through what means.

15 See, for example, UNHCR, *Review of the Pilot Resettlement Programme in the Republic of Korea* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2017), www.refworld.org/pdfid/5ab25c2f4.pdf; IOM, 'Syrian Refugees Resettled in Chile under the UN Migration and Refugee Agencies' Programme' (press release, 13 October 2017), www.iom.int/news/syrian-refugees-resettled-chile-under-un-migration-and-refugee-agencies-programme.

16 See, for example, Siriporn Yamnill and Gary N. McLean, 'Theories Supporting Transfer of Training', *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (2001): 195–208; Kat Leung, Lyndal Trevena, and Donna Walters, 'Systematic Review of Instruments for Measuring Nurses' Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes for Evidence-Based Practice', *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 70, no. 10 (2014): 2181–95.

1. Knowledge: What do refugees need to know?

Providing information about the resettlement process and the destination country is often of central importance to resettlement countries, and most orientation programmes provide information on some or all of the following topics:

- **Travel procedures.** Travel briefings generally include information on airport security (including what items are and are not allowed on the plane), what travel documents to present to authorities and when, and what refugees can pack in their checked luggage and what is allowed through customs.¹⁷ Most orientations also include information on how to board an airplane (such as finding a specific seat number) and what to expect once onboard (whether or not food is free).
- **Rights, benefits, and status.** Orientation programmes usually share information on the legal status refugees will have in the resettlement country and the rights and obligations attached to that status (such as whether they will be allowed to travel to or live in other European countries, and whether they will be required to register with a local immigration agency). Trainers often receive questions from refugees about the right to family reunification (see Box 1). Orientation may also include information on actions refugees will be expected to take after arrival, such as the importance of learning the resettlement-country language (as in the Netherlands) or of finding work quickly (as in the United States). Information on benefits is often given with the intention of countering misconceptions about the level and types of support refugees will receive, such as the type of housing they will be given.¹⁸
- **Practical information about life in the resettlement country.** Trainers may provide information on topics such as how to use public transportation, shop for food at a supermarket, interact with police, and safely use household appliances, such as gas stoves. In the Netherlands, for example, refugees are shown pictures of situations they may encounter and are asked to identify which are unsafe (e.g., leaving a hand towel on top of a stove).¹⁹
- **Culture, values, and expectations.** Orientation programmes often try to provide refugees with a sense of the behaviours and social norms they will experience in their new communities. For example, the Norwegian programme discusses how to make friends and manage social interactions, and addresses potential differences in parenting styles and family roles.²⁰ More controversially, some programmes include information on behaviours and values that some refugee populations may find shocking, such as the acceptance of same-sex relationships or different religious beliefs (this information is included in the Dutch orientation, for example).

17 One IOM official interviewed for the study recalled having to inform a refugee that he could not bring his refrigerator along with him to the resettlement country, even though it was one of his most valuable possessions. Author interview with Louise Bélanger, Global Programme Manager, Canadian Orientation Abroad, IOM, Geneva, 16 January 2018.

18 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter, Head of Integration Unit, and Elisabeth Hochenegger, Head of Operations, IOM Austria, 12 January 2018; author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey; author interview with Barbara Kurz, Caritas Austria; author interview with Laura Leino, Finnish Red Cross; author interview with Rachel Kidd, Client Services National Lead, and Rachel O’Conner, General Manager Migration, Red Cross New Zealand, 28 March 2018.

19 Author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

20 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

Box 1. Information on family reunification

Family life and supportive social networks play a crucial role in personal wellbeing. This is also true for resettling refugees, who may desire that family members join them in the resettlement country. Across the orientation programmes examined for this report, one of the most common questions trainers and reception service providers reported hearing from refugees was regarding their rights to family reunification, specifically which family members could be admitted and how. This topic continues to play an important role after arrival, with some service providers in resettlement communities reporting that they frequently receive questions on family reunification procedures and have to correct refugees' misunderstandings. Misinformation on this topic appears to be common in countries of first asylum, and can have implications for refugees' long-term wellbeing and integration. Several studies with resettled refugees have found that family separation can lead to psychological distress and difficulties in adjusting to life after resettlement. If refugees choose to resettle while believing that family members and friends will later be able to join them, learning after resettlement that this is not possible can be devastating.

Trainers also indicated that they commonly receive questions about whether refugees would be allowed to travel back to their home countries or countries of first asylum to visit friends and family, and whether they could move to other countries within the European Union. Accurate information on issues such as these is important; breaking residency rules or returning to a home country can place refugees' access to benefits or even their legal status in jeopardy. Some predeparture orientation programmes thus make it a point to share information about family reunification to help refugees avoid disappointment or legal missteps down the road.

Sources: Author interview with João Lima, Reception and Integration Specialist, Jesuit Refugee Service Portugal, 8 February 2018; author interview with Laura Leino, Refugee Programs Support, Finnish Red Cross, 5 February 2018; author interview with Terhi Tuominen, Social Worker, City of Tampere, Finland, 27 February 2018; author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Manager, Relocation and Resettlement, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Government of the Netherlands, 12 February 2018; author interview with Katharina Benedetter, Head of Integration Unit, and Elisabeth Hochenegger, Head of Operations, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Austria, 12 January 2018; author interview with Sanja Alikalic, Resettlement Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Turkey, 13 March 2018; author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala, Uganda, 2–5 April 2018; 'Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on Standards for the Qualification of Third-Country Nationals or Stateless Persons as Beneficiaries of International Protection, for a Uniform Status for Refugees or for Persons Eligible for Subsidiary Protection, and for the Content of the Protection Granted (Recast)', *Official Journal of the European Union* 2011 L337/9, 20 December 2011, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32011L0095>; German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), 'Resettlement: Aufnahme- und Integrationserfahrungen von besonders schutzbedürftigen Flüchtlingen' (working paper 70, BAMF, Nuremberg, November 2016), www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/WorkingPapers/wp70-resettlement-aufnahme-integrationserfahrungen.html; Sara Shishegar et al., 'Health and Socio-Cultural Experiences of Refugee Women: An Integrative Review', *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19, no. 4 (2017): 959–73; Johayra Bouza et al., 'The Science Is Clear: Separating Families Has Long-Term Damaging Psychological and Health Consequences for Children, Families, and Communities' (statement of evidence, Society for Research in Child Development, Washington, DC, 20 June 2018), http://srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/the_science_is_clear.pdf.

Resettlement countries differ widely in the focus of their orientation programmes and the extent to which they cover each of these topics. All provide information on travel procedures.²¹ Most resettling refugees have not travelled by air before and have little knowledge of how to navigate airport security and passport controls (or the mysteries of an airplane toilet). Without some prior knowledge of what to expect, the trip alone can be overwhelming. Providing information about the resettlement process and refugees' rights and responsibilities is also extremely common. Such information is valuable not only to ensure that refugees can navigate the legal aspects of the resettlement process, but also that they are embarking on resettlement with a full understanding of what the decision means for their and their families' futures. For resettled refugees, the realisation that some of the expectations and hopes that informed their decision to resettle will not be met can both lead to disappointment and depression, and undermine their ability to cope with change and adjust to their new communities.²²

While the level and types of information provided on travel, rights, and status may be broadly similar across resettlement countries, orientation programmes often differ in the extent to which they provide details on life in the destination country. The amount of destination-country information presented depends in part on the time available to conduct the training (see Section III.B.). Longer programmes, such as those provided by Romania and the Netherlands, go into greater detail about topics such as how schools or public transportation work. The Netherlands even provides refugees with information about the specific municipality in which they will settle. For refugees, knowing more about their future homes can help them begin to prepare mentally and emotionally for the transition, allowing them to visualise and perhaps even to look forward to their new lives, while also dispelling misconceptions. Though this is not commonly done in other countries' programmes, several local reception service providers expressed the view that it would be useful for refugees to learn which city or town they will be placed in before they travel.²³ The Finnish Red Cross, which meets refugees at the airport, reported that when refugees find out where they will settle upon arrival in Finland—rather than before departure—it can be stressful as they have no time to prepare mentally.²⁴

However, orientation providers must balance giving refugees a clear picture of their future life with the risk that a training becomes too long or intensive for refugees to absorb and recall the information given. Moreover, some information, such as how to ride the bus, may be easier to understand in context than in the abstract. And providing refugees with very specific information about their destination communities, such as the name of the town, can run counter to another goal of orientation programmes: helping refugees to approach their new situation with a flexible mindset. Plans can change, and refugees may end up being placed in a different community from the one whose name they were originally given, which can lead to confusion and disappointment.²⁵ Officials in Austria indicated that they do not inform refugees about their destination municipalities for this reason.²⁶ To mitigate this risk, some orientations instead provide more general information about the types of communities and housing situations where refugees can be settled, particularly emphasising that they may find themselves living in very small towns. Finland, for example, shows refugees pictures of small villages in order to impress upon them that they may not be settled in larger cities.²⁷

Whether and how programmes address cultural differences between origin and destination countries also differs, and some approaches have been met with criticism. Some information on cultural differences can be

21 All resettlement programmes reviewed for this study provided at least some travel information to refugees prior to departure.

22 Laurence J. Kirmayer et al., 'Common Mental Health Problems in Immigrants and Refugees: General Approach in Primary Care', *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 183, no. 12 (2011): E959–67.

23 Author interview with Laura Leino, Finnish Red Cross; author interview with Terhi Tuominen, City of Tampere; author interview with Lubna Makhoul, Municipality of Nome.

24 Author interview with Laura Leino, Finnish Red Cross. Information about the specific Finnish municipalities in which refugees will be placed is not shared during predeparture orientation. However, the Finnish Immigration Service informs UNHCR as soon as a placement has been found, and UNHCR passes this on to refugees. Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

25 Author interview with João Lima, Jesuit Refugee Services Portugal.

26 Author interview with Barbara Kurz, Caritas Austria.

27 Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

valuable as refugees often come from cultures that are significantly different from those they will encounter in their destination countries. They may be confronted by different perceptions regarding appropriate behaviour in different social interactions (should you shake hands or make eye contact with someone who is more senior?), when to arrive for appointments (how important is punctuality?), how parents should discipline their children (is physical punishment acceptable?), or gender roles within a family (should women work outside the home?). Trainers and reception service providers note that it is important for refugees to understand that their new neighbours will likely have values and lifestyles that differ from their own, and that accepting these differences will be a part of settling into their new homes.²⁸ In addition, refugees' family relationships and lifestyles often change after they move. Children, for example, may integrate more quickly than their parents, and thus take on more responsibilities, such as serving as interpreters for their parents who may pick up a new language more slowly. This role reversal between parents and children can be uncomfortable, and it is important for families to be aware of and prepared for these and similar changes.²⁹ By providing refugees with a sense of what to expect, predeparture orientation can help them avoid the stress that can result from unfamiliar and unexpected personal interactions, and empower them to become more independent and connected with their communities.

Trainers and reception service providers note that it is important for refugees to understand that their new neighbours will likely have values and lifestyles that differ from their own.

But some trainers and service providers have expressed concerns that the ways in which cultural information is provided may not be culturally sensitive, given refugees' cultural background, leading refugees to feel defensive, reject information, or in some cases even withdraw from resettlement.³⁰ Instead, some orientation providers have suggested that information should be conveyed in a way that is relatable for refugees and that emphasises how such information can help them prepare to cope with new situations,³¹ avoiding messaging that may simply shock or scare. Research also suggests that cultural and values instruction is most effective in promoting integration when it emphasises the role of values in shaping the behaviour of society as a whole, rather than instructing migrants and refugees that they must change their beliefs and behaviours to conform.³² Along these lines, some countries choose to frame cultural information around a broader discussion of citizenship and responsibility. The Dutch programme, for example, frames its discussion around the legal principle that all residents of the Netherlands should be treated equally.³³ Canada uses a similar approach; trainers

28 Author interview with Terhi Tuominen, City of Tampere.

29 Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

30 For example, an interviewee from UNHCR Turkey recalled that, after having attended orientation training, some resettling refugees shared that they felt discouraged from pursuing resettlement after being asked whether they would eat pork if no halal meat was available or how they would react if their wives behaved in a certain way. Author interview with Sanja Alikalic, UNCHR Turkey; author interview with Ariane den Uyl, Policy Officer, Dutch Council for Refugees, 25 January 2018. See also Mehek Muftic, 'Empowering Refugee Girls: A Study of Cultural Orientation Programs in Kenya and Sudan', *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 9, no. 1 (2014): 44–60.

31 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

32 For an in-depth discussion of the role of values instruction in integration, see Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan and Meghan Benton, *In Search of Common Values amid Large-Scale Immigrant Integration Pressures* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/search-common-values-amid-large-scale-immigrant-integration-pressures.

33 The Dutch predeparture orientation programme begins its discussion of values with a presentation on Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution, which establishes the principle that all residents of the Netherlands are equal. Trainers explain that Article 1 provides equal rights and responsibilities for all, including the respect for others, and that the article was created to prevent discrimination or conflicts between groups, including conflicts like those that many refugees have fled. Other cultural differences (including issues involving gender and sexual orientation) are then presented through the lens of Article 1. Trainers also explain that equality means that diversity is accepted, and everyone in the Netherlands must respect that Article 1 gives their neighbours the right to lead lives that are different from their own. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Manager, Relocation and Resettlement, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Government of the Netherlands, 12 February 2018; author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

discuss the ‘laws and values’ that govern Canadian society, rather than ‘culture’, and emphasise that these principles apply to everyone, not just to newcomers.³⁴

Being honest with refugees about how well normative principles such as equality are implemented in practice is also important to effectively and sensitively convey these messages. Some trainers and integration service providers noted that refugees are aware that discrimination and racism can be a problem in resettlement countries—and many are confronted with this behaviour after arrival.³⁵ Refugees who are told that a society values one type of behaviour and then experience something quite different may come to believe there is a double standard or become disillusioned. In Austria, trainers attempt to prevent this by explaining to refugees that the values they present are ideals that everyone in Austria should strive for, but that in reality, Austrian society may not always meet these standards.³⁶

Ultimately, expecting refugees to change their views on core cultural beliefs, such as gender roles, based on information delivered over the span of a few days and in a training setting is unrealistic.³⁷ Several trainers suggested that the most they can expect is to prepare refugees for what they will encounter and give them the skills to adapt;³⁸ more fundamental cultural adaptation or changes in belief can only happen through lived experiences in the resettlement country.

2. Skills: What do refugees need to be able to do?

Research on cultural adaptation and observations shared by trainers suggest that refugees’ ability to navigate new situations is likely as important (if not more so) than what they know about the resettlement country.³⁹ While many orientation programmes prioritise building refugees’ knowledge of the resettlement process and their destination country, refugees may be as well or better served by learning the skills to deal with culture shock or to mediate potential conflicts.

Most orientation programmes delivered by the IOM include activities designed to build coping skills,⁴⁰ as does the Dutch programme.⁴¹ Cultural mediation skill-building activities are meant to prepare refugees to cope with culture shock and cultural misunderstandings.⁴² Culture shock can result from feelings of confusion

34 Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

35 Author interview with Lisette van de Gazelle, Municipality of Sittard-Geleen, and Rob Dubbelman, Dutch Refugee Council Limburg; author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

36 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

37 *Ibid.*; Banulescu-Bogdan and Benton, *In Search of Common Values*.

38 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

39 Michael Winkelman, ‘Cultural Shock and Adaptation’, *Journal of Counseling and Development* 73, no. 2 (1994): 121–6.

40 Of the programmes reviewed for this study, those offered by IOM typically include a strong cultural coping skills element. Author interview with Jo De Backer, Regional Thematic Expert Resettlement, Geertrui Lanneau, Senior Specialist on Labour Mobility and Human Development, and Philipp Freudenthaler, Policy Officer, Policy and Programme Support Division, IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the European Union, and NATO, 25 January 2018; author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM; author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway; author interview with Constança Turquin, Project Assistant, IOM Portugal, 1 February 2018; author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

41 Trainers work with refugees to brainstorm a list of ways to prevent or de-escalate conflicts (such as informing neighbours before having a party or speaking with them about problems, such as loud music). Trainers also encourage refugees to think back on their experiences meeting new neighbours from other countries and religions in their first-asylum country, then suggest that similar skills will be useful for interacting with neighbours in the resettlement country. Author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

42 Culture shock has been defined in psychological literature as ‘strain and anxiety resulting from contact with a new culture and the feelings of loss, confusion, and impotence resulting from loss of accustomed cultural cues and social rules.’ This report draws on this definition and analytical framework. See Winkelman, ‘Cultural Shock and Adaptation’.

or what has been described as ‘information overload’, as refugees wade through the onslaught of new experiences, while attempting to interpret unfamiliar social cues and express themselves in a new language. Changes in personal and social status—such as when a refugee who had a high-status profession in his or her home country must take a lower-status job—can also result in culture shock. Predeparture orientation programmes try to prepare refugees for these challenges by explaining the range of emotions they will likely feel over the first few weeks and months in the resettlement country, and by discussing psychological coping strategies to encourage them to work through rather than succumb to the feelings and frustrations that they may experience.⁴³

In addition to mediation and coping skills, a few orientation programmes also aim to build broader life skills that will be useful after arrival. ‘Learning how to learn’ was identified by interviewed orientation providers as a key goal.⁴⁴ Most resettlement programmes encourage or require refugees to enrol in additional training programmes after they arrive, and for refugees who have little experience with formal education, understanding what is required of them (what materials should you bring to class?) and how to succeed in this setting (is it OK to ask questions?) can be particularly difficult. Orientation programmes can be a trial run of the type of training and instruction they will experience after arrival. The Finnish orientation programme, for example, uses the same language instruction methods during predeparture orientation as refugees will encounter during postarrival language courses to help them become familiar and comfortable with learning expectations in Finland.⁴⁵ Longer orientation programmes, such as the one operated by the Netherlands, may also teach refugees how to do basic household tasks such as create a budget based on their social benefit allowance.⁴⁶

Finally, some resettlement countries have built a language training component into their predeparture training curricula. A few—Finland, the Netherlands, and the United States—have opted for more formal and extensive lessons (see Box 2).⁴⁷ Others simply teach basic words or phrases.⁴⁸ For example, Romanian trainers teach resettling refugees how to introduce themselves and how to greet their neighbours.⁴⁹ Regardless of the scope of the language instruction, trainers and postarrival service providers report that language lessons help refugees feel more confident about resettlement and that most remember what they have learned.⁵⁰ Service providers working with refugees in Finland, which offers a few hours of language instruction during each day of training, noted that refugees often remembered the Finnish words they learned and were proud to be able to use them.⁵¹ And pre- and post-tests conducted with participants in the U.S. predeparture language programme show that refugees improved their knowledge of English and retained what they learned after they were re-

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- 43 IOM trainers in Turkey, for example, explained that they encourage refugees to think about how they felt and the coping skills they used when moving from their home country to Turkey. They then explain that refugees will need to rely on similar skills to support their transition to life in the resettlement country. Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.
- 44 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland. See also Peter Lenz and Stephanie Andrey, *Rahmencurriculum für die sprachliche Förderung von Migrantinnen und Migranten* (Bern: Swiss Ministry for Migration, 2009), www.fide-info.ch/doc/01_Projekt/fideDE01_Rahmencurriculum.pdf.
- 45 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland.
- 46 Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands; author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala. The Norwegian programme, which is five days long, also provides information on budgeting.
- 47 Romanian and Austrian orientation programmes teach refugees basic words or phrases as part of their regular training curricula. Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland; author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands; author interview with Lauren Messing and Katherine Rehberg, Church World Service.
- 48 Orientations for refugees resettling to Austria, the Netherlands, and Romania are among those that take this approach.
- 49 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.
- 50 Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.
- 51 One service provider reported that refugees had told her they felt more confident about coming to Finland already knowing some of the Finnish language. Author interview with Jaana Suokonautio, Head of Immigration Affairs, Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment for Uusimaa, 23 January 2018; author interview with Terhi Tuominen, City of Tampere.

settled, even if their departure was delayed by external factors.⁵² Some level of language training may thus be worth the investment, even if a short predeparture period only allows for a basic level of instruction.

Box 2. Models for building language training into predeparture orientation

The **Finnish** predeparture orientation programme offers a few hours of Finnish language training on each day of its predeparture orientation programme. This training is delivered by a staff member of a Finnish institution of higher education who has experience working with immigrant language students. The same instructional methods are used during the predeparture and postarrival phases; trainings take place entirely in Finnish with the help of videos and pictures as well as the use of objects, such as Finnish clothes and food, to help students visualise the meaning of words. After orientation, refugees are encouraged to access the Finnish Immigration Service website www.movingtofinland.fi, which has more in-depth language learning exercises.

The **Netherlands** dedicates one hour per day of its 12-day training to teaching Dutch. Refugees are also provided with MP3 players with audio Dutch lessons to practice between the training sessions, which are spread over six months. In more urban resettlement locations, such as Amman, Jordan, the Dutch embassy works with trainers to find Dutch expatriates who are willing to tutor refugees prior to departure.

The **United States** offers 60 hours of English instruction to refugees resettling through its Africa resettlement processing centre. In order to ensure that those in the course are starting with a similar level of English, participation is limited to refugees who are literate in at least one language and have no or very basic prior knowledge of English. The orientation provider, Church World Service, hires refugees who themselves speak English to serve as the instructors.

Sources: Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Senior Advisor, Finnish Immigration Service, 18 January 2018; author interview with Lauren Messing and Katherine Rehberg, Predeparture Orientation Coordinator and Deputy Director, Church World Service, Resettlement Support Center Africa, 8 May 2018; author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

3. Attitudes: What mindset and expectations will ease the transition?

Research on cultural adaptation suggests that one's attitudes and feelings towards migration can have an effect on integration. Several studies suggest that the extent to which migrants and refugees feel confident or in control of their decision to move, and how aware of and open they are to the challenges that this will bring,

⁵² Pre- and post-tests evaluated refugees' oral comprehension and speaking skills, and their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Refugees were asked to orally answer basic questions about themselves (such as 'What is your name?' and 'Where are you from?'), to copy numbers on a worksheet, and to write their name in the English alphabet. Author interview with Lauren Messing and Katherine Rehberg, Church World Service.

can influence the amount of stress or depression they experience.⁵³ The observations of orientation trainers echo these findings. Several expressed the view that the most important goals of orientation include giving refugees a sense of control over their choices in the resettlement process and confidence in their ability to adapt to and succeed in the resettlement country.⁵⁴

Although attitudes are usually less of a focus than knowledge or skills, some programmes, particularly those provided by IOM, try to help build refugees' enthusiasm for their new country and for resettlement, while also making them aware of the challenges they will encounter. The primary goal of the Canadian programme, for example, is to 'turn refugees' hearts and minds towards Canada' and to make them feel excited and committed to resettlement.⁵⁵ Broadly, trainers felt that refugees who were excited about embarking on resettlement and confident in their ability to overcome challenges would be more motivated to adapt and to integrate.

B. How long should the orientation be?

Three factors inform the duration of orientation programmes:

- ***The goals of the orientation and the amount of material to be covered.*** The more content a country includes in its orientation, the longer it will need to be. Romania, for example, conducts a five-day predeparture training because resettlement officials felt it was important to provide refugees with a full and nuanced understanding of Romania and their rights and responsibilities.⁵⁶ By contrast, Portugal offers two days of orientation, which is limited to presentations conveying travel information and basic information about Portugal's geography and society.
- ***The amount of time available before departure.*** Conditions in countries of first asylum and individual refugees' circumstances can place constraints on how long an orientation programme can be. If refugees reside in remote locations or conflict-ridden areas where it would be too expensive or dangerous for trainers to travel, it may not be possible to provide predeparture orientation programmes in their entirety. In addition, emergency cases may need to depart the country quickly for medical or protection reasons, for example, and thus not have time for a lengthy predeparture orientation. Several of the case-study countries provide shorter trainings or written information only to refugees in such emergency situations.⁵⁷ The timing of other parts of the resettlement process may also limit the time available for orientation. For example, in November 2015, the Canadian government made a political commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by 1 March 2016, and in order to meet this commitment, resettlement officials were forced to expedite the resettlement process, eliminating the time normally available for predeparture training.⁵⁸
- ***The resources available.*** Lengthy or logistically complex programmes (for example, those that require refugees to travel to attend) will require more financial and other resources to organise than shorter programmes. Another day of training could require another night in a hotel and more time budgeted for interpreters, trainers, and child-care providers. The benefits of a longer training period and more in-depth content must thus be balanced against the availability of resources to support it.

53 Lindencrona, Ekblad, and Hauff, 'Mental Health of Recently Resettled Refugees from the Middle East in Sweden'; Fang Gong, Jun Xu, Kaori Fujishiro, and David T. Takeuchi, 'A Life Course Perspective on Migration and Mental Health among Asian Immigrants: The Role of Human Agency', *Social Science and Medicine* 73, no. 11 (2011): 1618–26.

54 Author interviews with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal; author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

55 Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

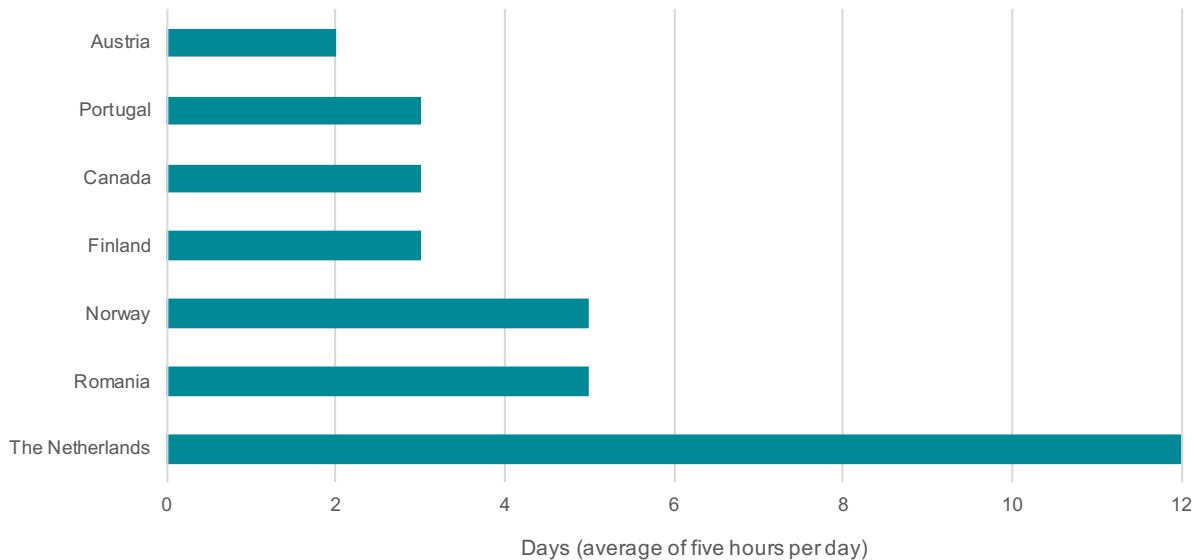
56 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

57 This is the case in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

58 Government of Canada, 'Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative'.

In general, predeparture orientations vary in length from a few hours to several days. On the longer end of the spectrum, the Netherlands provides a total of 84 hours of training over 12 days during three separate four-day sessions.⁵⁹ More commonly, countries design orientations that last between three and five days, as is done by Canada, Finland, Norway, and Romania.

Figure 1. Duration of predeparture orientation conducted by case-study countries



Source: Author interview with Katharina Benedetter, Head of Integration Unit, and Elisabeth Hochenegger, Head of Operations, IOM Austria, 12 January 2018; author interview with Constança Turquin, Project Assistant, IOM Portugal, 1 February 2018; author interview with Louise Bélanger, Global Programme Manager, Canadian Orientation Abroad, IOM, Geneva, 16 January 2018; author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Senior Advisor, Finnish Immigration Service, 18 January 2018; author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, Head of Unit/Programme Coordinator, IOM Norway, 26 February 2018; author interview with Maria Voica, Project Coordinator, IOM Romania, 19 February 2018; author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Manager, Relocation and Resettlement, Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, Government of the Netherlands, 12 February 2018.

There are clear tradeoffs to choosing a longer or shorter orientation, particularly when this is provided prior to departure. While it may be tempting to try to fit as much information into the predeparture period as possible—‘frontloading’ the integration process—trainers and civil-society representatives emphasise that it is important to consider how much information refugees can absorb in a single session, particularly under conditions that are often stressful.⁶⁰ Some refugees may need to undertake lengthy or tiring journeys from remote camps to the training location. The predeparture period can also be a busy time for refugees, who will need to undergo medical checks, decide what luggage to bring, and say goodbye to friends and family. In addition, when only a handful of refugees are resettled and participate in orientation, less time may be needed to cover the training curriculum. Trainers working with the five-day Romanian orientation programme, for example, have expressed concerns that the programme may be too intensive and lengthy.⁶¹ Concerns such as these mean that orientation programmes are typically limited to four to six hours per day.

⁵⁹ As refugees resettled to the Netherlands from Turkey receive only four days of predeparture orientation, after arrival they are accommodated in centralised reception facilities where they participate in orientation. Refugees placed directly in municipalities receive an extended, 84-hour orientation before departure. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

⁶⁰ Author interview with Luis Bernardo, Portuguese Refugee Council; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

⁶¹ In the case of Romania, each resettling cohort has had between ten and twenty refugees. However, as the Romanian orientation is designed for adults, refugees under the age of 10 do not participate, which further decreases the number of participants in a given session (sometimes as few as seven people). Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

On the other hand, an orientation that is too short can be ineffective. Trainers for the Austrian and Portuguese programmes, which used to last just two days, have suggested that these programmes were too short and required trainers to cram too much information into a very short timeframe,⁶² which could leave participants feeling overwhelmed or with unanswered questions. There may also be specific contexts in which a longer training is the more appropriate option. Norway, for example, decided to extend its orientation programme from four to five days after trainers observed that they needed more time in order to address all of the question resettling Syrian refugees posed to them.⁶³

C. *At what point in the resettlement process should the orientation take place?*

Resettlement occurs in several phases. After being identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement and referred to a resettling country, refugees are usually interviewed by representatives of that country's immigration agency to determine their eligibility for resettlement. If refugees receive a favourable decision, they undergo security and medical checks and apply for temporary travel documents (if they do not have a passport) and/or exit visas (if required by the first-asylum country). Once these steps are completed, refugees will travel from the first-asylum to the resettlement country, usually approximately three to six months⁶⁴ after the national resettlement agency's selection mission. There are several points in this process at which orientation could be delivered, including:

- ***As part of the selection mission.*** A few resettlement countries choose to provide some or all of their orientation programme during the selection mission.⁶⁵ Sweden, for example, delivers their full programme following selection interviews.⁶⁶ Other countries do this only for emergency or expedited resettlement procedures, or when refugees or trainers are unable to travel for a separate training. Belgium, for example, ran its Istanbul-based orientation for Syrians being resettled from Turkey from 2016 to 2018 at the same time as selection because the expedited resettlement process meant there was not enough time for a separate mission to conduct predeparture orientation. Refugees also required permission to travel within Turkey, which could be difficult to obtain and made arranging multiple trips to Istanbul logistically complicated. A few countries, such as Finland, provide short

62 The Portuguese programme has recently been expanded to last three days. Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal.

63 One IOM official mentioned that some refugees selected for resettlement were particularly active in Facebook groups in which misinformation and unfounded rumours about life in Norway were circulated. For example, some trainers encountered rumours that Norwegian child protection services would take children away from refugee families and place them in Norwegian foster families, or that the Norwegian government was spying on refugees through smoke detectors. Trainers felt that more time was needed to adequately address refugees' concerns and questions. Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

64 This estimate is based on information from ERN, 'National Resettlement Programmes'.

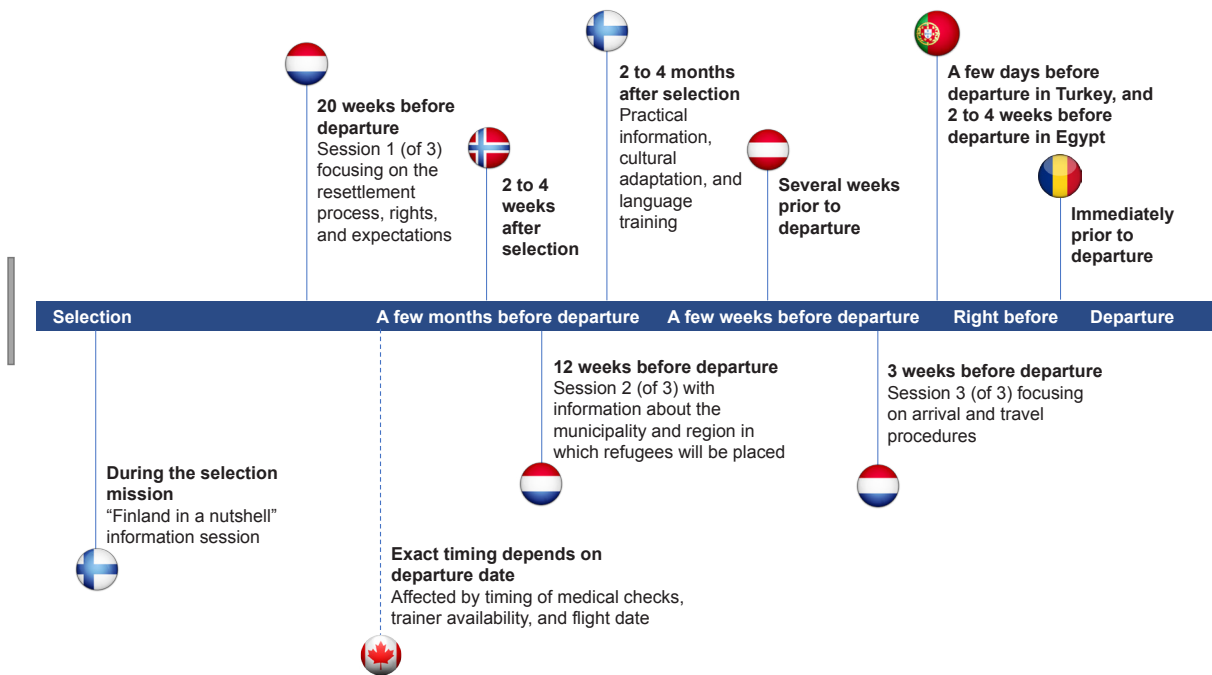
65 For example, refugees who participate in Finnish selection missions attend a presentation by a member of the selection delegation with up to one and a half hours of information about Finland. This presentation covers topics such as Finland's democratic system, health-care services, the freedom of religion, and everyday life in Finnish society. The presentation also includes photos to give resettling refugees a first glimpse of Finland as well as a link to the website www.movingtofinland.fi Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service. In the case of the Netherlands, information is sometimes provided during the selection mission, such as for Syrian refugees whose resettlement has been expedited and who thus will not be able to participate in the full orientation programme. Refugee families who undergo expedited procedures meet with a case manager from the Dutch Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers for up to one and a half hours to receive information about the Netherlands and to ask questions. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

66 UNHCR, *UNHCR Resettlement Handbook—Country Chapters: Sweden* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2018), www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/3c5e5a219/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapter-sweden.html.

one-to-two-hour information sessions during selection in addition to a full orientation before departure.⁶⁷

- **Between selection and departure.** The most common time to offer orientation is between selection and departure. The amount of time between these stages varies across resettlement countries and groups of refugees.⁶⁸ Portugal and Canada, for example, provide an orientation for refugees resettling from Turkey a few days prior to departure, while the Portuguese orientation programme for those being resettled from Egypt takes place two to four weeks before departure.⁶⁹
- **After arrival.** A few countries provide in-person orientation after refugees' arrival (such as New Zealand). In some countries, dossier and emergency cases are only provided with written or online information before departure, and in-person orientation takes place after arrival (e.g. Denmark and Finland). For small cohorts of refugees (e.g., Croatia and Estonia) or those that are not resettled as part of a larger national programme, it can be cost-prohibitive to organise additional trips for in-person orientation predeparture (e.g. Sweden). New Zealand provides all of their in-person orientation after arrival as part of an in-depth six-week course at a central reception centre, though the country coordinates with IOM to provide a travel briefing and show refugees a 90-minute film about New Zealand immediately prior to departure.⁷⁰ Thus, even when orientation happens primarily after arrival refugees are usually given some basic information about the resettlement country and travel procedures before they leave.

Figure 2. When case-study countries provide predeparture orientation



Source: Compilation by the authors.

67 Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, and New Zealand provide short information sessions to refugees during selection missions.

68 See, for example, Swedish Migration Agency, 'Questions and Answers about Resettled Refugees', updated 26 June 2017, www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Our-mission/The-Swedish-resettlement-programme/Questions-and-answers-about-resettled-refugees.html.

69 Author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal. Other resettlement states, such as Germany and Italy, also typically offer their orientation programmes approximately two weeks before departure.

70 Author email communication with Sarah Ward, Refugee Resettlement Coordinator, New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, Immigration New Zealand, March 2017.

The decision of what content to provide predeparture versus postarrival is not necessarily straightforward. Some information, such as about travel and the procedures that must be completed to obtain legal status, must be given prior to departure. Information on how to board an airplane, for example, will do little good after refugees have already travelled to the resettlement country. Other elements of orientation fall into a grey area: while refugees could benefit from some predeparture discussion of topics such as cultural mediation skills or information about their municipality, these components could also be delivered after arrival. And components such as mapping refugees' credentials and skills could easily wait until after arrival, but if there is extra time prior to departure, it may make sense to get an early start on these first steps towards integration.

Some countries have also begun exploring ways to begin preparing refugees for employment.

There are some clear advantages to doing more before refugees' departure. Research and evaluations of orientation programmes suggest that refugees benefit from the opportunity to plan for their resettlement,⁷¹ whether because knowledge such as basic language skills can build confidence or because information on topics such as rights and benefits can help them make informed decisions about whether to go through with resettlement.⁷² Conducting orientation prior to departure also avoids requiring refugees to move twice. In New Zealand, service providers note that refugees speak highly of the six weeks they spend in the central Auckland-based reception facility, but also that it can be difficult for them to then move again to reach their municipalities, with some disappointed upon arriving in smaller localities.⁷³ Finally, the predeparture period can be an opportunity to get a headstart on integration by working on skills refugees will need later, such as language proficiency.⁷⁴ Some countries have also begun exploring ways to begin preparing refugees for employment, whether by linking those with prior education and professional experience to credential recognition processes or job training (e.g., Canada⁷⁵) or by creating skill profiles that can inform postarrival services, as experimented with by IOM in partnership with Germany, Portugal, Romania, and the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, there are valid reasons to do orientation primarily after arrival. First and foremost, arranging and conducting orientation predeparture can be logistically complicated and resource intensive, particularly for new resettlement countries and those with small resettlement quotas. For example, the decision by New Zealand to provide orientation primarily after refugees arrive is due in part to the cost of traveling multiple times to many first-asylum countries, given New Zealand's remote location.⁷⁶ Secondly, the predeparture period can be busy and stressful, and refugees may find it more difficult to absorb information given in this context. By contrast, New Zealand reception service providers report that refugees view the postarrival reception centre as a safe place where they can ask questions and receive assistance adjusting to their surroundings before moving to and living independently in their destination municipalities.⁷⁷ Finally, there are just some things—whether cultural differences or public transportation systems—that refugees will only truly understand after experiencing life in the resettlement country. When orientation is done in-country, trainers can guide refugees through these experiences in real life.

71 See Lindencrona, Ekblad, and Hauff, 'Mental Health of Recently Resettled Refugees from the Middle East in Sweden'.

72 Government of Canada, 'Rapid Impact Evaluation of the Syrian Refugee Initiative'; Kratzmann, *Resettlement and the Humanitarian Admission Programme in Austria*.

73 Author interview with Rachel Kidd and Rachel O'Conner, New Zealand Red Cross.

74 Alin Chindea, *Headstart to Integration: A Global Review of Pre-Departure Support Measures for Migrants* (Geneva: IOM, 2015), http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/headstart_to_integration.pdf.

75 Author interview with Karen Clark-Verbisky and Caroline Liebenberg, Assistant Director and Senior Policy Analyst, Settlement and Integration Policy, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 16 January 2018.

76 Author interview with Rachel Kidd and Rachel O'Conner, New Zealand Red Cross.

77 Ibid.

On balance, it is valuable to provide refugees with at least a basic orientation prior to departure. This should include, at a minimum, a travel briefing, information on legal issues, and training on coping with new cultural and social situations. If a longer orientation is possible, this can be expanded to include information on life in the resettlement country, basic language instruction, and skills assessments. Importantly, some information from a longer predeparture curriculum may need to be repeated and expanded upon after refugees arrive, and this need for repetition should not be taken as an indicator of programme failure.⁷⁸

Ultimately, because decisions about exactly what to provide before departure and after arrival depend to a large extent on resettlement-country constraints and resources, the limitations of the first-asylum-country context, and the needs of the specific refugee population, no one model will be perfectly transferrable across contexts. Programmes will need to remain flexible and adopt models that fit the resettlement situation at hand.

D. Who should deliver the orientation?

Policymakers tasked with designing predeparture orientation programmes have a range of options when it comes to deciding who should organise and deliver information to refugees. Orientation delivery commonly involves one or more of three types of actors:

1. international and nongovernmental organisations;
2. national or subnational government authorities; and
3. country-specific nonstate actors, such as representatives of civil society or institutions of higher education.

These choices are not mutually exclusive. Only a few resettlement states rely solely on national authorities for predeparture orientation programme delivery. Most either contract with an international organisation or adopt a blended approach and cooperate with a mix of state and nonstate actors. Out of the seven countries analysed in depth for this study, only the Netherlands solely tasks national authorities with programme design and delivery (see Table 1).⁷⁹ In contrast, three countries (Austria, Canada, and Portugal) rely on IOM, while three others (Finland, Norway, and Romania) have blended programme models involving subnational authorities, civil-society organisations, and/or higher education institutions alongside IOM.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Rather, as one trainer explained, ‘they may not remember it now, but they will remember these things more easily the next time they are told—it’s about repetition.’ Author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

⁷⁹ Outside of the case-study countries, Belgium also takes this approach.

⁸⁰ Norway is listed amongst resettlement states using a blended approach because it recruits and trains crosscultural facilitators, with a preference given to those who work on resettlement in receiving municipalities. Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

Table 1. Organisations responsible for delivering predeparture orientation for the case-study countries

Resettlement country	Type of organisation		
	National nonstate actor	International organisation	(Sub-)national authority
Austria		International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Austria	
Canada		IOM staff in first-asylum countries	
Finland	Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak)	IOM Finland	
The Netherlands			Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
Norway		IOM Norway, with bicultural trainers recruited from Norway	
Portugal		IOM staff in first-asylum countries	
Romania	Schottener Foundation	IOM staff in first-asylum countries	

Source: Compilation by the authors.

Which actors are best placed to deliver predeparture orientation depends to some extent on the orientation’s intended purpose, content, and format. In any case, there are a few basic criteria to keep in mind when deciding who should be tasked with training delivery. Ideally, the involved organisation(s) should:

- be familiar with the specific refugee population and how to tailor instruction to their needs;
- be familiar with life in the resettlement country;
- provide trainers who refugees will view as credible and neutral sources of information, and who are trained in intercultural communication; and
- provide a curriculum that is suited to adult and refugee learners, and that uses a variety of instructional methodologies to cater to different learning needs and styles.

The following subsection provides an overview of the roles different actors take on in the delivery of orientations, highlighting their added value and challenges.

1. International and nongovernmental organisations

A common approach amongst resettlement states both within and outside of Europe is to partly or fully out-source the delivery of predeparture orientations. A range of international and nongovernmental organisations, such as the IOM, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Church World Service (CWS), have the expertise and capacity to do this. While European resettlement states typically rely on the IOM to develop and/or deliver orientation, some non-European resettlement states, such as the United States, turn to international nongovernmental organisations such as the IRC and CWS.

Working with external partners can have several advantages. First, based on years of experience, international organisations bring in-depth knowledge to the table when designing and implementing orientation programmes. IOM, for example, has developed extensive in-house guidance regarding which instructional techniques work best for refugees, what questions they are most likely to raise, and how to deal with sensitive topics such as gender roles. IOM programme managers and trainers (regardless of whether they are based in first-asylum or resettlement countries) benefit from this knowledge and training,⁸¹ and several resettlement country officials indicated that they chose to work with IOM specifically for this reason.⁸²

Based on years of experience, international organisations bring in-depth knowledge to the table when designing and implementing orientation programmes.

In addition, international and nongovernmental organisations have offices and staff members on the ground in many countries of first asylum who can provide trainings on an ongoing basis. If trainers are citizens or residents of these refugee-hosting countries, they may be more familiar with refugees' current living conditions and able to relate and respond to their information needs prior to departure.⁸³ In addition, this approach allows states with small resettlement quotas or no presence in a first-asylum country to avoid having to invest in building in-house capacity to provide trainings, potentially sparing destination-country policymakers logistical headaches and costs. Austria, for example, accepts only dossier cases; relying on IOM trainers to deliver its orientation programme allows it to skip the expense and difficulty of sending its own staff abroad.⁸⁴

Finally, organisations that provide orientation programmes for multiple resettlement states are able to harmonise the information provided and send a more uniform message to refugees. Trainers have reported that in first-asylum countries from which refugees are being resettled to a variety of countries, refugees sometimes compare the information they receive in predeparture training, leading to rumours that some resettlement countries are better than others and potentially undermining the enthusiasm of those matched with countries perceived as less desirable. To the extent that information can be harmonised, these rumours and the stress they can cause refugees may be avoidable.⁸⁵ For example, IOM Turkey currently employs six permanent staff members who deliver orientation programmes for sixteen resettlement states, with the result that they can ensure some consistency in the information that they provide.⁸⁶

81 According to IOM Turkey, locally hired trainers receive three weeks of training on IOM instructional techniques. Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

82 Author interview with Kofi Amankwah, IMDi; author interview with Crina Antea, Resettlement Officer, Romanian Government, 23 March 2018.

83 Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

84 Author interview with Caroline Jennewein, representative of Resettlement, Return, and International Affairs, Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior, 22 February 2018. Both the United Kingdom and Italy resettle refugees without an in-person interview (i.e., through dossier processing) and work with IOM to provide predeparture orientations. And Romania, which uses IOM Turkey to deliver parts of its orientation to refugees in that country, also indicated that doing so was cheaper than using its own staff. Author interview with Crina Antea, Romanian Government.

85 Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

86 Ibid.

There can, however, also be downsides to outsourcing training. When trainers are based in countries of first asylum and serve multiple resettlement countries, there is a risk that they lack the depth of knowledge that comes with personal experience of living in a certain resettlement country, making it difficult to answer very specific questions and potentially undermining their credibility with refugees. To mitigate this risk, some resettlement countries that rely on locally hired trainers arrange for them to participate in train-the-trainer sessions in the resettlement country and to visit its reception facilities.⁸⁷ In a slightly different approach, IOM Norway has hired social service workers from Norway who have a refugee or immigrant background and trained them to deliver predeparture orientation to refugees preparing for life in that country.⁸⁸ These trainers still benefit from IOM's curriculum, experience, and knowledge of first-asylum countries, but they are also able to draw on their own experiences settling in Norway.

2. National and subnational authorities

Some resettlement states have developed in-house capacity to conduct predeparture orientation. Trainers are typically employed either by national authorities responsible for asylum and migration issues or by municipal or regional authorities tasked with receiving resettling refugees. Both the Belgian and Dutch orientation programmes, for example, are managed by a single agency (the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, or Fedasil, in Belgium and the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers in the Netherlands).

The Dutch government's decision that national authorities should deliver orientations was based on the value they attach to trainers' personal knowledge of the Netherlands and its reception and integration system.

A key advantage of this model is its use of trainers sent directly from the resettlement state, all of whom have personal experience with its ways of life and are familiar with the national reception context, labour market, and educational and welfare systems. This enables them to deliver in-depth information, adequately address refugees' questions, and convey cultural habits or norms and credibly debunk rumours.⁸⁹ For example, the Dutch government's decision that national authorities should deliver orientations was based on the value they attach to trainers' personal knowledge of the Netherlands and its reception and integration system.⁹⁰

Furthermore, if the same trainers who provide predeparture orientation are also involved in the reception of resettled refugees, this can create valuable continuity in service provision. For example, Dutch trainers meet refugees at the airport when they arrive and accompany them to their new homes; they also do follow-up visits to check how refugees are faring after several months, and some maintain contact with refugees through WhatsApp or Facebook for the first few months after they arrive.⁹¹ This practice directly holds trainers accountable for the information they provide and gives refugees a chance to turn to the same person with questions or concerns in both the predeparture and postarrival periods. A different way to ensure such continuity can be found in Finland, where integration experts representing municipal and regional authorities gather

87 The Canadian Orientation Abroad programme arranges regular visits to Canada for trainers, and IOM Portugal has plans to arrange similar visits for its trainers. Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM; author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal.

88 Author interview with Kofi Amankwah, IMDi.

89 Author interview with Sanja Alikalfic, UNHCR Turkey.

90 Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

91 In order to maintain professional boundaries, the contact details the trainers share are professional accounts created for this purpose, and the accounts typically expire after a certain period of time. Ibid.; author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

information on the profiles of individual resettling refugees during selection missions. This information is shared with receiving municipalities to give them the opportunity to better prepare for the refugees' arrival.⁹²

Yet trainers based in resettlement countries may be less familiar with refugees' information needs and concerns prior to resettlement, and there is a risk that refugees may not regard trainers representing national authorities as neutral messengers. According to a Norwegian government official, previously resettled refugees viewed IOM staff as 'the good guys', as compared to national authorities who had been involved in the selection of refugees for resettlement.⁹³ In addition, national authorities and civil-society groups in states with no or little previous experience resettling refugees are likely to lack expertise and face considerable start-up costs. Countries that choose to design, organise, and implement their own orientation programmes will need to invest in comprehensive training and ongoing support for their staff.⁹⁴

3. National nonstate actors

In some resettlement states, nonstate actors such as higher education institutions are involved in the delivery of orientation, often taking on one of two main roles.⁹⁵ Higher education institutes that have specialised expertise in teaching immigrant language learners may be able assist national policymakers and organisations in designing curricula for resettling refugees. Alternatively, representatives of civil society and higher education institutes can participate directly in orientation delivery. In Romania, IOM cooperates with the Schottener Foundation to deliver orientation.⁹⁶ And in the Finnish orientation, IOM staff deliver training on intercultural skills and the travel briefing, while staff from the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) provide Finnish language instruction and practical information about everyday life in Finland.⁹⁷

Higher education institutes that have specialised expertise in teaching immigrant language learners may be able assist national policymakers and organisations in designing curricula for resettling refugees.

Like involving national agencies, this approach allows resettlement states to benefit from international organisations' human resources, contextual knowledge, and experience, while simultaneously providing information tailored to the resettlement-country context. In addition, both Finnish and Romanian interviewees argued that the involvement of nonstate actors facilitated continuity. For example, in the case of Finland, language trainers from Diak ensure that the format and methodological approach of predeparture Finnish-language training mirrors the language courses refugees will attend after arrival.⁹⁸ And in the Romanian programme, trainers from the Schottener Foundation are involved in both predeparture sessions and delivering more in-depth postarrival orientation, ensuring the refugees will meet a familiar face after arrival.⁹⁹

92 Information on refugees' profiles is also used to assess whether refugees meet the requirements for admission to Finland. Author interview with Jaana Suokonautio, Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment for Uusimaa.

93 Author interview with Kofi Amankwah, IMDi.

94 In Belgium, for example, in addition to training staff, Fedasil has developed a code of conduct for its employees in which neutrality plays a central role. Author email exchange with Vinciane Masurelle and Rosa-Lie Craps, Head of International Relations and Resettlement Officer, Fedasil, 20 March 2019.

95 This is, for example, the case in Finland, Norway, and Romania.

96 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

97 Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

98 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland.

99 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES

Regardless of the precise model resettlement officials choose for their predeparture orientation programme, effective programmes share a set of common features, explored in this section.

A. Deliver orientation in a credible and accessible manner

How trainings are delivered—from the instructional techniques used to who is serving as a trainer—can have a major influence on the extent to which refugees regard the information they receive as credible. There are several tools policymakers and practitioners tasked with the design and delivery of orientations can apply to ensure that information is both accessible to and trusted by refugees, including particular instructional techniques, tailored sessions, and the involvement of crosscultural facilitators or previously resettled refugees.¹⁰⁰

1. Using instructional techniques that are engaging and appropriate for the participants

To ensure that information reaches and resonates with all refugees in an orientation, it is important to combine different modes of delivery and instructional styles. Pedagogical techniques commonly used to teach youth in schools—such as lectures and written assignments—cannot simply be transferred into the context of adult learning. In comparison to younger learners, adults tend to respond better to self-directed and autonomous ways of learning.¹⁰¹ This could be achieved by asking learners to work in smaller groups, tasking them with small projects outside of training time,¹⁰² using checklists to help them identify learning targets,¹⁰³ or establishing learning contracts between teachers and adult learners.¹⁰⁴ In the context of predeparture orientation for refugees, this means that, at a minimum, trainers need to be flexible and able to adapt their instructional methods and materials to engage participants who may vary in age, educational experience, and learning style.

Interactive techniques can help to keep participants engaged, while also giving trainers a chance to check how much information participants are retaining. Interactive approaches can include games, role playing, discussion groups, and storytelling, or visual techniques, such as the use of objects and photos. For example, after a thematic bloc on rights and responsibilities, IOM Austria trainers show photos of everyday life situations in Austria and ask participants to judge whether each situation is legally admissible and socially acceptable.¹⁰⁵ In order to explain the abstract concept of multiculturalism, trainers delivering Canadian Orientation Abroad

¹⁰⁰ As part of the European Union Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) project, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has developed this type of training for resettlement officials, which includes both practical and methodological guidance on how to design and deliver predeparture orientations.

¹⁰¹ Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (Boston: Elsevier, 2005), 265.

¹⁰² Richard Rossner, *Quality in the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants: From Values to Policy and Practice* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Education Policy Division, 2014), 37, <https://rm.coe.int/1680305c65>.

¹⁰³ David Little, *The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2012), <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1ca>; David Little, *The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants and the European Language Portfolio: Goal-Setting and Self-Assessment Checklists* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2012), <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1cc>.

¹⁰⁴ Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson, *The Adult Learner*, 265–71.

¹⁰⁵ Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

sessions ask participants to identify who is Canadian by showing them photos of people with diverse backgrounds, all of whom, as the trainers later reveal, are in fact Canadians.¹⁰⁶

Written materials and technological tools can complement in-person training and give refugees the chance to continue learning independently during the waiting period before departure. For example, written materials can help refugees deepen their knowledge of the resettlement country, and learning aids such as the MP3 players handed out by Dutch orientation trainers can enable refugees to enhance their language skills.¹⁰⁷ Yet these resources should not replace in-person training entirely, and both written information and technological tools should be carefully adapted to the context, aims, and participants of an orientation training.

2. Tailoring trainings to refugees' needs

The needs, concerns, knowledge, and capabilities of refugees vary tremendously. Trainings that rely heavily on written exercises will be of little use to a preliterate population, for example, while refugees from highly educated, urban, middle-income backgrounds are less likely to benefit from extensive explanations of how to safely use common household appliances. To be useful for refugees, orientation programmes must thus be tailored as much as possible to the specific needs and backgrounds of the participating individuals and families.

Crucially, there may be a need to tailor orientation within as well as between refugee groups. While there are differences between refugees from Syria and those from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there are also differences within each group that can affect the appropriateness of training methods and content. Chief among these are a diversity of cultural norms, refugees' relative familiarity with life in middle- and high-income countries, varying literacy and education levels, and the amount of time spent in exile (with implications for access to schooling). Furthermore, refugees from different regions within an origin country may hold varying beliefs about how to interact with orientation trainers and with local authorities and service providers in resettlement states.

There may be a need to tailor orientation within as well as between refugee groups.

In order to address specific concerns or better adapt orientation to the particular profiles of refugees, some resettlement states offer special sessions within a broader training programme for groups with unique needs. Canada, Norway, and Finland all offer special training sessions for youth. Canada's youth orientation lasts between one to one and a half hours per day and takes place following adult sessions,¹⁰⁸ and Norway provides two full days of youth-centred orientation for refugees between the ages of 8 and 15.¹⁰⁹ Youth sessions typically revolve around what kinds of food and weather to expect,¹¹⁰ how to make friends at school,¹¹¹ how to deal with incidents of bullying or gangs, and what dating practices are common in the resettlement country.¹¹² Like sessions for youth, special sessions or breakout groups for refugees of different genders are common during orientations,¹¹³ though these are usually more brief. Finland, for example, offers separate orientation sessions for male and female refugees on the second day of training, each led by trainers of the same gender, in order to provide a safe space for participants to raise gender-sensitive issues.¹¹⁴

106 Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

107 Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

108 Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

109 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

110 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland.

111 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

112 Author interview with Louise Bélanger, IOM.

113 Dutch trainers adapt their programme schedule to the needs of female refugees if there is a sense that they are not being heard or receiving enough attention. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

114 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland; author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

In order to tailor both content and methodologies, orientation providers need information about participants. Insights into resettling refugees' education levels, literacy skills, age, family composition, previous employment, living conditions, and medical or psychological needs are valuable pieces of information. Finnish integration experts, for example, use the selection phase for both dossier and nondossier cases as an opportunity to collect additional information about resettling refugees.¹¹⁵ In cases where it is not possible to gather such information prior to orientation, embassy staff and international organisations with an established presence in host countries are well placed to compile a general overview of the local context and profile of refugee populations.¹¹⁶ In addition, local authorities and service providers in resettlement states could provide input based on previous experiences with the reception of refugees from particular countries of origin that can be used to tailor the delivery of training for similar groups.¹¹⁷

3. Incorporating the voices of previously resettled refugees and other trusted figures

The decision of who delivers information has implications for whether or not resettling refugees will perceive it as credible.¹¹⁸ Refugees may be more likely to accept information that comes from someone who has a similar background to them or who has experienced migration or resettlement themselves.¹¹⁹

One option is to engage crosscultural facilitators who share the linguistic and cultural background of resettling refugees and who have personal experience with life in the resettlement country.¹²⁰ While some crosscultural trainers may themselves be resettled refugees, others may have arrived in the resettlement country under other immigration circumstances (e.g., as asylum seekers or students). In the case of Norway, crosscultural trainers are also representatives of local municipalities who enter short-term contracts with IOM to deliver orientation sessions.¹²¹

Several interviewees noted that such facilitators are particularly well-placed to convey information credibly, regardless of whether they are affiliated with international organisations or national authorities.¹²² Crosscultural trainers can act as interpreters as well as bridge-builders between participants and trainers without an immigrant background. IOM Austria's stated aim in using this approach is to foster trust with participants and provide a realistic impression of the country.¹²³

115 For example, both Dutch and Finnish government officials inform trainers of refugees' profiles ahead of orientation using information collected during selection missions. In Finland, national authorities organise a coordination meeting with trainers to discuss the profile and special needs of each refugee, with a focus on their age, medical and psychological needs, language skills, and educational background. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands; author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

116 IOM offices, for example, are found in nearly all countries worldwide. This enables the organisation's orientation trainers to develop in-depth knowledge of refugee populations and their living conditions in host countries.

117 Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland.

118 Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

119 Ibid.; author interview with Sanja Alikalfic, UNHCR Turkey; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway; author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland; author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania. See also Michael Collyer, Rupert Brown, Linda Morrice, and Linda Tip, 'Putting Refugees at the Centre of Resettlement in the UK', *Forced Migration Review* 54 (2017): 16–19, www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/resettlement/collyer-brown-morrice-tip.pdf; Stephen Pindie, 'IOM's Role in Refugee Resettlement and Integration' (presentation at Refugee Resettlement Conference, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, 14–16 September 2016), www.sussex.ac.uk/migration/research/integrationcitizenship/refugeeresettlement/conference-blogs.

120 Pindie, 'IOM's Role in Refugee Resettlement and Integration'.

121 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

122 Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service; author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal; author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria; author interview with Ariane den Uyl, Dutch Council for Refugees; author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway; author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey; author interview with Sanja Alikalfic, UNHCR Turkey.

123 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

The inclusion of previously resettled refugees also enables information to be delivered in an authentic and balanced way. Instead of only focusing on positive aspects of resettlement, they can share insights on the struggles newly resettling refugees may face and better prepare them mentally for the transition ahead.¹²⁴ This is commonly done either via live Skype sessions or less directly via video testimonies.

B. Create continuity between predeparture and postarrival services

Rather than a one-off exercise prior to departure, the most effective orientation programmes form the first stage in a continuum that links refugees with the provision of accommodation, social services, and integration support they will need after arrival. With this goal in mind, resettlement countries have taken different steps to create more continuity between the predeparture and postarrival phases.

In some predeparture programmes, the trainers are integration service providers who will also work with refugees after arrival. In Romania, a trainer from the country's predeparture orientation accompanies refugees in their travel and becomes their case worker for their first months in the country.¹²⁵ Belgium and the Netherlands achieve a similar effect by having the government agencies that arrange refugees reception deliver their orientation. For countries where this approach is not possible or too logistically demanding, technologies such as Skype may offer a way to connect refugees awaiting resettlement with service providers, as has been done in the United Kingdom. Having a familiar face at the airport or a known contact point to rely on and turn to with questions can make the resettlement process much less daunting.

In Romania, a trainer from the country's predeparture orientation accompanies refugees in their travel and becomes their case worker for their first months in the country.

A second means of building a service continuum, noted above, is to use the predeparture period to collect valuable information on refugees that social and integration service providers can use to offer more personalised support after arrival. Most resettlement programmes share information from UNHCR files or selection missions with service providers before refugees arrive, and some have explored ways to expand the information available. Finland and the Netherlands, for example, send reception and integration service providers along on selection missions to collect more detailed information on refugees' needs. And the Netherlands includes hour-long individual meetings between trainers and refugee families in each of its three orientation sessions; the trainers' notes are then added to refugees' case files and shared with reception service providers. Municipal service providers can also request specific information about refugees to better prepare for their arrival.¹²⁶

124 Author interview with Yusuf Koroglu and Dmytro Dmytrenko, IOM Turkey.

125 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

126 For example, in the training observed by the study team in Kampala, service providers in one community requested that the trainers ask refugees for their shoe sizes so that the municipality could purchase shoes for the families before they arrived. Author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

C. Use the predeparture period to prepare resettlement communities as well as refugees

While not typically thought of as the target beneficiaries of orientation activities, resettlement communities and service providers can benefit from being included in the predeparture orientation process. Just like refugees, resettlement communities will undergo cultural adjustment as newcomers arrive. Particularly in communities that are new to resettlement, neighbours, service providers, and other community members may be confronted with behaviours or attitudes that are unfamiliar or uncomfortable to them. Newcomers may have different norms and communication styles that govern social interactions (such as body language or verbal cues), which could be difficult for community members to interpret and can lead to miscommunication.

For this reason, a number of resettlement countries have begun to include communities and local actors more intentionally in predeparture orientation activities. IOM staff in Norway and the United Kingdom offer formal orientation sessions for municipal representatives and other community members who will work with resettled refugees (including teachers, school officials, and social workers), and Finland has introduced community orientation sessions as well.¹²⁷ And in the Netherlands, the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers provides receiving communities with written information about each incoming group of resettling refugees, and predeparture orientation trainers are available to provide information meetings for community members, including representatives of the schools refugee children will attend.¹²⁸

Orientation sessions such as these are intended to give community members a framework for interpreting differences and understanding refugees' perspectives and experiences. The community orientation sessions offered by IOM in Norway, for example, include a briefing on the conflicts refugees have fled (such as the war in Syria), what life was like in countries of first asylum (e.g., for refugees in Lebanon), common cultural norms (such as gender roles or communication styles), and potential integration challenges.¹²⁹ The training also provides information on the resettlement process, including what refugees have been told during predeparture training and what they are likely to know about Norway. Trainers explain that refugees will not arrive in Norway completely prepared, even though they have had predeparture orientation; rather some things will need to be explained and repeated several times (e.g., how to dress for Norwegian winters), and adaptation and learning will take time.

Some programmes also aim to help community members understand how refugees perceive their resettlement experience and new communities, and how they are likely to interpret or react to common situations. In the United Kingdom, crosscultural trainers (UK residents with knowledge of resettling refugees' countries of origin) provide local authorities and service providers with information about refugees' countries and experiences prior to resettlement.¹³⁰ In Norway, crosscultural trainers, often refugees themselves, share how they viewed Norwegian society and what cultural practices were confusing to them when they first arrived. In another activity, participants are asked to try writing their names with their nondominant hand to demonstrate how hard it can be change ingrained habits.¹³¹

127 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway; author email exchange with Jo De Backer, IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the European Union, and NATO; presentation by IOM UK at the meeting of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement/Working Group on Resettlement, 'Integration and New Partnerships', Friedland and Berlin, 21–23 February 2018.

128 If resettling refugees grant their permission, this information can also include specific details about incoming families. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

129 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

130 Presentation by IOM UK at the meeting of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement/Working Group on Resettlement, 'Integration and New Partnerships', Friedland and Berlin, 21–23 February 2018.

131 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

D. Minimise environmental stress

Regardless of when orientation occurs, it is important that refugees are in an environment and mindset that are conducive to learning. The effectiveness of orientation activities can be undermined if participants are stressed or distracted. To the extent possible, programme managers should ensure that orientations take place in a setting and at a time that allow refugees to be fully involved in the training activities.

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Typically, orientation programmes take place in hotels or the offices of international organisations in first-asylum countries. Participants either stay in the hotel for the duration of the orientation or are accommodated in close proximity to minimise the time and effort it takes to get to the venue. In order to increase participants' wellbeing and comfort, trainers should strive to create a friendly and safe learning environment, and to ensure that lunch, snacks, and drinks are available. For example, Dutch trainers delivering orientation to refugees resettling from Uganda brought along a Dutch flag and decorated the room with posters, words of songs, pictures of public transportation, and a map with pictures of families taped over their municipalities.¹³² In addition, these trainers tried to group participating families together according to their native language to ensure that everyone had access to an interpreter.

The provision of child care is crucial to ensure that refugee parents can fully concentrate on the information and skills discussed during orientation. In addition, activities in the child-care group such as storytelling and games can be used to prepare children in playful ways for their upcoming journey. The Finnish orientation delegation includes several child-care workers to mind children under the age of 12 while their parents participate in orientations.¹³³ They provide young refugees with age-appropriate information about Finland, discuss topics such as Finnish food and weather, and teach the children some Finnish words. In the case of Austria, children under the age of 14 can attend day care at the hotel in which orientations take place. They are also allowed to pop in and out of the adult orientation sessions, if they wish. IOM Austria brings along different toys, including colouring books with Austrian themes, to keep children busy for the duration of the sessions.¹³⁴

E. Incorporate monitoring, evaluation, and continuous learning into programme design and delivery

It is difficult to isolate the impact that refugees' participation in orientation has on their preparedness and integration trajectories from that of other factors. Nonetheless, regular monitoring and evaluation of orientation practices can give policymakers, programme designers, and trainers invaluable insight into whether trainings are meeting their intended goals and how resettled refugees integrate over time—findings that can be fed into the design of future orientations.

¹³² Author observation of the Dutch orientation programme in Kampala.

¹³³ Author interview with Hanna Viljamaa, IOM Finland.

¹³⁴ Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

Some resettlement states collect feedback informally based on the observations of trainers or from comments by refugees during or after the training.¹³⁵ Using only informal methods to monitor an orientation, however, creates the risk that any lessons learned, potential problems, or successes will not or will only partially be fed back into the broader design and implementation of the programme. To create more formal monitoring procedures, some countries use questionnaires, surveys, or pre- and post-tests that are delivered during the training and after refugees arrive in the resettlement country.¹³⁶ For example, IOM Romania distributes questionnaires that refugees are asked to complete for the first time immediately after attending orientation and then again 45 days after their arrival in Romania.¹³⁷ Trainers also collect oral feedback from participants at the end of each training. Similarly, IOM Austria uses feedback surveys in which participants are asked to rate aspects of the training by choosing different smiley faces.¹³⁸ Some orientation providers have expressed concerns, however, that the information gathered through these assessments is not always useful. When asked whether the training was helpful, one interviewee noted that refugees nearly always said yes or would describe the quality of the food or hotel, rather than the information provided.¹³⁹

In order to get a more accurate view of how useful predeparture programming is, IOM Portugal has begun to do follow-up interviews with refugees three months after they arrive. Programme managers report that this approach has proved to be an incredibly rich source of feedback, more so than written questionnaires.¹⁴⁰ In the Netherlands, predeparture orientation trainers stay in touch with resettled refugees after arrival to learn from their experiences and perspectives on the integration process, and use their feedback to inform orientations for future cohorts.¹⁴¹ Similarly, IOM Norway meets with resettled refugees, orientation trainers, and service providers in the receiving community a few times per year to discuss which elements of their orientation were or were not useful.¹⁴² However, interviews can be both time-consuming and costly, particularly in terms of the human resources. In Austria, for example, programme managers were not able to collect direct feedback from resettled refugees after their arrival due to budget constraints.¹⁴³

Regardless of whether monitoring and evaluation is done primarily through formal or informal means, an effective feedback loop is needed to ensure this evidence is used to improve the design and implementation of future orientation programmes. Such feedback loops ideally encompass a broad range of actors involved in the various phases of the resettlement process, ranging from resettled refugees and orientation trainers, to local authorities, civil-society organisations, volunteers, and policymakers. In Austria, IOM is in contact with ARGE Resettlement, an association of nongovernmental organisations that support resettled refugees' integration after arrival, to gather feedback on how refugees are faring.¹⁴⁴ To facilitate communication between the different actors engaged in resettlement, ARGE Resettlement created a flowchart outlining various actors' responsibilities and contact information.¹⁴⁵ And in Norway, government officials conduct annual formal evaluations of municipalities' reception of resettled refugees and regularly meet with representatives of IOM Norway to debrief on how the delivery of orientation trainings went and whether there is any particular

135 For example, due to their comparatively small domestic networks, Dutch and Finnish officials also communicate directly with municipalities, which provide feedback on the integration trajectory of resettled refugees and on the orientation training. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands; author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

136 For example, the Dutch government did a survey with resettled refugees in 2015 to ask about their wellbeing and integration outcomes following resettlement. IMDi in Norway sends surveys to receiving municipalities to collect feedback on refugees' integration. Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands; author interview with Lubna Makhoul, Municipality of Nome.

137 Author interview with Maria Voica, IOM Romania.

138 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

139 Author interview with Marjo Mäkelä, Finnish Immigration Service.

140 Author interview with Constança Turquin, IOM Portugal.

141 Author interview with Nicolien Rengers, Government of the Netherlands.

142 Author interview with William Kweku Paintsil, IOM Norway.

143 Author interview with Barbara Kurz, Caritas Austria.

144 Author interview with Katharina Benedetter and Elisabeth Hochenegger, IOM Austria.

145 *Ibid.* The Austrian Resettlement Association (ARGE Resettlement) includes representatives from Caritas, the Red Cross, and Diakonie Austria, which work in cooperation with UNHCR and IOM Austria.

information about individual resettled refugees that municipalities need to know (such as medical conditions that may need special attention).¹⁴⁶

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For refugees, the period of time between when they are selected for resettlement and when they arrive in their new country can be exciting, confusing, and stressful all at once. For resettlement countries, the predeparture and immediate postarrival periods present a critical opportunity to ensure that refugees are able to navigate the transition from their old to their new lives as smoothly as possible. Orientation programmes are an important tool for resettlement countries to aid refugees in making this transition.

The predeparture and immediate postarrival periods present a critical opportunity to ensure that refugees are able to navigate the transition from their old to their new lives as smoothly as possible.

Exactly when, where, and how that orientation is provided vary tremendously across resettlement countries. While some countries have invested in providing extensive programming that last several weeks before departure (e.g., the Netherlands), others offer much briefer two- or three-day trainings (such as Austria and Portugal). Still others forgo predeparture training entirely and instead provide orientation after refugees arrive, as in New Zealand.

When it comes to programme content, some elements must obviously be delivered before refugees depart. Travel information, for example, is of little use to refugees who have already undergone the journey. And giving refugees information on the rights and benefits they can expect to receive in their destination country before they depart can help them to make an informed decision about their resettlement. Other information, such as details about the municipality where they will settle or instructions on how to access specific services, could conceivably wait until shortly after refugees arrive—though some details may help refugees begin to prepare mentally and emotionally for their new lives.

Resettlement countries also differ in terms of the training providers they prefer to work with and how they prefer to organise orientations. For newer resettlement countries and those with more limited in-house resources or expertise, it may make sense to work with an experienced international organisation, such as IOM, or an international nonprofit, such as ICMC or CWS, to plan and deliver orientation programmes. External partners such as these have extensive previous experience in a range of resettlement contexts, a network of experienced trainers in countries of first asylum, and detailed knowledge of the circumstances in which refugees find themselves that can be used to tailor orientations appropriately. Some more established resettlement countries that have extensive experience managing the resettlement process, and those that prefer to have close oversight of the training and predeparture process, may opt to design and deliver orientations themselves. Still other countries prefer a blended model, in which national authorities pair with international partners to conduct different parts of the orientation and predeparture process.

Ultimately, resettlement-country decisions about what training to provide to refugees, and when and how this is to be done, will depend to a large extent on their resources and priorities and on the constraints of the specific refugee situation. In some first-asylum countries, such as Turkey, complicated logistics may dictate that

¹⁴⁶ Author interview with Kofi Amankwah, IMDi.

orientation be provided during selection or immediately prior to departure. In other settings, a more extended orientation may be possible. Regardless of the model chosen, however, several basic principles should inform programme design:

- The curriculum should focus as much on developing a positive attitude towards resettlement and the resettlement country—and on building cultural mediation and coping skills—as on conveying specific information.
- The content of the orientation and the instructional techniques used should be tailored as much as possible to the needs and capacities of the specific refugee population, and trainers should consider offering separate training sessions for specific groups (such as youth or women), when necessary.
- Whenever possible, orientations should incorporate the voices and expertise of previously resettled refugees (for example, through Skype sessions or testimonial videos, or by hiring trainers who are themselves resettled refugees). Their perspectives and experiences are a valuable source of information and will be viewed as credible by refugees who are awaiting departure themselves.
- Service providers in resettlement communities should be involved in predeparture orientation whenever possible, including through regular communication with trainers. They should also be invited to provide feedback and ask questions about the orientation process or the refugees with whom they will soon be working.
- Regardless of when in the resettlement process orientation is provided, the space in which it occurs should make refugees feel safe and should be free of stressors or distractions.

Evaluations of resettlement programmes with and without orientation components—as well as trainer and service-provider observations—make clear that refugees benefit from an opportunity to learn and ask questions about the resettlement process and the place in which they will soon live. Orientation programmes give refugees critical information about how to manage the travel process and how to register their status in the resettlement country. They can also help refugees build the skills and confidence they need to interact with their new neighbours and navigate their community independently. Where there is enough time during the predeparture period, orientations can also jumpstart certain parts of the integration process, such as mapping refugees' job skills or learning the language.

But while investing in predeparture orientation is important, officials in charge of designing and implementing resettlement programmes can feel intense pressure to demonstrate that refugees are integrating into their new communities—and quickly. This is particularly the case where scepticism about refugee programmes (and immigration more broadly) has come to dominate the political environment, as in many EU Member States. In this context, it may be tempting to look to predeparture orientation as a tool to 'get integration right' from the very beginning. But no orientation programme will be able to teach refugees everything they need to know about life in the resettlement country—or to completely change their cultural attitudes or behaviours—in the space of just a few days. Policymakers, the public, and reception service providers must thus have realistic expectations regarding what even the most effective orientation programmes can do. Predeparture orientation can never replace postarrival reception and integration services. It can, however, help refugees begin to develop the knowledge and skills to navigate their new communities and societies, and the confidence to overcome challenges and setbacks—a solid foundation upon which reception and integration services can build.

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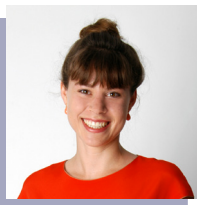
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Migration Policy Institute Europe, established in Brussels in 2011, is a non-profit, independent research institute that aims to provide a better understanding of migration in Europe and thus promote effective policymaking. Building upon the experience and resources of the Migration Policy Institute, which operates internationally, MPI Europe provides authoritative research and practical policy design to governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders who seek more effective management of immigration, immigrant integration, and asylum systems as well as successful outcomes for newcomers, families of immigrant background, and receiving communities throughout Europe. MPI Europe also provides a forum for the exchange of information on migration and immigrant integration practices within the European Union and Europe more generally.

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