

Summary of UNHCR Interim Report: Three Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Executive Summary

- The Three-Year Strategy (3YS) was developed in collaboration with 90 stakeholders and launched in 2019 by the UNHCR. The Strategy's goals are to: (1) grow resettlement, (2) advance complementary pathways, and (3) build a foundation for these by promoting welcoming societies.
- This interim report covers progress made on 3YS goals from June 2019 to September 2020.
- The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced resettlement and complementary pathways: only 15,425 refugees were resettled in the first nine months of 2020.
- However, the challenges of the pandemic also led to the creation of innovative processes and tools, including remote resettlement interviews and selection missions and virtual advocacy platforms. These tools should be maintained into the future, where they continue to add value.
- Working groups, communities of practice, advocacy groups and networks have continued to sustain efforts to increase complementary pathways in labour, education, family reunification, and community sponsorship. These efforts also “serve as bottom-up pressure on government to maintain and grow safe pathways”. (p. 14).
- There is sustained and growing interest by States and civil society around the world in community-based reception and integration models, including community sponsorship (p. 14).
- Despite the pandemic, there is hope that 2022 will be the largest single year ever for resettlement and complementary pathways (p. 14).
- The challenges and opportunities of the pandemic show the importance of refining and repeating a positive, evidence-based narrative on refugees and third country solutions.

Impact of COVID-19 on resettlement and complementary pathways

- 2020 was the first full year of the 3YS. The pandemic resulted in severe restrictions and limitations for third country durable solutions, which are likely to continue into 2021.
- Most resettlement was suspended from March to June 2020. Re-openings have been slow and partial. As of 30 September 2020, **18 countries** participated in resettling **15,425 refugees** whereas in 2019, **28 countries** resettled **63,000 refugees** (p. 3).
- Departures for pathways for family reunification, education and employment were delayed or halted- the goal of **140,000** admissions in 2020 was not met.
- The EU resettlement pledge for 2020 was changed to a two-year scheme. Commission funding for resettlement, community sponsorship, and complementary pathways, “will be central to the [3YS]’s success or failure in Europe over the coming years.” (p. 4).
- Overcoming the challenges of the pandemic has led to innovative processes and tools, such as remote resettlement interviews and selection missions; new and vigorous virtual advocacy platforms, communities of practice and networks to sustain and improve programmes (p. 4).

Progress on Goal 1 – Grow Resettlement

- Five states have increased their resettlement targets for 2020-2022: Canada, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, and Norway (see p. 5 for total increases).
- UNHCR and IOM launched the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (CRISP) Initiative 2020-2022 which aims to support States and key stakeholders to establish, expand or renew resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways (p. 3).
- UNHCR finalized a data sharing agreement with the United States in July 2020 to enable secure sharing of personal data and biometrics.
- The UNHCR has commissioned research to map global opportunities to grow third country solutions—carried out by MPI Europe and the University of Ottawa’s Refugee Hub, and due to report in Spring 2021 (p. 5).
- The Refugee Steering Group (RSG) first convened in Jan 2020: it has an important advisory role in the planning cycle of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR).
- The Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Network was established as a platform for EU+ states to exchange on operational, implementation and regional issues related to resettlement and humanitarian admissions.

Progress on Goal 2 – Advance Complementary Pathways

- In 2018, the OECD & UNHCR released a Study on third country solutions for refugees via family reunification, education, or labour pathways (2010-2017) (available [here](#)). The report was updated in 2019 to cover 2018 data (available [here](#)). The next update will be finalized at the end of 2020 (p. 7).
- In 2019, UNHCR Deployees specializing in complementary pathways were placed in 13 operations around the world for the first time (p. 2).
- December 2019: At the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, almost 80 commitments were made by stakeholders related to resettlement and complementary pathways (p. 3).
- October 2020: As part of a new policy framework for promoting complementary pathways, the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) put out a call for proposals to fund the design and implementation of complementary pathway programmes for labour, education, and family reunification in the EU (p. 7).

a. Labour pathways:

- **Australia:** In 2020, announced it would roll out a pilot program over the next 2 years to offer employment for up to 100 skilled refugees. (p. 9).
- **Canada:** In June 2020, announced that it would dramatically expand its [Economic Mobility Pathways Project](#) and bring 500 refugees to Canada in partnership with employers, communities, provinces and territories, and NGOs over 2 years. (p. 9).
- **UK:** committed to engage with NGOs over the next 12 months on identifying ways to improve access to labour market mobility for displaced persons. (p. 9)

b. Education Pathways:

- Education pathways—or strategies for implementing pathways—have been developed in Italy ([University Corridors](#)), Mexico ([Proyecto Habesha](#)), Thailand (via IIE [PEER](#)), and Asia-Pacific (joint Japan ICU Foundation and UNHCR Conference) (pp. 10-11).
- UNESCO, UNHCR and World University Services of Canada (WUSC): international conference to explore country-and region-specific needs for refugees to access education pathways: *Education Opportunities as Complementary Pathways for Admission*, Paris, Nov 2019.
- May 2020: **Education Task Force** launched and then announced at the ATCR.
- Initial two-year term: Task Force will promote the expansion of education complementary pathways- to help meet the *15by30* target: to increase tertiary education for refugees by 15% by 2030 (p. 10).
- The Task Force currently has 12 members:
 - [Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie](#) (AUF)
 - European Commission – DG Home
 - Government of Canada
 - Government of Portugal
 - [Institute of International Education \(IIE\)](#)
 - [Japan ICU Foundation](#)
 - Open Society Foundations (OSF)
 - Open Society University Network (OSUN)
 - [Unione delle Università del Mediterraneo](#) (UNIMED)
 - World Education Services (WES)
 - WUSC
- Sept 2020: UNHCR launched [Scholarship Opportunities for Refugees](#) portal that provides verified information on higher education programs available to refugees worldwide: the site will be expanded to include information on labour pathways (p. 11).

c. Family Reunification

- December 2020: UNHCR and partners launched the States-led Network on Family Reunification to share experience, collaborate and advocate to promote family unity for refugees globally (p. 8).
- In the first nine months of 2020, the Family Reunification Project (conducted by UNHCR, IRAP, RefugePoint, DLA Piper and Miles4Migrants) processed 243 individual children for family reunification and 396 children benefited from other related interventions (p. 9).

Progress on Goal 3 – Building the Foundation

- A number of states took steps towards the implementation of **community sponsorship programmes** with the assistance of the UNHCR, national governments, the GRSI and civil society actors (p. 12):
 - **Spain:** pledged to expand its sponsorship programme in the Basque country and consider implementation in other regions; new programme developed in Valencia.
 - **Belgium:** began implementing a community sponsorship programme: first refugee arrivals under the programme in Oct 2020.

- **Germany:** started a pilot project in 2019 called “[Newstart in team—NesT](#)” inspired by the private sponsorship programme in place in Germany since 2013 (p.12).
- **Ireland:** in December 2019, converted its pilot to a permanent community sponsorship programme.
- **Portugal:** working to implement a community sponsorship pilot project (expected in 2021).
- **New Zealand:** renewed its community sponsorship pilot and increased from 25 places in 2018 to up to **150** places across 2021-2023.
- GRSI provided active support to community sponsorship programmes around the world in 2020, particularly to support the sponsorship community during COVID-19 pandemic, including: convening virtual community calls to share strategies and tools to welcome refugees in lockdown, maintaining momentum for new programs through advocacy, continuing to grow the sponsor base (Germany, Argentina, UK), support policy design and re-design (Portugal, UK), and providing training for new programmes (Valencia, Spain, and Belgium). (p.12).
- Studies and consultations were undertaken to improve integration models across a number of states including across the EU, Iceland, and Sweden (pp. 13-14).
- UNHCR contracted the International Rescue Committee to review evidence of the impacts of government-led resettlement programs across six countries: Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States. The final report will cover observable outcomes in relation to costs and benefits of resettlement. The Final report is due: Dec 2020/early 2021.