

# Student, Worker or Refugee?

How complementary pathways for people in need of international protection work in practice

Sirkku Varjonen, Amanda Kinnunen, Juho-Matti Paavola, Farid Ramadan, Mika Raunio, Joanne van Selm, Tuuli Vilhunen

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Raunio, Mika; van Selm, Joanne; Vilhunen, Tuuli;**Language** English**Pages** 126**Abstract**

This report presents the key findings of the project *Complementary pathways for people in need of international protection: Learning from the evidence of pathways in practice (PATHS)*. The objective of the study was to obtain comprehensive information on what complementary pathways can mean in practice and describe what administrative and legislative solutions have been made by the countries applying these arrangements.

Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement refugee resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where the refugees' international protection needs are met. We distinguish between three types of pathways: labour-based, study-based, and other complementary pathways and examine examples of each.

Our main focus in this work is in labour- and study-based complementary pathways. In their contemporary form labour- and study-based pathways are mostly small-scale NGO-led programmes. Many of them are still in a pilot phase.

Complementary pathways have a great potential to offer protection and, at the same time, give an opportunity for skilled refugees to integrate into the receiving country through working or studying. Labour- and study programmes do not target the most vulnerable refugees, however, and cannot replace resettlement.

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## Opiskelija, työntekijä vai pakolainen?

### Kuinka kansainvälisen suojelun tarpeessa oleville tarkoitetut täydentävät väylät toimivat käytännössä

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#### Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja 2021:60

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#### Tiivistelmä

Tässä raportissa esitellään *Täydentävät maahanmuuton väylät kansainvälisen suojelun tarpeessa oleville ihmisille: Oppeja käytössä olevista väylistä (PATHS)* -selvityshankkeen keskeiset tulokset. Selvityksen tavoitteena oli luoda kokonaiskuva täydentävistä väylistä käytännössä sekä esitellä, minkälaisia hallinnollisia ja oikeudellisia ratkaisuja on tehty maissa, joissa näitä väyliä on käytössä.

Täydentävät väylät ovat turvallisia, uudelleensijoittamisohjelmia täydentäviä reittejä päästä maahan, jossa pakolaisten suojeluntarpeeseen voidaan vastata. Jaoimme väylät kolmeen eri tyyppiin: työperusteisiin, opiskeluperusteisiin sekä muihin täydentäviin väyliin ja tarkastelimme esimerkkejä jokaisesta.

Keskityimme tässä työssä erityisesti työ- ja opiskeluperusteisiin väyliin. Ne ovat nykymuodossaan pääsääntöisesti varsin uusia ja pienimuotoisia ei-valtiollisten toimijoiden vetämiä ohjelmia, joista monet ovat vielä pilottivaiheessa.

Täydentävillä väylillä on runsaasti potentiaalia ja ne tarjoavat kansainvälisen suojelun tarpeessa oleville osajille mahdollisuuksia kiinnittyä vastaanottavan maan yhteiskuntaan opiskelun tai työnteon kautta. Työ- ja opiskeluperusteiset väylät eivät kuitenkaan kohdenna kaikkien haavoittuvimmassa asemassa oleviin pakolaisiin, joten ne eivät voi korvata uudelleensijoittamisohjelmia.

**Klausuuli** Tämä julkaisu on toteutettu osana valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimussuunnitelman toimeenpanoa. (tietokayttoon.fi) Julkaisun sisällöstä vastaavat tiedon tuottajat, eikä tekstisisältö välttämättä edusta valtioneuvoston näkemystä.

**Asiasanat** täydentävät väylät, pakolaiset, maahanmuuttajat, maahanmuuttopolitiikka, pakolaispolitiikka, tutkimus, tutkimustoiminta

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## Student, arbetare eller flykting?

### Hur kompletterande vägar för personer i behov av internationell skydd fungerar i praktiken

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**Referat**

Denna rapport presenterar de centrala resultaten i forskningsprojektet *Kompletterande migrationsvägar för personer i behov av internationellt skydd: Kunskap om tillgängliga vägar (PATHS)*. Syftet med projektet var att skapa en helhetsbild av kompletterande vägar i praktiken samt presentera vilka administrativa och lagstiftningsmässiga lösningar har gjorts i länder där dessa vägar används.

De kompletterande vägarna är trygga och reglerade vägar som kompletterar vidarebosättningsprogram, och genom vilka flyktingar kan komma till ett land där deras behov av skydd kan tillgodoses. Vi delade upp vägarna i tre olika typer: arbetsbaserade, studiebaserade och andra kompletterande vägar, och vi granskar exempel på varje.

I detta arbete fokuserade vi särskilt på arbetsbaserade och studiebaserade vägar. I sin nuvarande form är de huvudsakligen ganska nya och småskaliga program som drivs av icke-statliga aktörer, och många av dem befinner sig fortfarande i pilotfasen.

Kompletterande vägar har stor potential och erbjuder experter i behov av skydd möjligheter att etablera sig i det mottagande landets samhälle genom att studera eller arbeta. Arbets- och studievägarna riktas dock inte till de mest utsatta flyktingarna och kan därför inte ersätta vidarebosättningsprogram.

**Klausul** Den här publikation är en del i genomförandet av statsrådets utrednings- och forskningsplan. (tietokayttoon.fi) De som producerar informationen ansvarar för innehållet i publikationen. Textinnehållet återspeglar inte nödvändigtvis statsrådets ståndpunkt**Nyckelord** Kompletterande migrationsvägar, flyktingar, invandrare, invandringspolitik, flyktingpolitik, forskning, forskningsverksamhet

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## List of abbreviations

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CRISP	Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EDUFI	The Finnish National Agency for Education
EU	European Union
EMPP	Economic Mobility Pathways Project
GCR	The Global Compact on Refugees
GRSI	Global Refugees Sponsorship Initiative
HOPES	Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians
ICMC	The International Catholic Migration Commission
ICU	International Christian University
IIE	Institute of International Education
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
JICUF	Japan International Christian University Foundation
NHS	National Health Service (UK)
NYD	New York Declaration
OAU	Organisation of Africa Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OET	Occupational English Test
SARF	Scholars at Risk Finland
SRF	Scholar Rescue Fund
TBB	Talent Beyond Boundaries
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (The UN Refugee Agency)
UNICORE	University Corridors for Refugees
WUSC	World University Service of Canada

# 1 Introduction

Complementary pathways have been defined by UNHCR (2019a, 5) as:

*safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where their international protection needs are met. They are additional to resettlement and do not substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime.*

Humanitarian admission programmes, private or community sponsorship programmes, humanitarian visas, family reunification (outside resettlement), and education and labour opportunities are examples of immigration channels that could count as complementary pathways (UNHCR 2019a). Complementary pathways could be an answer to several problems in the refugee protection field. There are very limited opportunities for resettlement globally, in part because this durable solution is resource intensive and viewed as a permanent move, and therefore not one taken lightly by either states or refugees. Only 4.5% of the refugees identified by UNHCR as being in need of resettlement were actually resettled in 2020. The percentage was particularly low partly due to the pandemic, but also due to low quotas made available by resettlement countries (Fratzke et al. 2021). For comparison: in 2014 approximately 10% of refugees in need of resettlement were resettled (UNHCR 2015). UNHCR estimates that in 2022 almost 1.5 million refugees will be in need of resettlement (UNHCR 2021a). This level of need will undoubtedly not be met. What is more, it is a tiny fraction of the forcibly displaced population, 82.4 million according to UNHCR (2021b). With often limited protection or prospects in neighbouring countries, and insufficient legal pathways to reach the longer-term safety of life in developed countries, refugees often find they have little choice but to take dangerous and sometimes fatal journeys, for example to Europe, resorting to smugglers who benefit economically. Their efforts to find protection and safety frequently then result in irregular migration, posing many challenges for them and for the receiving countries too.

Developing complementary pathways is now seen as one of the key strategies for managing the movement of more refugees: keeping some potential asylum seekers out of the hands of smugglers, avoiding many of the abuses and challenges posed by independent journeys, complementing resettlement, while allowing for a focus on non-refugee aspects of migration for some people whose need for safety can be met through channels other than asylum or resettlement.

In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (UN General Assembly 2016), governments voiced a commitment to strengthen and enhance mechanisms to protect people. Further, the Global Compact on Refugees adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018 stressed the expansion of legal access to third countries and emphasised making available pathways for admission that complement resettlement in ways that benefit both refugees and the communities that host them. Despite the growing demand for information, however, complementary pathways have not yet been thoroughly evaluated (van Selm 2020a).

This study has been carried out as part of the implementation of the Finnish Government Plan for Analysis, Assessment and Research. The research was conducted in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Foundation, Migration Institute of Finland, Oxford Research AB and an Independent consultant, Dr Joanne van Selm. The research team was led by Senior researcher, Dr Sirkku Varjonen from Rehabilitation foundation and the report was cowritten by Dr Varjonen, Researcher Farid Ramadan and Researcher Tuuli Vilhunen from Rehabilitation Foundation, Senior researcher Mika Raunio from the Migration Institute of Finland, Analyst Juho-Matti Paavola, Analyst Amanda Kinnunen and Analyst Stefanie Lange Scherbenske from Oxford Research and Dr Joanne van Selm. Director, Docent Riikka Shemeikka (Rehabilitation Foundation) and Julia Erginoz (Oxford Research) assisted in the project.

## 1.1 Aims

The objective of this research is to gather and provide information on the practical aspects of complementary pathways. This means examining the variety and nature of the complementary pathways internationally, particularly in the EU, and compiling what could amount to an annotated inventory of the situation to date. This study pulls together the evidence on the practical implications of complementary pathways, focusing on labour and study-based programmes in particular as relevant to the Finnish situation.

Examining experiences from existing complementary pathways is important for both national and international level discussions and debates on the need for and means of developing complementary pathways for legal migration of people in need of international protection. This research project contributes to knowledge concerning the development of legal migration pathways as part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration, as emphasised by the European Commission (2020). The aim of further developing the system of legal admission pathways is also mentioned in the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (2019).

As noted in the ERN+ (2018a) policy paper on three types of complementary pathways, 'Further policy-focused studies, both at national and EU level, could be engaged to investigate what works well, and come up with innovative approaches' (p. 29). By collecting information from and engaging in discussions with a wide array of experts working in the field, the project aims to inspire and support collective efforts to create and adopt new solutions to ensure more people can live their lives in safety.

In line with the research call and research questions mentioned in the terms of reference provided by the Prime Minister's office, the main emphasis of the report is on mapping and describing the currently existing complementary pathways on a practical level and not on evaluative perspectives or offering policy advice.<sup>1</sup> We will, however, also briefly discuss the functionality of the programmes based on current experiences at the end of the report.

Six main research questions guide this enquiry, each with several sub questions. The questions below were formulated in the terms of reference. Over the course of the research process certain questions proved more relevant than others<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, it is those questions that we address here in most detail. In the main results in Chapter 6, we present and discuss our answers thematically, instead of explicitly answering each question in the order presented below.

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1 However, a separate policy brief in Finnish will be provided based on this study.

2 For instance, programmes are not quite as country-driven as the questions assume: they are not strictly coordinated or initiated by a single state but are more programme-based. This is relevant to RQ1 in particular. In addition, there are usually no separate solutions at the legal framework level when it comes to visa types or residence permit procedures. The same permit types are used as with regular migration.

## ***1. What are the complementary pathways for legal migration?***

**1.1** What strategies and arrangements are in place in various countries and how are they coordinated nationally?

**1.2** Is there a common core idea in the various arrangements made by countries? What do these arrangements seek to accomplish? Do different countries have different emphases?

**1.3** If a country has a resettlement programme, how do the complementary pathways relate to it?

**1.4** Are arrangements pertaining to complementary pathways used to improve labour supply, for example in sectors suffering from labour shortages?

**1.5** How much have people in need of international protection migrated through such arrangements, and what is known about them from statistics?

## ***2. How are people who may be suitable for complementary pathways selected: how are they identified or presented to the countries, and how does the process then proceed?***

**2.1** The purpose is to determine how the process works: among other things, how, at what stage and by whom is the need for protection assessed, and how are other conditions for granting of a permit determined?

***3. On what grounds is the stay of a person selected under an arrangement based?***

**3.1** Is the stay based on the need for international protection or on a 'complementary' criterion such as working or studying?

**3.2** Is the person issued a residence permit or other document granting the right to stay and at what stage?  
How long is the right to stay valid and can it be renewed?

**3.3** On what grounds does the right to stay cease or on what grounds can it be revoked, and how is the need for the person's international protection taken into account here?

***4. Is there a difference in the legal status of a person selected under an arrangement when compared against a person, on the one hand, entitled to stay on the basis of an ordinary permit granted, for example, for work or study; and, on the other hand, a person with a residence permit based on the need for protection?***

**4.1** Are facilitated admission to a country or eased criteria for granting a residence permit (e.g. on the basis of work or study) applied to persons entering under an arrangement, and what does such facilitated admission mean in practice?

**4.2** If the permit is based on such a complementary pathway admission, how do the arrangements take into account that the persons concerned are in need of international protection?

**4.3** What rights does a person arriving through the arrangements receive?

***5. Is there cooperation with, for example, educational institutions and employers within the framework of the models, and what forms of cooperation are in use?***

**5.1** Can educational institutions and/or employers influence the selection of people?

**5.2** Are training, coaching (e.g. language training) or other early-stage relocation services provided to individuals selected through different models?

If so, what kind and by what bodies?

***6. Are there examples indicating that the model would be applied only in geographically limited areas, for example as part of a mobility partnership with a specific country or region?***

## 1.2 Data & Methods

A three-strand methodology was undertaken for this study. These consisted of a desk review of existing documents, interviews with representatives of key organizations and governments, and participation in online events.

Thus, the research data consist of interview data, documents (scientific publications, policy documents), as well as documentation of and presentations given by experts in online events.

### Interview data

To gain preliminary insight into the topic of complementary pathways, we started with four group interviews (11 interviewees in total, two of whom participated in two interviews) with experts from key organisations having an overall view of the current state of complementary pathways. Interviews were made with officials from the IOM Regional Office Brussels, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the UNHCR Headquarters Geneva, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe and the UNHCR Representation for the Nordic

and Baltic countries. During these interviews suggestions were also received for further organisations and individuals to interview.

In order to learn about the practicalities of particular labour- and study-based programmes, we conducted interviews with people working in or in close contact with these organisations or programmes. In total, 18 interviews were conducted with 22 interviewees in relation to the following programmes: TBB UK, TBB Australia and New Zealand, EMPP, SPARK, Middle East Scholars programme, AUF (France), DAAD, The multi-stakeholder Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways, Humanitarian Corridors, Student Refugee Program, NesT, BMI, University Corridors. The interviewees in this group included also local stakeholders (e.g. migration authority officials and representatives of ministries) in Italy and Germany. Key focus of these interviews was on the legal and administrative solutions used, as well as the policy context and the target groups of the pathways adopted in the context of these countries.<sup>3</sup>

The interviews were semi-structured, and the length of a typical interview was one hour.

## Documents

A wide range of documents were assessed in this course of this study. These were drawn from research literature, policy documents, legal documents and other relevant material including statistical information focusing on complementary pathways in general, as well as those addressing key programmes and selected case countries in particular. Besides online library and google searches, snowballing was used, following up on sources found in various documents.

## Webinar data

In June 2021 we organized an international webinar on complementary pathways to deepen our understanding through expert discussion. The Complementary Pathways and Migration Policy – World Refugee Day 2021 webinar & expert panel was built around four major questions concerning complementary pathways as a policy measure. For details, see: [Complementary pathways and migration policy - World refugee day 2021 webinar & expert panel - Siirtolaisuusinstituutti](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Our initial plan was to focus on 3 case countries (Italy, Germany and Canada) in more detail, but as we realized that the current programmes often aren't initiated of closely coordinated by states, we directed our focus on individual programmes more than the country context as such.



In addition, members of the research group attended several online events on or interlinked with complementary pathways to get a deeper insight into the research topic.

## Methods

The interviews were semi-structured with questions largely based on the research questions. Interviews were conducted via MS Teams. The interviewees gave their informed consent and were given a list of main interview questions in advance. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative analysis of the interview data was based on simple content analysis and guided by our straightforward research questions. When analysing the interview data, a template was used to tease out specific elements across various programmes.

Document and webinar data was also analysed guided by our research questions and aiming at producing definitions and descriptions of current complementary pathways, with a special emphasis on labour- and study-based programmes and focusing mainly on the European context.

## 1.3 Structure of report

In the first chapter we have provided a brief introduction to the topic of complementary pathways and described the aims, data and methods of the research.

Chapter 2 offers a brief overview of the background and history of complementary pathways and looks at how the concept has been defined and used in previous literature. At the end of the chapter, we elaborate on how the concept of complementary pathways is used in this report.

Chapter 3 zooms in on labour-based complementary pathways. It introduces the background and current state of labour-based complementary pathways and presents key examples of pilot programmes currently in use.

Chapter 4 focuses on study-based complementary pathways. It discusses the need for study-based opportunities and presents several current programmes, dividing these into comprehensive study-based programmes and other study programmes available for refugees.

Chapter 5 offers an overview of other complementary pathways including humanitarian pathways, humanitarian visas, sponsorship-based programmes and family reunification.

Chapter 6 takes a cross-sectional view of complementary pathways and related programmes and provides an overview. The chapter is organized into five main themes and responds to the six research questions and their sub-questions, listed in section 1.2.

Chapter 7 offers some evaluative comments on how the current pathways function. It also discusses some open questions and considers the future prospects of complementary pathways.

## 2 Defining complementary pathways

*Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the background and history of complementary pathways and looks at how the concept has been defined and used in previous literature, thus partly answering research question 1. 'What are the complementary pathways for legal migration?'. At the end of the chapter, we elaborate on how the concept of complementary pathways is used in this report.*

### 2.1 What is meant by complementary pathways?

International documents and scholarship on complementary pathways reveal a progression of thought and content on what is exactly meant by *complementary pathways* as a term or concept, although it has not yet achieved a standard and widely accepted definition. As Wood (2020, 3) points out, 'the diversity that exists between the various kinds of complementary pathways makes it difficult to identify with clarity what is, or is not, [a] complementary pathway' and that, in turn, 'raises the question of whether a single definition of "complementary pathways" is possible or even desirable'.

Most recently, in a September 2021 report commissioned by UNHCR and conducted by MPI Europe and the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, complementary pathways were defined as:

*legal admission programmes created or adjusted to allow refugees access for the purposes of eventually reaching a solution to their displacement. These programmes are additional and separate to UNHCR-referred resettlement programmes against state-set quotas. Eligibility of refugees for complementary pathways is based on criteria other than those for resettlement (such as vulnerability or protection needs of the refugees) and includes their education or employment qualifications, family composition, etc. Ideally, complementary pathways include progressive access to permanent residency or citizenship.*

(Fratzke et al. 2021, 15)

Wagner and Kaliaficas (2021) have noted that, rather than being defined, complementary pathways are often presented as a list of methods or approaches to admission strategies

for refugees and others in need of international protection through various immigration channels.

A major reason for this listing of pathways rather than defining the general approach is probably the fact that complementary pathways essentially amount to the use of a range of regular immigrant admission channels for safe entry and residence status for people who:

- are in a country of first asylum; and
- have a protection need; and
- qualify for an immigration status, or for a specific humanitarian programme; and
- are granted status or at least permission to enter prior to arrival; and
- might have their travel organized by the authorities of the country to which they are migrating; but
- will not necessarily be granted refugee status or subsidiary protection; and
- do not fall under a resettlement programme; but
- will have residence and other rights for the duration of their immigrant status; and
- should be able to apply for asylum, which is their right, as is *non-refoulement*

The 'pathways' are immigration channels and humanitarian programmes that 'complement' resettlement as alternative, legal, organized means of admission for refugees and others in need of protection. They are generally limited in size, and the status granted is usually not a refugee or protection status, and is temporary, though renewable, in nature.

Resettlement is a precious mainstay of the international protection regime. One challenge of the last two decades has been how to expand resettlement, while not actually challenging its pre-eminence as a durable solution in any way. Some of the methods investigated or attempted to achieve that end are discussed in the history section below.

The concept of complementary pathways rose to prominence in the 2016 New York Declaration (NYD). In that document, governments signalled their intention to expand the number and range of legal pathways available for admission of refugees to third countries, benefiting those refugees and the countries of their first asylum, as well as the destination states (para 77). By indicating that they would consider expanding existing humanitarian

admission programmes with possible short-term evacuations for medical reasons; making flexible arrangements to assist family reunification; private sponsorship, and opportunities for labour mobility and education (para 79), governments gave some substance to the meaning of 'legal pathways' without actually defining a new approach.

In the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) annexed to the NYD, governments employ the term 'resettlement and complementary pathways' as a durable solution, alongside return and local integration (Point 10). The legal pathways of the Declaration text were apparently the 'complementary pathways' of the annex with a link to resettlement. However, while indications of substance and purpose were present, a real definition remained lacking.

Furthermore, some of the substantive elements, such as private sponsorship, were already functioning parts of resettlement programmes in some countries (e.g. Canada), while other elements, such as family reunification, were highly politicized in their existing, narrow form (e.g. in the EU, where efforts over recent years to limit the extent of family reunification, seen as a major immigration channel, could be counter to the idea that extended family members, in need of protection, be admitted under a complementary pathway).

The Global Compact on Refugees (UN 2018) clearly distinguishes between resettlement and complementary pathways – the latter being specified as 'a complement to resettlement' (para 94). The GCR seeks contributions from states, again setting out a list of potential pathways, and stressing the need for increasing both their availability and their predictability. The list in the GCR offers some nuance on the New York Declaration list. For example, establishing private or community sponsorship programmes is specified as 'additional to regular resettlement' and the Global Refugees Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is referred to directly. The list of pathways continues with (para 95):

*humanitarian visas, humanitarian corridors, and other humanitarian admission programmes; educational opportunities for refugees (including women and girls) through grant of scholarships and student visas, including through partnerships between government and academic institutions; and labour mobility opportunities for refugees, including through the identification of refugees with skills that are needed in third countries.*

As mandated in the GCR, UNHCR produced a Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (2019b) in which it defined complementary pathways as:

*safe and regulated avenues that complement refugee resettlement and by which refugees may be admitted in a country and have their international protection needs met while they are able to support themselves to potentially reach a sustainable and lasting solution.*

This perhaps comes closest to a non-list definition to date, and is the definition on which we ground ourselves, as will be explained in section 3 of this chapter below.

Whether or not there is an agreed definition of complementary pathways, there are several criteria widely viewed as central to the approach, with significant potential benefits for various participants in the refugee protection process. Although the pathways are posited as complementary to resettlement, there is often tension in discussion of the relationship, similarities and differences.

Wood (2020) discusses four core objectives of complementary pathways and notes that they can (ultimately) provide durable solutions to refugees who find themselves in first countries of asylum without access to other durable solutions such as return or resettlement, although this is not always the case. Secondly, they can at least meet the immediate international protection needs of people whose lives and freedoms are at risk. Furthermore, they can help to achieve self-reliance for refugees by allowing them to re-establish themselves and pursue their own goals and livelihoods. The fourth core objective according to Wood is promoting responsibility-sharing among states in the protection of refugees. Another core feature of complementary pathways, highlighted by the European Resettlement Network+ is that they contribute to the international protection regime generally, in particular to the search for durable solutions for refugees (ERN+ 2018a).

Self-reliance, independence and human agency are also emphasized by UNHCR (2020a, 5): 'An important feature of many complementary pathways is that refugees are able to exercise control over their own solutions by accessing them independently using publicly available information and processes.' Yet here an example of tension arises: the GCR distinguished between resettlement as a durable solution, and complementary pathways. Can the latter offer a step on the path towards a durable solution, although the immediate solution might be temporary? Do they complement resettlement by offering different criteria for admission or by not necessarily providing permanent status?

Analytically, Wood (2020, 13-14) suggests that different types of complementary pathways can be categorized in two ways: 1) Needs- vs qualifications-based complementary pathways, and 2) 'custom' complementary pathways vs regular migration channels. Under the first of these categorizations, needs-based pathways would include humanitarian visas and humanitarian admissions programmes, while expanded family reunification, employment, and education would be qualification-based pathways. Meanwhile, regular

migration channels would involve those labour and education mobility programmes that are available to any qualified person, including refugees – although these might require adaptations or adjustment to ensure access for refugees (Wood 2020, 13-14). They also give rise to questions about how protection can be ensured. Custom complementary pathways are those that have been specifically developed and implemented, often in conjunction with UNHCR, to provide admission and stay for refugees (whether needs or qualification based).

In sum, complementary pathways, broadly speaking, are any legal admission route that opens up opportunities or are specifically created for safe refugee mobility. They could be existing immigration channels or newly crafted programmes. They are not refugee resettlement programmes, but they complement resettlement opportunities. This complementarity is found through a sort of mutual programmatic co-existence, or by reinforcing access to resettlement for those refugees who are particularly vulnerable, while other refugees with particular skills or connections can make use of complementary pathways to reach a secure situation. Regular legal migration pathways are often not accessible for refugees 'as is' – for example due to documentation requirements and other eligibility criteria. So they may need adaptation. However, complementary pathways can also be legal immigration opportunities of which refugees take advantage to find their own solution to the problems they face in their existing location and situation.

The search for a definition portrayed above makes complementary pathways sound like something new, a policy creation of the last few years. In fact, they have existed without a title for a long time, as will be explored below.

## 2.2 The history and current state of complementary pathways

Complementary pathways is quite a recent term in international protection, probably first explicitly coined and linked to resettlement in 2016 in documents of the 66<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee of UNHCR and the build-up to, and finalizing of, the New York Declaration (2016).

However, both the term and the approach it connotes have a history. In some senses, the movement towards complementary pathways (i.e. refugees being admitted under various immigration headings) can be seen as completing a circle with earlier forms of resettlement (see e.g. Zeick 2013). In other ways, it might be seen as a more linear consequence alongside the understandings of mixed migration flows and motives (see e.g. Angenendt et al. 2017). One could even suggest its lineage goes further back to

examples such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century welcoming of Huguenots in the UK and the Netherlands as 'denizens' and citizens, or the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century introduction of Nansen passports, allowing safe movement for hundreds of thousands of refugees. The overview below is necessarily cursory, but is intended to give a sense of the developments over time that have contributed to the current policy (if not numerical) focus on complementary pathways, alongside resettlement.

First, the terminology of 'complementary' has a history. The term 'complementary protection' has previously been used to describe states' obligations to people who do not qualify for refugee status in the sense of the 1951 Convention, but do have protection needs and are granted status under other international or regional legal instruments, such as the European Convention on Human Rights (Karlsen 2009; Hein & Donato 2012). Many of these same forms of, or reasons for, protection now fall under the label of subsidiary protection, in Europe at least.

Second, the notion of regular immigration channels or pathways being used by refugees (or by states to accommodate refugee admissions) is really not new. This has been a feature, even in the 1951 Convention era. Many of the Hungarians who were 'resettled' from Austria and Yugoslavia following the 1956 uprising and exodus were admitted to west European states as miners or farmers, not as refugees (van Selm-Thorburn 1998, 216). This is an example of state use of immigration channels for the purpose of refugee admissions. Individuals' use of immigration opportunities rather than applying for asylum, for example, is more difficult to document, but has frequently occurred.

The 1956 example illustrates the historical relationship between the use of regular migration pathways for protection purposes and resettlement. Resettlement had been a more common and widespread feature of the international protection regime until the Indo-Chinese resettlements of the 1970s and early 1980s, and the 1989 Comprehensive Plan of Action, which sought to bring resolution to issues surrounding asylum, migration, return and resettlement for those who had fled conflicts in Vietnam and the region.

Following that era, resettlement programmes came to be viewed as primarily instruments of the traditional immigration countries (US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). Those conducted by the few European states (primarily Nordic/Scandinavian) still active in the resettlement field were relatively small in scale and scope.

A dichotomy had appeared in resettlement. In North America, Canadian citizens supported resettlement to the degree that new streams of private sponsorship were opened (see e.g. Pfrimmer 2019). The US consolidated a multi-strand refugee programme involving referrals from UNHCR and NGOs, as well as political designations of priority situations (see e.g. Elliott 2007; National Immigration Forum 2020).



In Europe, however, resettlement was reduced (see e.g. Loescher 1989). In part, this was a consequence of increasing asylum seeker arrivals as travel became easier for many and geographic proximity to areas of conflict and persecution meant people sought safety in Europe through direct arrival. However, there was also some political tension around resettlement (Duke et al. 1999) and around asylum and immigration in general. Those European countries that continued to resettle into the 1980s and 1990s generally focused on the particularly vulnerable among the refugees, with special attention on medical needs, for example.

The perception was that the larger, traditional immigration countries seemed to resettle refugees with skills, who found employment and apparently became independent and integrated soon after arrival. This made for a differential in approaches to resettlement. The largest difference was of scale and of approach. The US in particular, without a welfare state, emphasised and continues to focus on work as the only way refugees can survive in their new lives; and the sheer size of the US programme until 2016 meant that the admitted population was bound to include some people with existing skills and professional motivation. Over time, overall resettlement places diminished vastly relative to the refugee population in need.

As irregular immigration and refugee arrivals through asylum became increasingly politicized in Europe, practical, if short-term, solutions to immediate crises taught lessons that contributed to the impetus to re-examine resettlement or other methods of admitting refugees.

In the early 2000s, following the relatively successful Humanitarian Evacuation Programme for Kosovars who had fled across the border to North Macedonia, the European Commission started to investigate the feasibility of more organized admission for refugees to the EU. The seeds of current complementary pathways might be found in the thinking of that time. The Humanitarian Evacuation Programme, building on experience of temporary protection for those fleeing the Yugoslav conflict of the early 1990s, was a temporary admission programme for European states (whereas the US and Canada resettled those admitted to their countries on the same programme, giving a durable solution and full refugee status) (see van Selm 2000).

The European Commission commissioned two feasibility studies. One, on 'protected entry procedures', was conducted by Gregor Noll and a team at the Danish Centre for Human Rights (Noll et al. 2002). The other, on resettlement, was conducted by a Migration Policy Institute team led by Joanne van Selm (van Selm et al. 2003). These two studies were the basis for the early conversations at EU level about admission of refugees through traditional resettlement and other means, which initially focused on humanitarian visas.

Simultaneously, in the mid-2000s, UNHCR and the Canadian government, seeking to boost resettlement places, launched the concept of the Strategic Use of Resettlement (SUR). SUR centred on the idea that resettlement could have a multiplying effect: that if a refugee were resettled, there could be benefits beyond that individual's protection. For example, in a given displacement situation, the thinking goes that it could be that by resettling 10,000 refugees from a country of first asylum, one could, through political agreements, facilitate the local integration of 50,000 others. A smaller scale benefit might be that by resettling the brother of a refugee already in your country as an immigrant or as a refugee themselves, you could strengthen the integration chances of all the family concerned (van Selm 2013).

Neither SUR nor the initial efforts to increase resettlement or other humanitarian admissions had immediate, significant impact in the EU, but they were part of a process that has contributed to thinking and policy attention towards complementary pathways.

In fact, most of the countries that had Protected Entry Procedures ended them in the early 2000s, although Switzerland maintained its humanitarian visas and has used them as a 'complementary pathway' for Syrians (ERN+ 2018b). Independently, some countries were increasing or restarting resettlement, e.g. the UK's Gateway Programme starting in 2003/4, or showing interest in becoming emerging countries of resettlement. The European Commission, under the European Refugee Fund, continued to support research into alternative or complementary models of admission for protection (e.g. Hein & Donato 2012).

As the European Commission continued to establish supportive funding mechanisms under the AMIF, interest grew, and by the early 2010s, particularly with an eye to the Syrian refugee crises with displacements to Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, some European states, such as Germany and Austria, were establishing either resettlement or Humanitarian Admissions Programmes. Others, responding to public pressure, were starting to establish Humanitarian Corridors (Italy and later France), with private or community sponsorship of those admitted. Aware that many Syrians were highly educated, many European universities and their national bodies started to offer scholarships for Syrian refugees. Resettlement itself was growing, if still relatively limited compared to the needs, and other programmes, a range of initiatives that were not quite resettlement but something like it, were expanding, if still relatively small scale. The arrival of over a million asylum seekers in 2015/6, including large numbers of Syrians whose situation in the region of origin was becoming untenable, focused attention again on organizing admission of refugees, which might, some theorized, if done on a sufficiently large scale, break, or at least dent, the smuggling business model (see e.g. for news on the Turkey Deal, Reuters 2016). There is, however, no concrete evidence that this would actually be the case.

EU funding extended also to research into both resettlement and complementary pathways. The European Resettlement Network, and ERN+, a consortium of UNHCR, IOM and ICMC, undertook both knowledge sharing and research projects during the mid- to late 2010s (See [ERN+](#)). The AMIF call in 2020/2021 resulted in the selection for funding of several practical endeavours to put complementary pathways into practice, albeit starting on a relatively small scale. Projects funded include some with government partners in multi-Member State consortia (AMIF 2020).

The 2016 New York Declaration and 2018 Global Compact on Refugees gave some substance to the idea that immigration channels can be used for refugees (and already often were being used by refugees whose qualifications allowed them to do so, and who were prepared to forgo the benefits of refugee protection for the safety of immigration to a developed country and employment in a strong economy). The fact that governments could use entry means other than resettlement to admit people in need of protection gained firmer footing, and a title – Complementary Pathways – was given to what had been an organic process until that point. As the Three-Year Strategy mentioned above built on the concept of complementary pathways with ideas for action, CRISP, led by IOM and UNHCR (see: CRISP - Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative), was established as a resource platform intended to lead to concrete capacity building projects that will help to implement the plans set out in the three-year strategy. CRISP pulls together news and data on resettlement and complementary pathways, training resources and documentation.

One question on considering this history and the range of motives for complementary pathways would be: why not simply expand resettlement? Some would answer that resettlement must be preserved as a 'gold standard', only for the very vulnerable among the larger refugee population, and giving a durable solution only on protection grounds, with no possibility that a refugee could be resettled due to other qualities such as skills, education or family relationship.

Noll (2003, 11) has suggested that 'resettlement alone is too monodimensional and too limited to bring relief in this crisis [of access to asylum, territory and protection]'. He also indicated that resettlement is constrained by numerical quotas. Neither of these points is necessarily as clear-cut as Noll suggested: resettlement can have different criteria – European states have generally chosen to focus on vulnerability; there can be quota, targets, ceilings – all are needed for planning, but they can be set sufficiently high to meet needs if governments so choose. What is important from this commentary on the need for entry mechanisms beyond resettlement is that *flexibility* is required. Complementary pathways – using different eligibility criteria for refugee immigration purposes – can offer that, alongside resettlement, if expansion of resettlement is not seen as desirable.

Of course, many people in need of protection, seeing their avenues to refugee status through either resettlement or asylum being limited, take up immigration opportunities for which they qualify. In doing so, they might not receive the form of status and protection their situation requires under international law, but they can achieve safety, security and a more peaceful life. The exact number of people who have migrated to third countries while actually in need of protection (i.e. via complementary pathways that they have sought out, rather than a government expressly opening to them) is unknown. A recent OECD–UNHCR (2021) study has mapped the residence permits issued by OECD countries and Brazil to citizens of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Venezuela, which together encompassed 62% of all displaced persons in 2019, providing a proxy indicator for complementary pathways admission. Based on the study, approximately 1.5 million first-time residence permits were granted between 2010 and 2019 to citizens of these countries on the grounds of family, work or study.<sup>4</sup> Numbers for 2020 are expected to be significantly less due to the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD & UNHCR 2021; Manicom 2021).

Policies that now might be labelled complementary pathways have been used in the past, by governments (e.g. for Hungarians in 1956) and by individual refugees choosing an immigration route rather than battling for recognition as a refugee. Now, international discourse and national policy thinking are becoming more open to exploring the potential of marrying refugee needs and characteristics beyond protection. This gives rise to many questions: practical, philosophical, legal and ethical. One underlying factor is clear: the effort is to improve the opportunities for refugees to reach safety, to increase the number or proportion of them who can access security and get on with their lives, in communities that support and accept them.

## 2.3 How the concept of complementary pathways is understood and used in this report

In this report, we return to the description used by UNHCR in the Key considerations document (2019a, 5), which defines complementary pathways as follows:

*Complementary pathways for admission are safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement refugee resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where*

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<sup>4</sup> There were however severe limitations in the data and the numbers therefor should not be considered as a reliable indicator of complementary pathways admissions. See more in ch. 6.1.2.

*their international protection needs are met. They are additional to resettlement and do not substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime. Complementary pathways include existing admission avenues that refugees may be eligible to apply to but which may require operational adjustments to facilitate refugee access.*

Next, we will dismantle the above definition, listing five features that we understand to form the key criteria of complementary pathways. We also clarify how we interpret each criterion and how we are using this definition of complementary pathways in this report.

### **Five core criteria of complementary pathways:**

#### **1) Safe and regulated avenues**

Access to a third country is made possible via safe avenues, instead of resorting to the help of smugglers, for instance. Safe travel is facilitated for instance by issuance of Refugee Convention Travel Document and legal entry documents (e.g. humanitarian visa), by providing financial support for travel, or by organizing the travel, e.g., through IOM. Such organization might be in terms of ticketing, but also support at airports or other transportation locations, as well as pre-departure orientation and welcoming services on arrival.

#### **2) For refugees**

As indicated by the OECD and UNHCR (2021,13):

*complementary pathways are meant to complement refugee resettlement by offering safe and legal admission avenues to refugees and other persons in need of international protection who find themselves outside their country of origin and seeking opportunities in a third country.*

Many texts on complementary pathways simply refer to refugees, without specifying what is meant by the term – whether it is being used in the general sense, or the specific sense of the 1951 Convention definition. As indicated in the quotation above, many complementary pathways are open to all people in need of international protection, and not exclusively to people who are determined to have refugee status. Like the vast majority of literature on complementary pathways, in this report we also use the term ‘refugee’ not in the strictest legal sense, but to refer broadly to a displaced person in need of international protection.

### 3) Provide a lawful stay in a third country

This is understood to include 'access to legal status and documentation in the third country' (UNHCR 2019a, 12), for example: a residence permit, usually for at least two or three years and renewable, is provided to people admitted to a third country via a complementary pathway.

### 4) International protection needs are met

We take this to include safeguards such as the right to a long-term stay in the receiving country if needed, or to seek asylum, protection against *refoulement* (in line with the non-return principle contained in article 33 of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and customary international law, see OHCHR 2018 and Goodwin-Gill 2021), as well as confidentiality, and data protection (UNHCR 2019a, 12-14).

UNHCR (2017, 1) has explained that the need for international protection arises:

*when a person is outside their own country and unable to return home because they would be at risk there, and their country is unable or unwilling to protect them. Risks that give rise to a need for international protection classically include those of persecution, threats to life, freedom or physical integrity arising from armed conflict, serious public disorder, or different situations of violence. Other risks may stem from: famine linked to situations of armed conflict; natural or man-made disasters; as well as being stateless.*

These elements are very often interlinked. We use this standard as indicating the need for international protection.

### 5) Pathways are additional to resettlement and do not substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime

By being 'additional to resettlement' we understand that a pathway to admission and residence does not replace, substitute for or diminish any existing national resettlement quotas, nor exclude the expansion of resettlement or creation of a new resettlement quota. Complementary pathways and resettlement are also targeted at different refugees, although the two could overlap. Resettlement is a durable solution for the particularly vulnerable; complementary pathways are generally focused on skills and connections. The protection afforded under the international protection regime refers to the right to apply for asylum, the right to *non-refoulement* and alignment with broader protection strategies and data sharing with UNHCR (UNHCR 2019a, 14). Beneficiaries of complementary pathways might not be granted an actual protected or refugee status, but rather an immigration status. But this should not mean they are excluded from applying for asylum at any point.

In this report we use the above UNHCR (2019a) description as a framework for assessing whether a specific immigration programme or arrangement, or the use of a certain immigration category under particular circumstances, can be categorized as a complementary pathway.

Finally, we pay special attention to, but do not limit ourselves to, those programmes that clearly fulfil all five criteria. The reasons for this are manifold, including: 1) Only a very limited number of prototypical, comprehensive complementary pathway programmes exist. 2) Looking at cases that are not at present fully classifiable as complementary pathways helps us in part to answer the first broad research question: 'What are the complementary pathways for legal migration?' 3) Learning about programmes that do not quite 'fit' the description of complementary pathways may be helpful for both modifying existing pathways and developing new ones. Such programmes could provide useful building blocks for more extensive pathways, and broader understanding of emerging approaches.

Throughout the report, we aim to clearly distinguish comprehensive complementary pathway programmes from less extensive or insufficient ones. The basis for this distinction is, again, the UNHCR (2019a) description cited above.

## 3 Labour-based complementary pathways

*Chapter three introduces the background and status-quo of contemporary labour-based complementary pathways. Current pathways are strongly based on the approach developed by a single independent NGO (Talent Beyond Boundaries), but behind them there is a long history of divergence and convergence of refugee and labour migration policies. Talent Beyond Boundaries have developed a model to co-create the complementary pathways in collaboration with national governments and other key stakeholders in receiving countries. They have provided legal and policy expertise, links to skilled refugees in sending countries and some ethical guidelines to frame the policy design processes that are now emerging in Australia, Canada, the UK, and very recently also in some EU member countries. Practical examples introduced here include on-going pilots in Australia, Canada and the UK. This chapter helps to answer all six research questions and puts a special emphasis on policy development of labour-based complementary pathways.*

### 3.1 Combining economic and protection needs in migration policy

Labour-based complementary pathways, or 'third country employment opportunities' as they are called in UNHCR's Key Considerations report, are 'safe and regulated avenues for entry or stay in another country for the purpose of employment, with the right to either permanent or temporary residence' (UNHCR 2019a, 10). Combining refugee protection needs and labour migration avenues is not entirely new. Labour migration programmes have long been used in hybrid policy designs aiming to both improve the situation of those in need of protection and ease labour shortages in the receiving countries. In general, it is easy to see how such hybrid policies would be a 'win-win' situation. One aspect is enabling employment in a third country of people in need of protection who find themselves in vulnerable situations. Another aspect is the opportunities employment provides for those individuals to re-find their self-reliance and agency. Nonetheless, actual labour-based *complementary pathways* as policy measures, require careful design, with particular regard to aspects of safety and security in their implementation.



Policy discussion relevant to the current formulation of complementary pathways can be found mostly in UNHCR's fairly recent publications. For example, Long (2009) has suggested regularised labour migration as a tool in UNHCR's traditional durable solutions toolkit to resolve refugee situations. The argument was that it could increase willingness to offer asylum in the North and help to solve prolonged refugee situations in many locations. Both were recognised challenges. Giving labour migration a more central role in the range of refugee solutions could emphasise the normality of human mobility. It could increase opportunities for people in need of protection to make their own choices about their optimal solution. It could also contribute to the improved quality of international protection, especially by focusing attention on labour market integration, which could have knock-on effects for refugees entering through asylum and resettlement. Long (ibid.) also notes that labour migration cannot replace the three traditional durable solutions (resettlement, local integration and repatriation) for refugees, and objectives and principles of labour migration must be carefully combined with those of the humanitarian refugee protection regime.

In September 2012 UNHCR and ILO came together at a workshop in Geneva on 'Refugees and labour mobility' to discuss the convergence of labour and refugee policy models. The workshop's Concept Note indicates the underlying perception that an increasing number of labour migration programmes (especially in emerging economies) mostly excluded refugees simply because of the level and type of documents required to participate in them. Exclusion from open labour markets is likely to increase irregular and high-risk mobility, as well as exploitative working relationships and unpredictable refoulements, because those excluded nevertheless need to sustain themselves and their families. The Concept Note specified that refugees' unique legal status under international law, securing stay in the country where they are not at risk, has evolved into too strict a separation between refugees and labour migrants. Such a strict division is, according to the Concept Note, not necessarily an appropriate solution in the context of contemporary migration systems and more diverse models could also benefit refugees themselves. The distinction might prevent refugees from accessing labour mobility programmes, which could empower them and enhance their self-reliance while achieving durable solutions. (UNHCR 2012a.)

The list of labour mobility programmes provided by the workshop illustrate the divergence of labour and refugee policies over time (UNHCR 2012b). In the European context, labour and refugee policies were intertwined after World War II. Labour for reconstruction was much in demand, and people in need of protection were abundant. A UNESCO exchange of persons programme was initiated after WWII to promote educational, scientific or cultural exchange for students, young persons, workers, teachers or professors. An important part of the programme was UNESCO's assessment of refugees'

skills and qualifications to ensure a match with labour needs in receiving countries (this was done by WHO in the case of health care services).

Examples of national post-World War II programmes were also presented (UNHCR 2012b). In **Belgium** a programme was established to offer refugees the opportunity to work in coal mines as part of the national economic recovery and 50,000 refugees participated. A similar programme in **Australia** enhanced basic industries and services and 160,000 refugees participated. In **Canada** more general labour shortages were targeted and 100,000 refugees participated. Belgium and Australia offered two-year contracts initially, and all three countries preferred refugees from the Baltic States, who seemed to integrate smoothly. The International Refugee Organization (IRO) participated in these programmes. In the **UK**, the European Voluntary Service Balt Cygnet Programme and Westward Ho Programme specifically targeted women in the Baltic States to work as nurses in hospitals on initial one-year contracts and refugees from Eastern Europe to work in industries, coal mines and agriculture. In total, 96,000 refugees participated.

Obviously, there are profound differences between the migration programmes of the late 1940s which satisfied the protection needs of some refugees, and current pathway development. In the earlier programmes, complementarity was not emphasised and the programmes did not aim at long-term solutions. Then as now, however, it is evident that labour-based pathways can offer highly relevant opportunities for refugees with skills or other qualifications to move from precarious situations to a more stable environment. In 2016, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognised labour migration as an alternative pathway for beneficiaries of international protection. This OECD report emphasised the role of employers for successful implementation of policy and distinguished three broad approaches to policy development:

- Improving access to existing labour immigration channels
- Developing employers' incentives to recruit refugees and dislocated people directly from abroad (under the framework provided by the labour migration policies)
- Creating new types of work-based migration programmes specifically targeted at refugees and the dislocated.

The OECD report notes that virtually all existing labour migration programmes are based on a model where the employer applies for the work permit, not the migrating employee. Therefore, any policy or programme based on labour migration is highly dependent on the 'buy-in of employers' (OECD 2016).

While the policy discussions extend beyond the last decade, actual labour based complementary pathways and their precise definition in practice are very recent. According to Cedefop (2019) in 2017 there were still no programmes or approaches at the global or EU level with tested pilots. Cedefop recognised two novel and emerging approaches that were frequently mentioned by the relevant stakeholders: Talent Beyond Boundaries and the Australian community sponsorship programme (CSP). While the Australian community sponsorship programme (CSP) shares many similarities with complementary pathways, it does not count as one according to the definition used in this report. It is not additional to resettlement, as the number of arrivals through this programme is included in the overall quota of the Australian Refugee and Humanitarian Programme ([www.refugeecouncil.com](http://www.refugeecouncil.com)). Rather the CSP makes the existing humanitarian resettlement programme more market-driven and prioritises 'job ready and English-speaking refugees, and thus conflicts with ideals of helping the most vulnerable', ((Hirsch et al. 2019).

There is a sense of convergence emerging between labour migration approaches and refugee protection. The essential part of this process has been the discussion over the more precise principles of labour-based complementary pathways and related pilot projects over the last five years. The refugee and labour migration categories were kept quite distinct for policy making and admissions policy practice for several decades. However, the fact that many migrants might have a mixture of protection needs and other migration motives, for example, has been acknowledged for some time (van der Klaauw 2009). In the current context, even a refugee focused international organization like UNHCR is starting to see the benefits of using non-refugee-specific programmes to allow the entry and residence of people whose situation includes protection needs. The most significant progress in developing practical programmes is currently seen from expert NGOs in cooperation with governments and other key stakeholders. Projects are expanding in geographic range, with more destination countries gradually investigating the possibilities, but they remain relatively limited numerically. The outcomes of current pilot projects will provide important evidence of pros and cons of the approach, in particular in terms of their complementarity with resettlement, safety and security issues and the nature of employer involvement.

Thus, the currently existing refugee-specific labour mobility complementary pathway programmes that fall within our parameters are very recent, are at a pilot stage, representing policy exploration more than well-established policy measures. They are also generally collaborations between governments (Australia, Canada, and the UK) and NGOs (While several NGOs are emerging in this field (e.g. RefugePoint, Kenya, and TalentLift, Canada), we focus here on the first and currently most active and visible one, Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB), to explore the changing landscape of labour-based

complementary pathways. Section 3.2.1 introduces TBB in general with practical examples from UK and Australia and section 3.2.2 provides more thorough analysis of Canadian case.

## 3.2 Contemporary platform powered model and its practical applications

### 3.2.1 Talent beyond boundaries (TBB) model

The most visible contemporary model of a labour-based complementary pathway has been proactively developed by the NGO, Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB). The origins of TBB can be found in the Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative, under which the two founders were conducting research and exploring the migration of skilled refugees in Beirut. They came up with the initial concept and tested the idea with refugees and some relevant organisations, including UN agencies. The model gained support and was concretised when the founders met an Australian technology entrepreneur who had developed a parallel concept (Taskforce of experts). Talent Beyond Boundaries was established as non-profit organisation simultaneously in Washington DC and Melbourne in 2016. Its funding is largely sourced from philanthropic donors and governments. TBB is not a programme, but an NGO offering a model and links to refugees, as described below. From these premises, however, governments can develop various programmes, including labour market related complementary pathways, based on their existing migration programmes and policies.

The key element of the model is a *Talent Catalog* – an online CV gallery and platform to match refugee talent with employers. It has been defined as the ‘Linked-in’ for displaced people, and marketed as the ‘first online platform of its kind’ on the TBB website (TBB 2020a). The Talent Catalog curated by TBB facilitates the matching of skilled refugees and displaced people with employers in the selected countries. The Talent Catalog itself was developed in collaboration with refugees with relevant technological expertise in Lebanon and Jordan. The development of the Talent Catalog was initiated and funded by the US State Department which was interested in identifying skilled people in displacement among Syrian refugees. It now displays the credentials of some 32,000 self-registered people, mostly in Jordan and Lebanon, covering over 150 occupations. Most registered job applicants are of Syrian origin, speak at least intermediate English (82%), and are 18 to 45 years old (92%). The Talent Catalog contains information about their skills, qualifications and employment histories, based on the information about their education, qualifications and professional experience they have entered into the system. This generates a CV that can be used to approach employers. TBB aims to provide open access to the catalog to all who need it among the target groups. The Talent Catalog is not

geographically restricted, anyone can join, but emphasis is still strongly on Jordan and Lebanon, where TBB has a base of operations.

TBB currently employs over 20 people in six countries (Jordan, Lebanon, USA, UK, Australia, Canada). They work directly with refugees and other displaced people in sending regions and with governments and other relevant stakeholders in receiving countries to develop labour mobility pathways. TBB is a frequently found reference when discussing labour-based complementary pathways with experts or reading academic articles on the topic. Despite the active and visible role of TBB, labour-based complementary pathways are, so far, still in their infancy and used by a very limited number of migrants.

**Objective:** According to their website, Talent Beyond Boundaries is 'the first organization in the world to focus on pioneering labour mobility as a complementary solution to traditional humanitarian resettlement' (Talent Beyond Boundaries: Unlocking skilled migration pathways for refugees). TBB supports governments and other organisations 'to imitate and scale the model' they have created and provides a concrete link to displaced talent through their online CV gallery, the Talent Catalog, described above.

TBB actively initiates discussion with governments and other stakeholders. Support offered by TBB includes policy and legal support. The process needs to be carefully adjusted to each specific context (examples of the UK, Australia and Canada are elaborated below). TBB aims to explore and solve the challenges related to visas and other practicalities in cooperation with governments and other stakeholders. The working method of the TBB is very practical and pilot-based, and takes advantage of experience gained from previous pilots. It includes proof-of-concept by using ordinary permits for a small testing group and then developing a pilot programme for more profound testing and development purposes. Through these learning processes they are able to create the required network of actors and inform governments about challenges that arise and ways to overcome them.-

According to interviews, TBB does not want to grow extensively or have a large number of employees, but rather to create new visa streams and partnerships globally, catalyse the change, and then disappear when it works. In practice, their work mostly consists of testing, advocacy, sharing technology and knowhow and documenting what works.

**Geographical scope:** TBB currently works with receiving countries in Australia, Canada and the UK and is exploring the possibilities for collaboration in the United States, Ireland, Belgium and Portugal. Thus, currently participating countries are primarily English-speaking countries who have been active in talent attraction and labour importing for a long time, with fairly business-led societal (and immigration) systems.

In sending countries, TBB started its activities in, and continue to focus on, Lebanon and Jordan. More recently, Kenya has been connected at least to Canada (via RefugePoint). TBB is also expanding into source countries (including Iraq and Turkey). In response to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, TBB is working with candidates currently in neighbouring countries. TBB is also working closely with the International Organization for Migration to open up labour pathway opportunities. Other NGOs such as HIAS are starting programmes to support displaced people in Peru and elsewhere in Latin America, with the aim of these candidates moving to Canada and elsewhere on labour pathways.

**Relation to resettlement:** TBB refuses to develop programmes with governments if they aim to replace traditional refugee quotas with more market-driven models. New or adjusted pathways need to be fully additional, complementary to the existing quotas. They are labour-based channels adjusted according to the needs of displaced people.

**Eligibility:** An eligible applicant is a refugee, a person who is stateless or has been displaced from his/her home country and unable to return (due to danger) and currently without a legal status that would enable working in the host country. In unclear cases, potential applicants may communicate with TBB representatives via messaging channels (e.g. Facebook). Proficiency in English is considered 'an essential asset that affects the outcome of your application' (TBB 2020a). People who are not yet proficient in English may apply to the system; however, they are recommended to improve their language skills while waiting.

**Legal frameworks and permits:** TBB aims to create a clear pathway to permanent residence. In Australia and Canada TBB is already working with both permanent and temporary visa pathways, and in the UK TBB's programme utilizes temporary pathways – but in all cases these visas are able to be translated to permanent residence after a period of time. In most cases TBB holds that candidates are able to secure permanent stay through work-based solutions. But in the worst case scenario, where a candidate loses their job and may risk losing their visa status, a amending to refugee status is a safeguard option. TBB collaborates with governments to find legal and safe solutions to either create totally new visa or permit types or amend existing ones to combine protection and labour pathways.

**Identification and selection** take place mostly via the Talent Catalog online platform, up to the test and interview phase on the employer side.

Endorsed employer partners are provided with access to anonymized candidate profiles through the Talent Catalog, in order to evaluate their equivalence with the job available. The employers receive the names and contact information only through TBB's consent as it curates the process. If a candidate is found to match a vacancy, the TBB's sending country team will be notified and communicate with the candidate first. Ultimately, selection is done by the hiring employer.

Identifying candidates for the Talent Catalog in the sending countries involves constant work. TBB actively recruits skilled refugees to register to the system. There are, however, no specific requirements regarding the countries of origin or the countries of current residence of eligible candidates. TBB organises outreach activities in the sending countries to find potential candidates, especially via Facebook and WhatsApp. In addition, targeted activities to reach women have been organised, including women only information sessions as well as asking men who register whether they also have a spouse or sister who would like to register to increase the family's chances of securing a solution. Other programme-specific outreach activities are also organised as needed (e.g. to find nurses). Also, different refugee organisations have spread the word as partners of TBB (e.g. Finnish Church Aid, IOM, Union of Relief and Development Associations, URDA).

The role of TBB's teams in sending countries is crucial. They work with a network of partners on location (including local and international organisations) and support candidates when they register to the system. If a job opportunity arises, they help the candidate take advantage of it. The team also identifies suitable candidates from the Talent Catalog for recruiting employers, ensures the skills match and provides other relevant information, and finally links the candidates with potential employers.

**Actors involved:** In receiving countries, TBB works with government immigration officials as well as other stakeholders, such as immigration lawyers, employers and various integration services (see programme description below), depending on the programme and its target group. It should be noted that there are more than 900 organisations serving refugees in the UK alone, for example. These existing actors provide various opportunities to develop a new layer of services needed for the specific target group related to the development of complementary pathways.

Partners in sending countries include those discussed above. RefugePoint in Kenya and HIAS in Central and South America are examples of partners co-operating with TBB in new source countries.

TBB also work in partnership with an immigration law firm that operates in 160 countries, so they are able to get clear picture of the legal systems in any country they enter and what should be changed. According to the representatives of TBB, they also work in close cooperation with international organisations and forums (e.g. UNHCR, Global Compact on Refugees, Global Compact on Migration) with the aim to 'open up labour mobility pathways to refugees and displaced people'.

Finally, TBB puts out a continuous online 'open call' for new actors in both receiving and sending countries to participate in further developing and expanding the activities. This process is facilitated and curated by TBB (parallel with any online based recruitment

platform and brokering between job candidate and employer) by matching skills and jobs, preparing candidates, conducting interviews, etc. TBB asks candidates about their displacement status and whether they are registered with the UNHCR or similar bodies – but registration is not essential to be considered for the programme. Candidates can submit documents that help to prove their skills to employers, but TBB does not require these documents unless employers and immigration officials require them, so there is some flexibility in interpretation.

The fast pace of this development is notable. While the number of pilot projects has increased during the last five years and evolved towards functional programmes, also new actors are emerging. Partly, these are 'spin-offs' of TBB. For example, TalentLift (est. 2021) is a non-profit talent agency. They support Canadian employers to recruit and relocate talent from within refugee and displaced populations to fill skills shortages, 'enabling candidates along with their families to lift to their potential, secure their futures, and leave displacement behind' (TalentLift Canada 2021). They develop more equitable access to recruitment and visa systems for candidates who live in refugee or refugee-like circumstances. Candidates have to register their skills and aspirations on the TalentLift talent platform or with one of their non-profit partners. Their services include talent search, visa application, and settlement coordination. TalentLift is a federally-incorporated non-profit and a registered Civil Society Organisation with the Law Society of Ontario.

In addition to the generic features above, numerous aspects need to be tailored case-specifically for different countries and different pathway types. These include definition of the target group (skills needed in the receiving country's labour market), selection of suitable permit types to be adjusted, formation of a task force of actors to implement the processes, and so forth. These are illustrated by three country-specific examples below with respect to the UK and Australia, and more broadly in the case of Canada, where development has been most extensive.

### **TBB CASE. Example 1. International Refugees Helthcare Pilot (UK)**

**Eligibility criteria and number of arrivals:** This scalable pilot programme aims to bring more than 200 (original aim was 25 and 35 have already arrived by September 2021) health and care professionals to the UK. Refugee or displaced nurses are sought from Lebanon or Jordan and the aim is to develop viable, sustainable and ethical sources responding to the UK's National Healthcare Service's (NHS) workforce needs. If successful, the programme can be scaled up. The pilot was considered as a 'test of concept' for recruitment of refugees and displaced people;" The programme is essentially a recruiting scheme targeting refugees currently in Lebanon and Jordan, in primarily nursing roles.



To make the programme more suitable for displaced talent, certain fees are suggested to be cut. For example, fees paid by employers can be very expensive (e.g. few thousand pounds per permit). With lower payments, employers could be more eager to support displaced candidates and their arriving families. The Skilled Visa Programme in the UK includes the Health and Care stream which offers streamlined processing and a waiver of the NHS surcharge for international healthcare professionals. Candidates enter as Healthcare Assistants which requires that they have a nursing qualification in their country, together with evidence of English at B1 level. They then progress their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in the UK to attain Registered Nurse status. Alternatively, candidates may complete the preliminary assessment from the NMC offshore, and present English language evidence at IELTS 7.0 and enter as Pre-Registration Nurses. This is then a shorter pathway to full registration in the UK.

**The legal context and permits:** The legal context follows the guidelines of broader “Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot” that is effectively a “watch and learn” of refugees applying for and obtaining Skilled Worker Visas. The Home Office processes visas as per usual, but can apply flexibility on a case by case basis in consultation with visa applicants, employers and TBB. For example, flexibility has been applied to some police check requirements where it was unreasonable to obtain police checks from certain countries. The Skilled Worker Visa entitles holders to temporary residence and after five years, (if eligible) Indefinite Leave to Remain, and finally citizenship. As this is an employer sponsored route, visa holders must maintain employment with their sponsor. If there is a change in this arrangement, visa applicants have 60 days within which to secure another job and sponsor. Finally, if all other means fail, there is a possibility to apply for asylum/refugee status in order to stay permanently.

**Actors involved and related adjustments:** The pilot programme includes several governmental and non-governmental actors that have different responsibilities in the process.

- Occupational English Test (OET) is the only international English language test specifically for healthcare professionals that is approved by governments, regulators and educators for visas, registration, study, and work. For the purposes of the UK pilot, OET has agreed to waive the standard £322 test fee for agreed number of TBB candidates and they will be remotely and securely invigilated in Lebanon and Jordan. OET also offer free “pulse tests” which are used as a benchmarking tool for test readiness.
- NHS England (National Healthcare Services) NHS employers represents the employers’ organisation for in the UK. They agreed to cooperate with the pilot by using the workforce supply team to identify and support potential employers who would recruit refugees through the pilot. They also project manage one pilot (out of four).
- Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) supports the pilot to ‘prove that skilled refugee or displaced talent can be recruited into the NHS as an alternative recruitment pipeline’.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council is the regulatory body for nursing and midwifery in the UK. They have agreed to assist displaced candidates with validating their qualifications in the UK. The NMC will ensure that candidates meet its registration requirements already in the sending countries.
- Reset is the UK’s Community Sponsorship Learning Hub for welcoming refugees in the UK. Reset and TBB have established the “Neighbours for Newcomers” initiative which is a community-led integration programme for displaced talent arriving to the UK. (TBB 2020b).

Existing actors are thus slightly adjusting their activities to make the process work. For example, in the case of integration to local community pre-arrival, early stage and post-arrival activities, Reset deployed its service that was originally developed for vulnerable people and refugees arriving via normal routes. They have more than 100 active groups of volunteers already working in the UK (religious groups, students, retired people, etc.). Reset connected people already before arriving to provide various practical information on how to live and cope in the new location (e.g. enrolling to school) and to provide a social network to turn to for help and guidance after arriving.

The UK healthcare pilot aims to demonstrate that allowing refugees and other displaced people to leverage their own skills and access existing skilled migration pathways is a possible solution.

### **TBB CASE. Example 2. The Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot**

In July 2021, the UK government announced the Displaced Talent Mobility Pilot which will follow the framework set out above, but will apply to labour shortages in non-healthcare occupations. The pilot is expected to last for up to two years and will aim to support 100 primary applicants from Lebanon and Jordan to migrate to the UK through the points-based Skilled Worker Visa.

The aim of the pilot is to further identify and address the administrative and legal barriers for refugees and other forcibly displaced skilled job seekers. It provides opportunities for applicants and their families to move to the UK for work.

Employers can hire applicants via remote recruitment and sponsor TBB candidates. Candidates may be hired to take up jobs in any eligible occupations under the Skilled Worker Route. Occupations on the Shortage Occupations List are prioritised (e.g. IT, construction and engineering). Applicants receive priority processing and support to overcome administrative barriers (e.g. accessing passports, travel documents, employment references, and tax records).

Safeguards are in place for the eventuality that beneficiaries lose their job. In this case they will not be returned to a country where they could face danger. A Skilled Worker Visa is for a duration of five years with the opportunity for extension, if so long as certain criteria is met.

### **TBB CASE. Example 3. Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot programme (Australia)**

Australia has cooperated with TBB since 2017 and, after some experiments, has recently launched a pilot programme specifically targeted at skilled refugees, which is clearly different from the CSP programme discussed earlier.

**Objective:** The new programme was launched in July 2021 by the Australian Government in collaboration with TBB. The programme develops employer-sponsored skilled migration pathways and aims to remove recognised obstacles to refugees and other forcibly displaced people using these channels and make it easier for employers to access this pool of skills. The aim is to attract 100 individuals to Australia (in addition to their families) and the government has listed more than 100 occupations that can be sponsored under the pilot. (For more details see: Gnanakaran 2021.)

**Legal context and residence:**

Visa types available in the programme are:

- Employer nomination scheme with permanent residence visa on a direct entry basis. (subclass 186)
- Skilled employer sponsored regional visa with a pathway to permanent residence after three years. (subclass 496)
- Temporary skill shortages visa (maximum four-year visa) with opportunity for permanent residence. (subclass 482)

Permits processed under the pilot project are prioritised and process to last around three months (subject to delays due to COVID-19). Under these visa types, the programme includes several concessions, for example:

- Waiver of skills assessment requirements (employers may determine the sufficient skills)
- Waiver of requirement for proof of minimum years of work experience
- Reduction of minimum English language requirements (e.g. IELTS score of 4.5)
- Increase in age limit (up to 50 for certain visa types)
- Flexibility when valid travel documents or IDs are missing (e.g. resettled refugees)
- Flexibility in police checks, if checks not possible due to protection needs.

TBB has requested a broad range of concessions for the Skilled Refugee Pilot based on their engagement with displaced persons and Australian employers (see Table 1 for details).

**Application process:** Employers must be endorsed by TBB and register to their system (Talent Catalog) along with the job seekers. Together with TBB, employers can assess whether the candidates (and jobs available) are suitable for the programme and whether the professional skills of candidates match the needs of the company (Talent Beyond Boundaries: Unlocking skilled migration pathways for refugees).

**Actors involved:** Employers can join the programme by committing to a company-specific labour agreement with the Department of Home Affairs that allows them to sponsor refugees or displaced persons.

TBB works in cooperation with Australian start-up Refugee Talent, which provides services to integrate newcomers into local labour markets and to society. Refugee Talent is 'an employment platform where companies can hire diverse talent across Australia and internationally'. Founders met at a refugee-oriented start-up meeting in Sydney (Techfugee Hackathon) in 2015. They developed a solution to reduce the obstacles that refugees encounter when seeking employment matching their qualifications and experience in their new country (Refugee Talent: Unlock refugee potential). TBB is a non-profit actor and Refugee Talent is a social enterprise – neither take any fees for employers. The only costs employers pay cover the fees for the government, relocation costs, and other costs related to the recruiting process.

Refugee Talent plays a critical role in the saleability and sustainability of TBB's programme in Australia. In the long-term, TBB plans to hand over most of its labour mobility activities in Australia to Refugee Talent.

Finally, it is important to recognize at least two key issues when developing labour based complementary pathways approach as introduced here:

- In order to play significant role in both, refugee and labour migration policy, the labour based complementary pathways have to move from pilot phase towards established migration and refugee policy practices. Continuity and scaling of pilots is crucial in order to make a real impact on refugee situation globally (ca. 20 million refugees currently).
- It is crucial to ensure and maintain true humanitarian and complementary nature of these pathways.
  - Clear and transparent priorities for selection of target groups are needed to better explain current choices and the future also to expand the selective nature of current pathways (e.g. now Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, skill and language requirements).
  - It is important to ensure not only that pathways are complementary to regular refugee resettlement quotas, but that they will remain as such. They should not be used to justify the exclusion of asylum seekers in the future if the anti-refugee sentiments rise in political regimes. (Crisp 2021.)

**Sources:** Interviews with representatives of TBB UK and Australia, Cedefop, Refugee Studies Center, Oxford University and TalentLift. TBB 2020a; 2020b; Gnanakaran 2021.

### 3.2.2 Economic Mobility Pathways Project (Canada)

Canada's Economic mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) is often referred to as one of the most prominent examples of a successful labour-based complementary pathway. It utilises the TBB's Talent Catalog platform as part of the programme and TBB has been deeply involved in building it. Besides TBB, other actors are also involved, and responsibility for coordinating the programme is in the hands of governmental actors seeking to establish labour-based complementary pathways as a more permanent part of Canadian immigration policy. At this stage, however, the programme is only moving beyond its first pilot phase. The number of refugees that have entered Canada through the programme is still small, and many issues remain to be solved. Still, it has worked as a proof of concept that the labour-based complementary pathway model is feasible in Canada.

The EMPP does not constitute a novel entryway to Canada, nor is it part of Canadian resettlement efforts. At its core, the project is about finding skilled refugees, matching them with employers in need of workforce and, when this is done, facilitating entry through established labour migration channels. It incorporates all the elements of the UNHCR definition of complementary pathway, offering skilled refugees and their family members permanent residence in Canada.

The origins of the EMPP can be traced to both NGO and governmental actors. In the late 2010s TBB was looking to extend its operations to Canada. In 2018, the organisation had its first candidate and employer match in Canada, but unfortunately the participant did not qualify for regular labour immigration programmes. This led to the realisation that there was a need for closer cooperation with governmental actors. At the same time, the government was looking, partly due to the influence of UNHCR, into finding complementary pathways offering refugees protection outside the traditional refugee resettlement framework. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the governmental organisation responsible for refugees, scanned for existing programmes that could be leveraged for this purpose. IRCC was especially interested in exploring economic immigration programmes, which led to cooperation with Talent Beyond Boundaries. Later, RefugePoint, an international NGO that has been working with the Canadian government on resettlement, joined the programme as a partner.

The EMPP was officially launched in 2018 as a pilot project and a feasibility study on the ability of skilled refugees to access Canada's economic immigration programmes and to explore the barriers and challenges they face. The aim was to identify 10-15 skilled refugees and facilitate their entry to Canada through regular economic immigration programmes. Hence, the programme is still often referred to as the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot, though the initial pilot phase is over and Phase 2, with a more substantial target number for participants, is planned to start accepting applications in late fall 2021.

Phase 2, announced by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marco Mendicino in June 2020, aims help settle 500 refugees and their families through labour immigration channels over two-year period. It will be implemented in two stages. Stage 1 will run until June 30, 2022 and cap processing at 150 applications from principal applicants. Stage 2, starting July 1, 2022, will cap processing at 350 applications from principal applicants. For now, it is unclear what will happen to the programme after 500 applications have been received. According to the public policy announcement, it will remain in effect only until the cap is reached. On the other hand, according to the interviewees, there is a strong interest from both the governmental and non-governmental participants to make the labour-based complementary pathways model a permanent part of the Canadian immigration system. Therefore, if Phase 2 is considered a success, it will probably have some kind of continuity in the future.

**Number of beneficiaries:** By October 2021, TBB had helped 18 candidates arrive in Canada. In total 50 people including dependents had entered Canada through TBB's services under the EMPP are 13 more candidates (40 people including dependents) were waiting entry in different parts of the selection and entry process (Statistics received from TBB representatives 15 Oct 2021). Additionally, by September 2021, RefugePoint, had helped 3 candidates enter Canada (5 people including dependents). An additional 44 candidates have applied for jobs and are waiting for feedback from job applications. When family members are included, RefugePoint has 150–200 refugees in their pipeline (Statistics received from RefugePoint representative 30 Sep 2021).

**Legal context and residence:** Legally, the applicants use existing economic immigration programmes, such as the Provincial Nominee Programme (PNP), the federal Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) or, more recently, the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP). Applicants apply for permanent residence in Canada for them and their family members, though there are some rare cases where temporary work permits have been applied if it suits the participants better. At present, though, only permanent residence is officially considered to be part of the EMPP.

**Actors involved:** In the pilot phase, the programme has involved collaboration between governmental actors on different levels, UNHCR, and two international NGOs, though more NGO actors are sought to join the programme as it is extended in Phase 2. Local community groups and employers have varying roles in providing post-arrival integration services.

Canada has a federal governmental system with 10 provincial governments having considerable autonomy over many issues, including immigration. In the EMPP, the federal government is represented by IRCC, which coordinates between all partners and sets the policy direction within the government. IRCC ensures that the EMPP is aligned according

to the general immigration policies and helps in identifying employment needs and coordinating actions with settlement stakeholders both pre-arrival and post-arrival. Its international network is also responsible for receiving and processing applications submitted under the EMPP and, in the final stage, accepting applications for permanent residence in Canada.

The main pathways that participants in the EMPP use are Provincial Nominee Programmes. The role of provincial government varies according to the legislation and programmes available in each of the participating provincial and territorial governments, which include Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and the Yukon. In general, though, the provincial governments nominate the employer and the individual and are responsible for making sure the individual is eligible for the provincial programmes. This must be done before the application moves to the federal government for processing the permanent residence application.

In addition, UNHCR has helped in the design and administration of the EMPP project. It grounded the project in the broader context of Global Compact on Refugees and ensured that the underlying policy principles and protection safeguards were considered. UNHCR also has an active role in countries of asylum, though this varies from country to country. In Kenya, for example, UNHCR helps RefugePoint to identify and verify applicants to the project, and also helps facilitate a number of logistical steps for applicants living in Kenya's refugee camps.

Practical implementation of the programme is done by the NGO partners, TBB and RefugePoint. They are responsible for identifying skilled individuals and, once the job offer has been secured, facilitating the preparation and submission of the immigration application for programme participants and their family members and assist them throughout the whole process. TBB works through its Talent Catalog model and is actively looking for suitable job offers and establishing employer connections. It operates in Lebanon and Jordan and has over 32,000 refugees in its Talent Catalog. RefugePoint is based in Kenya, and, during the programme's pilot phase, identified and recruited suitable candidates in the health care sector from Nairobi, as well as the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps.

**Eligibility and application process:** To be eligible to participate in the EMPP, a person must have one of the following:

- Refugee status determined either by UNHCR or a refugee-hosting state; or if refugee status is not obtained yet, be a registered asylum seeker abroad; or have a Person of Concern letter issued by UNHCR specifically for the EMPP.



- Additionally, the applicant must reside outside Canada at the time of application, have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period, of a durable solution in a country other than Canada and be a convention refugee or meet the country of asylum definition.<sup>5</sup>

The process of selecting applicants is based on the needs of the employers. TBB works directly with the employers to find refugees with suitable skills to match their needs. Applicants coming through the TBB pipeline usually are part of their Talent Catalog. Eligibility and the selection process for this are described in detail above (see section 3.2.1).

With the RefugePoint the process starts usually through UNHCR. UNHCR's Canadian office identifies potential employers and then directs suitable requests to RefugePoint. The organisation's in-country operators then post the job vacancies in suitable places in refugee communities. So far, RefugePoint has dealt only with health care workers, so vacancies have been posted, for example, in clinics. RefugePoint screen CVs of the applicants to find qualified workers and confirm their refugee status with UNHCR.

After qualified candidates are found, they send job applications and if an employer finds a candidate suitable based on the application, they interview the candidate. If this leads to a job offer from a Canadian employer, the process proceeds according to the steps included in the specific economic immigration programme the candidate applies to. The eligibility requirements in these programmes vary. They may include requirements related, for example, to age, education, work experience, language skills, and/or settlement funds as proof of the applicant's ability to support themselves and their dependents. In some provincial programmes, certain professions can be proclaimed to be an occupation in demand, with lower requirements.

Applicants in the EMPP are, in principle, subjected to the same legislation as other applicants in economic migration programmes. However, they have a number of accommodations to facilitate the application process. The public policy announcement of Phase 2 lists the following exemptions the applicants may be granted:

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<sup>5</sup> For detailed definitions, see the Government of Canada (2021) public policy announcement: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/public-policies/economic-mobility-pathways-pilot-phase-2.html#shr-pg0>

- Waiving fees related to permanent residence application and collection of biometric information.
- In circumstances where there is a job offer, exemption from respective requirements relating to settlement funds, especially allowing use of grants and loans to meet the requirement.
- Exemption from the requirement for one-year full-time work experience within the preceding three years of the application. EMPP applicant may meet this requirement through work experience obtained at any time in the past.
- Exemption from the need to hold certain travel documents.
- Exemptions related to fees and documentation are extended also to family members where appropriate.<sup>6</sup>

Other government documents and interviewees pointed to some additional accommodations that have been used. Processing times are sought to be maintained within the standard 6 months through a dedicated team in IRCC, and the EMPP applicants may be provided with access to the Immigration Loans Programme to help with travel costs, start-up costs, and the right of permanent residence fee. Some candidates might be allowed alternative proof of work experience and other required documents.

These exemptions and facilitation measures are granted according to individual candidates' needs. The idea in the EMPP is that officials operate within the existing legislation but are flexible towards the refugee applicants and understand their unique situation. As one interviewee described, candidates in the EMPP receive another layer of understanding because of their circumstances. This all aims to help level the playing field with applicants who do not come from a refugee background.

**Pre- and post-arrival services:** Besides finding suitable skilled refugees for job vacancies, TBB and RefugePoint both provide a number of pre-arrival services in the country of departure for their candidates. They facilitate the whole process in the country of departure: posting job vacancies, helping applicants with job applications and CVs, preparing for job interview, and providing connections for interviews, to name a few examples. In addition, they can help candidates with language training if needed. After the candidate receives a job offer, the local staff help with the residence permit applications and the entire process up to departure for Canada.

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6 For a detailed list, see Government of Canada (2021) public policy announcement.

The NGO partners usually devise a settlement plan for candidates before departure, but the actual provision and contents of post-arrival services varies greatly. The applicants have access to post-arrival services that are available to all applicants in the given economic migration programme that they enter Canada through. These vary between programmes but can include services such as language and cultural training. Additionally, in Phase 2, the EMPP clients will be eligible for settlement and integration services, including pre-arrival orientation and referral to in-Canada settlement services and supports, according to the public policy announcement<sup>7</sup>. The policy announcement does not include details on how and what services are available and who will provide them, however, and according to the NGO interviewees, so far provision of services has been varying case by case.

The employer is involved after the candidate arrives, but their role is dependent on the available resources and how active interest the employer takes to help the candidate. Some employers can provide housing, integration services, help with costs related to the process, and can even help with finding work for spouses. However, this varies in each case and some employers contribute more and others less. In some cases, TBB have used private sponsorship groups to help with post-arrival services and support candidates after they have landed, and some local communities can provide settlement support as well. Additionally, private settlement agencies are often used in economic migration, but these are rarely utilised for immigrants with a refugee background.

**Lessons learned:** The EMPP has shown that there are skilled refugees who can enter Canada through the economic immigration streams. This, in turn, demonstrates in practice that there is enormous potential in economic immigration programmes, especially those based on the needs of employers instead of restricting programmes to certain sectors or occupations, to serve as labour-based complementary pathways for refugees. Economic immigration is by far the largest source of permanent residence admissions in Canada. In 2019, more than 196,000 individuals received permanent residence under the economic class, whereas refugee resettlement category included just under 30,000 admissions (IRCC 2020a). Canada is also suffering a considerable labour shortage, with 500,000 vacant jobs each year (IRCC 2021).

Yet, at this point, the EMPP remains far from being a truly scalable model for refugee mobility. The pilot phase has shown that there are number of barriers to entry through economic migration channels for candidates with a refugee background. The lack or poor quality of documentation, from basic travel documents such as passports all the way to education or employment certificates, has been a considerable issue. Refugee

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<sup>7</sup> See Government of Canada (2021) public policy announcement.

candidates also often lack access to necessary funding to cover the costs related to the process: e.g., application fees, language test, medical certificates, travel costs. Additionally, in many programmes there is the requirement for settlement funds to show proof of the applicant's ability to support themselves and their families. This can be especially restrictive for refugees since they rarely have large savings. Additionally, the family groups of refugees can often be unorthodox and extended. This presents a problem not only to fulfilling the settlement fund requirements, but to family reunification in general. Economic immigration streams are not designed with refugees in mind and can be more restrictive in their definitions of family members whereas resettlement programmes offer more flexibility.

The types of pre- and post-arrival services an immigrant with a refugee background requires can be different to immigrants with a non-refugee background. However, since the participants in the EMPP enter Canada through regular economic migration streams, they do not necessarily have access to services designed for refugees coming to Canada through resettlement channels. Also, applying for a permanent residence permit ensures that the need for protection of refugee candidates is considered, but it also makes the application process considerably longer compared to temporary work-based residence permits. This can exclude from the programme certain sectors and occupations where the need for labour emerges quickly and irregularly. A solution where the applicant applies for a temporary work-permit but is ensured the possibility to apply for permanent residence immediately when in Canada could help alleviate this situation, but at this point, there was no information that such arrangements would be considered.

So far, in the EMPP these issues are solved on a case-by-case basis and the programme has been mainly based on ad hoc practices tailored to each individual candidate. This enables flexibility according to individual needs but also introduces variability and unpredictability. In addition, it places significant administrative burden especially on the NGOs that have the main responsibility for the practical operation of the program. TBB has built its activities on the Talent Catalog model, which provides a certain structure to the process. RefugePoint's main interest as an organisation is refugee protection and durable solutions, and thus it did not have prior experience of the EMPP-type labour mobility programmes. During the first two years of their involvement in the EMPP, RefugePoint therefore had to labour-intensively build its operations from scratch, although now they are fully staffed and operational. Governmental actors are also learning as they go about the special circumstances that refugee candidates face.

In its current form, the EMPP model requires a lot of resources to be devoted to all parts of the process, from matching jobs and candidates to supporting candidates through the application process. This limits the number of candidates and applications that can be handled through the programme. In addition, post-arrival services vary greatly and the

activity of the employer or the community receiving the immigrant plays a large role. This is not a sustainable way to build a functioning labour-based pathway in the long run or at the large scale. There is a need for a more structured solution to these issues in order to transform the EMPP into a more durable and scalable model. There is also a need for stronger coordination and clearer roles between actors. As one interviewee pointed out, the labour-based pathways include a considerably larger array of both governmental and non-governmental actors compared to resettlement. Hence, coordination between actors is more demanding, but also more crucial for labour-based pathways.

The Phase 2 of the EMPP aims to tackle many of these issues. It formalizes some of the accommodations to the application process that have been used earlier. Especially the exemptions to the fees related to the application process and possibility to use loans to prove settlement funds are important improvements. Public policy announcement of the Phase 2 also indicates a more structured approach to providing pre- and post-arrival services, though detailed plans were not publicly available at the time of writing. IRCC is also planning to develop together with NGO partners a more sustainable and scalable model for provincial and territorial governments to recruit, integrate and retain skilled refugees through economic pathways. In addition, IRCC is exploring new possibilities to target larger cohorts of skilled refugees. A community-driven model seeks to connect employers experiencing chronic labour market shortages in certain regions and local communities with refugees with relevant skills. A sector-driven model builds on the labour market needs in Canada's in-demand sectors. However, these solutions are still being planned and tested and no results on their viability are available at the time of writing.

**Sources:** Interview with representatives of TBB; Interview with a representative of RefugePoint, Government of Canada 2021; IRCC 2021; IRCC 2020a; IRCC 2020b UNHCR 2019c.

**Table 1.** Contemporary labour-based complementary pathways

	Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot programme (Australia)	International Refugee Healthcare Pilot (UK)	Economic Mobility Pathways Project (Canada)
Initiator	TBB	TBB	TBB & Government of Canada
Year of programme start	2021*	2021	2018
Is programme connected to existing labour migration programmes?	Yes, labour visas (3 types)	Yes, labour visa (health care)	Yes, labour mobility programmes
Is programme actively connected to local labour market needs?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of people entered through the programme	100 (goal)	+200 (initial goal 25), 35 arrived by Oct. 2021	Goal: 500 principal applicants. By October 2021, 21 principals applicants and in total 55 persons including dependents had been admitted to Canada through the programme
Is need for protection assessed in the selection process?	yes	yes	Yes, refugee status determined either by UNHCR or a refugee-hosting state
Type of permit to stay	Temporary (with pathway to permanent) or permanent	Temporary with pathway to permanent	Permanent residence
Length of permit	Permanent or 3 or 4 years depending on visa pathway	3 or 5 year visas	Permanent
Received rights related to permit type (compared to applicants outside the programme with the same permit type) same / limited / extended	Same	Same	Same

	Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot programme (Australia)	International Refugee Healthcare Pilot (UK)	Economic Mobility Pathways Project (Canada)
Geographical scope	Varies	Varies	Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya
Adjusted permit practices	Yes, (reduced documentation requirements)		Yes, financial accommodations, reduced requirements of documentation and work experience
Travel and visa expenses covered	By the employer (reduced fees)	By the employer	Varies case by case.
Housing and other basic living expenses covered	No (salary guaranteed)	No (salary guaranteed)	No
Pre-arrival support	Yes	Yes	Yes, varying services depending on individual situation
Post-arrival support	Yes (through TBB and partners)	Yes (through TBB and partners)	Yes, varying services depending on individual situation
Right to family reunification (family members may accompany the principal applicant)	Yes	Yes	Yes, family members may accompany the principal applicant.

\*An earlier pilot started in 2018 which helped to test the model using existing visa pathways before the government brought in special concessions

## 4 Study-based complementary pathways

*In this chapter, we define study-based complementary pathways and discuss the prohibitive challenges faced by refugees in moving to a third country to study through regular scholarship programmes. Understanding these obstacles helps to foreground why study-based complementary pathways are needed and what should be considered in their design and implementation. We also provide detailed examples of the most relevant existing study-based complementary pathway programmes and present a table summarising their main features. As there are only a few extensive study-based programmes that meet all of the criteria for a complementary pathway as defined in this report, we have included some examples of other educational opportunities for refugees. These programmes have similar features to complementary pathways that may be useful in the design of study-based programmes.*

### 4.1 What are study-based complementary pathways and why are they needed?

According to UNHCR, complementary education pathways are: 'safe and regulated avenues by which refugees may move to a third country for the purpose of higher education, have their international protection needs met, while also being able to support themselves and reach sustainable and lasting solutions'. These pathways may include scholarships and other educational opportunities,<sup>8</sup> which can be private, community or institution-based (UNHCR: Complementary education pathways; UNHCR 2019a, 11). Academic scholarships awarded to refugee students allow them to continue studying or to do research. Universities, NGOs and governments can work together to customise and obtain funding for these academic scholarship programmes (UNHCR 2019a, 11).

UNHCR's key considerations for these educational pathways are that there must be funding for the student to study in and travel to a third country; the student should have access to legal status in the third country (including support to obtain travel documents

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<sup>8</sup> UNHCR (2019a:11) states in the report 'Complementary pathways for admission to third countries. Key considerations' that third country educational schemes or educational opportunities for refugees can offer complementary pathways.



and the possibility to stay in the third country after the study programme ends); rights, legal status or other protection granted to the refugee should not be endangered when the refugee enters the study programme; the pathway should take into account matters such as cultural context and availability of education documentation; and the pathway should help with the needs and challenges that the student faces, including economic and language issues and inclusion (UNHCR 2021c; UNHCR 2019a, 11).

One of the consequences of conflicts and disasters is that many people lose opportunities for education. When the situation becomes prolonged, there is a risk that an entire generation is not able to obtain a formal education. The importance of offering education to refugees has also been highlighted by the United Nations. The United Nations' New York Declaration (2016) states that tertiary education, skills training and vocational training should be ensured even in times of crisis, as these serve as a powerful driver for change, protect young people from despair by maintaining their hope for the future, and provide them with the necessary tools to rebuild their countries and societies after the conflict ends (UN 2016, paragraph 82 15/24). However, only about 3% of refugee youth have access to higher education (UNHCR 2020a, 5; UNHCR 2019d).

Refugees who live in a country of first asylum may face several barriers to accessing higher education. These obstacles include lack of money, insufficient language skills, lack of certificates, restrictions on moving around the first country of asylum or moving to another country, limited access to information, and lack of necessary support for attending and completing studies (UNHCR 2020a, 4).

In addition, refugees face difficulties in accessing third country educational opportunities, since many third countries require the student to return to their country of origin after finishing their studies. Quite often, countries of first asylum do not take refugees back if they have moved to a third country to study.

Study-based complementary pathways offer one way to tackle the educational challenges and add another way to reach safe countries legally. The findings of this research show that study-based pathways are still quite new in most countries and, in many cases, are still taking shape. The programmes also differ in design, purpose and execution.

In order to promote the creation of study-based complementary pathways, UNHCR, UNESCO and WUSC (World University Service of Canada) arranged a two-day conference, *Education Opportunities as Complementary pathways for Admission* (Paris meeting), in November 2019. They invited different stakeholders with a shared interest in developing these pathways. During the conference, participants explored country- and region-specific needs, shared good practices already developed in existing programmes, and identified barriers refugees confront regarding access to education opportunities in third countries

(UNHCR 2020a, 6). After the Paris meeting, a Task Force on education as a complementary pathway to admission in third countries was formed with the purpose of promoting higher education opportunities as complementary pathways for admission (UNHCR 2020a, 16).

Although currently very few complementary pathways are operational worldwide, interest among different stakeholders, such as state organisations and educational institutions, is gaining traction. More higher education institutions are developing their own programmes or collaborating with existing programmes. For example, the university corridor programme initiated by the University of Bologna has expanded in Italy and, at the moment of writing, France is building a similar pathway within its national context.

## 4.2 Examples of study-based complementary pathways and other study programmes for refugees

We have categorised study-based opportunities for refugees in two categories based on how well they fit our interpretation of the UNHCR definition or description of complementary pathways using the five basic criteria outlined in section 2.3.

In section 4.2.1, we present the first category, which consists of examples of study-based programmes that we consider to fully match the UNHCR definition of complementary pathways thus fulfilling these five criteria: They are 1) safe and regulated avenues 2) for refugees that 3) provide a lawful stay in a third country where 4) their international protection needs are met and 5) are additional to resettlement. We refer to these programmes here as *comprehensive study-based complementary pathways* or *comprehensive study-based programmes*.

In section 4.2.2 we take a look on the second category of programmes. This category consists of scholarship programmes for refugees which, in our view, do not count as complementary pathways because one or more criteria of the above-mentioned definition are not met. Some of the presented programmes for instance offer support for refugees in their current country of residence and therefore do not provide a legal *pathway in to a third country*. We nevertheless consider it useful to present these here as they contain many elements relevant to complementary pathways and may therefore provide some useful ideas for complementary pathway planning. The rationale for presenting these programmes is further discussed at the end of section 2.3.

The programmes presented in this chapter offer an overview of different types of study-based complementary pathways and other scholarship programmes available for refugees

facilitating admission to third countries. We focus on study-based programmes that offer tertiary education, as this is a common approach to study based complementary pathways<sup>9</sup>.

The presented programmes do not constitute an exhaustive list of all study-based programmes but aim to provide key examples of contemporary study-based programmes. When selecting the programmes to be presented, special emphasis was put on European programmes as well as the three countries originally selected as our case countries, namely Canada, Germany, and Italy.

## 4.2.1 Comprehensive study-based complementary pathways

### 4.2.1.1 UNICORE (Italy)

The University Corridors for Refugee Students (UNICORE) project aims to enhance refugees' access to tertiary education by providing a two-year scholarship for Master's studies at an Italian university. It was established by UNHCR, the University of Bologna, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Caritas Italiana and other partners in 2019. Its establishment was preceded by the rise of the need to find new safe and legal pathways in Italy in the late 2010s due to the situation in the Mediterranean and also due to the emergency evaluations from Libya conducted by the Italian authorities in 2017. In addition, the establishment of the Humanitarian Corridors programme in 2015 contributed to the discussion by providing a new alternative for safe and orderly arrival of migrants.

The UNICORE 1.0 project sought provide an opportunity for tertiary education for six students. Since then, the project has expanded rapidly. The most recent edition, UNICORE 3.0 (2020-2022), involves 24 Italian Universities and provides 43 scholarships.

The beneficiaries receive a two-year scholarship which covers accommodation, meals, residence permit related expenses, health insurance, legal, social and psychological support, and study materials. It is open to people residing in Ethiopia whose refugee status has been recognised in collaboration with UNHCR. The beneficiaries enrol in a second cycle degree programme (120 ECTS), which leads to a master's degree. Courses are taught in English or Italian and there is considerable variety in terms of subjects.

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<sup>9</sup> To learn about secondary education programmes, visit UWC Refugee Initiative website: <https://www.uwc.org/uwcrefugeeinitiative>

The aim of the programme is two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to implement the Global Refugee Compact by promoting enhanced solidarity, partnerships between different actors, including universities, and promoting enhanced resettlement. The programme is also in line with UNHCR's education policy, which seeks to improve refugees' access to tertiary education and promote safe legal channels. Secondly, the country-specific background of the programme is the tragic loss of human lives resulting from the large numbers of sea arrivals to Italy. UNICORE promotes safe and legal migration.

**Actors involved:** UNICORE started out as a bottom-up process. The initiative came from the University of Bologna. The university, in cooperation with UNHCR, sought to grant access to Italy for a few refugees residing in Ethiopia, which led to a discussion on how to establish a structure for facilitating the entry of a larger number of refugees. Currently, 24 universities in Italy are involved in this project. The project is coordinated by UNHCR and Italian Universities

Universities have a central role in the programme – they have responsibility for financing, the academic aspects, and for the beneficiaries themselves. UNHCR's role is to coordinate their work. Faith-based organisations, such as Caritas, the Diaconia Valdese, Centro Astalli (since the third edition) play a key role in the implementation of the project. The faith-based organisations provide support for refugees once they arrive in Italy by providing legal, social, psychological or health assistance. These project partners are also responsible for financing different parts of the programme. In addition, Caritas and Gandhi Charity provide significant logistical and travel related support to students in Ethiopia, as well as advancing the project by contributing to its dissemination in refugee communities.

Another supporting partner is the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their role in the implementation of the project is related to the issuance of visas – a process that takes place through the Italian Embassy in Ethiopia. The Ministry of the Interior's role is not formalised, but the public security department in particular is involved since their role in the issuance of residence permits is significant. The project is also well-known among other Italian authorities. State actors do not finance the project in any way or participate in other substantial ways in the operational work of this project.

**Eligibility:** The programme is open to refugees residing in Ethiopia. Universities involved in the programme are responsible for the selection of students. The key criteria are the same as for all universities. The selection process is merit-based: academic background and grade point average (GPA), professional experience and personal skills, and coherence between previous studies and the degree the individual wishes to take, are the key criteria used by universities to evaluate candidates.

**Application process:** The partner universities carry out the admission procedure individually. Each university forms a Committee of Experts which then carries out the evaluation. The evaluation process consists of two stages: 1) evaluation of documentation; 2) on-line interview to evaluate the technical skills, subject knowledge and language skills of the applicant.

UNHCR's role is to disseminate information about the programme in Ethiopia. Different social media platforms are used to do this. Furthermore, UNHCR cooperates with other NGOs (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council and the Jesuit Refugee Services) who also disseminate information about the programme through their channels. They also assist the potential beneficiaries in completing the application forms, provide technical support (internet connection) for the interview if required, etc.

**Visa and residence permit:** When the selection process is done, the visa application process is started. The beneficiaries arriving through UNICORE apply for a visa at the Italian Embassy in Ethiopia. They are issued an ordinary student visa. Once the beneficiary arrives to Italy, they apply for a residence permit for study-related reasons. The length of this permit is 12 months, and it can be renewed up to completion of the studies. The students need to pass approximately two exams per year in order to be able to renew the visa. Hence, the status of the beneficiaries in Italy is the same as the status of any other international student (interview with representatives of UNHCR Italy). The residence permit includes the family and children of the student.

Once the beneficiary has completed their studies, they can either return to the first country of asylum where their status as refugee is recognised, proceed to another country for work or studies, or remain in Italy for work or studies. The beneficiaries can also apply for asylum in Italy at any point, including at the end of their studies.

**Process of pre-departure and entry:** When the selection process is done, in-person meetings between the selected students and Caritas Italiana, UNHCR and Diaconia Valdese are organised to discuss their plans and assess their need for supporting services. The selected students are also provided pre-departure training that aims to prepare the students for the new context and the sociocultural aspects of Italy and to provide them with information on their rights and duties. UNICORE 3.0 also provides an online Italian course already during the pre-departure process.

Once arrived in Italy, the students are enrolled to the university and hosted in apartments and student residences. The universities are responsible for introducing the students to the campuses and practicalities. Early-stage relocation services, such as legal counselling, healthcare, psychological support and language training are provided for the beneficiaries.

**Number of beneficiaries:** In 2019 (UNICORE 1.0), six students were granted a scholarship out of a total of 50 applications. In 2020 (UNICORE 2.0), 20 students were granted a scholarship out of 155 applications. In 2021 (UNICORE 3.0), 43 scholarships were granted out of 491 applications.

**Lessons learnt:** As the rapid expansion of UNICORE indicates, the programme has been well-received and created a high level of engagement among Italian universities and also a high level of interest among potential beneficiaries. Furthermore, UNICORE is a good example of multi-stakeholder cooperation with the aim of promoting safe and orderly asylum.

However, the rapid expansion is also creating challenges. UNHCR coordinates work between universities, other organisations and the ministries, but institutional governance could be further enhanced. Similarly, there is no clearly defined project budget, rather the partners contribute different sums to cover different parts of the project. In order to keep growing, a clearer structure needs to be set in place, for instance by strengthening the role of the Ministry of Education.

The beneficiaries' legal status as international students may also pose a challenge. As described above, the study-related residence permit is valid for 12 months, but the Master's programme they are enrolled in is two years. In order to renew the permit, the student must have passed about two examinations. So far, this has not been an issue, but the situation where a student cannot renew their residence permit and thus loses their scholarship could occur. In this case, the student can either return to Ethiopia or apply for asylum in Italy. Since there is no economic safety net for the beneficiary beyond the scholarship, this situation could be financially very difficult for the beneficiary.

**Sources:** Interview with representatives of UNHCR Italy; UNICORE 2021; Caritas Italiana 2021

#### 4.2.1.2 Middle East Scholars (Lithuania)

Middle East Scholars (MES) is a Lithuanian based programme run by LCC International University, a private university established in Lithuania by Lithuanian, US and Canadian foundations in 1991. The university provides liberal arts education based on Christian values in English language. Initially, the university provided education especially for those coming from former Soviet countries, but over time new target groups have emerged. The focus at present is on the Middle East but this is not fixed and could change according to global resettlement needs.

Planning for the Middle East Scholars programme started in 2014 just before the number of asylum seekers rose significantly in Europe. After the necessary connections and preparations were made, the first Syrian students came to Lithuania in 2016 and currently the university has about 50 full-time students from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Funding for Middle East Scholars comes from LCC University, although recently the Lithuanian government has provided some additional funding for the programme.

**Relation to resettlement programme:** In 2015 Lithuania agreed to participate in the EU's refugee resettlement programme and committed to receiving 1,077 refugees by the end of 2019. However, by that time Lithuania had received about 500 refugees and the country decided to extend its participation in the EU resettlement programme until the end of 2021. The Middle East Scholars programme is not connected to the EU resettlement programme.

After completing the Middle East Scholars programme, graduates have the same options as anyone with regard to the right to seek residence.

**Objective:** The aim of the programme is to provide education for displaced people coming from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. Annually 15-20 people are admitted to the programme.

The population of Lithuania is decreasing, and immigration is seen as a means of redressing this trend. One goal of the programme, therefore, is to attract people to Lithuania.

The programme is not actively connected to local labour market needs.

**Actors involved:** LCC University started the programme by building a network of civil society actors in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan. The network consists of NGOs and churches that have close connections with the programme's target populations. Later, UNHCR got involved. Since its start, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been involved by providing additional funds for the programme. The Ministry of the Interior and organisations under its purview provide visas and residence permits. Other universities in Lithuania have also expressed their interest in the programme by offering places for students coming to Lithuania through the programme. UN organisations and NGOs operating in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan are also involved in the project.

**Eligibility:** Nationals of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan are eligible to apply for the programme. Those residing in unsafe settings are prioritised. Beneficiaries do not necessarily have to be recognised as refugees by UNHCR, but their situation is carefully assessed. LCC University assesses the candidates with the help of local partners who can provide recommendations on behalf of the candidates.

**Identification and selection:** LCC University works with UN organisations and other NGOs in Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan to identify eligible people for the programme. The network of local organisations helps the LCC University by promoting the opportunity locally in different countries and locations and by connecting eligible people to LCC University. The network also has an important role in helping the LCC University to assess the applicants. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, an employee from LCC University would go to Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq or Jordan to choose suitable candidates for the programme. Due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, LCC University has since conducted the interviews online.

The applicant should meet the skill-based requirements to enter the relevant programme of study and have such sufficient English language proficiency. The qualifications are assessed by LCC University by reviewing certificates from previous studies and by interviewing the applicants.

As the studies are run in English, it has been crucial to assess the English language skills of applicants to ensure adequate proficiency to complete the studies. Due to current COVID-19 travel restrictions, the English language tests have been conducted online. Additionally, Duolingo has been used as a cost-effective means of evaluating candidates' language skills. Clearly, these adjustments made due to the pandemic have decreased the accessibility of the programme, as those without a computer, smartphone or internet connection simply have not been able to apply.

The need for protection is assessed with the assistance of local partners and the final selection of beneficiaries is based on the candidate's need and skills. For example, applicants who are already studying in a university in the first country of asylum but would prefer to attend the MES programme are excluded from the programme.

Those applying should have a recommendation letter, preferably from someone connected to the organisations of the cooperation network. LCC University makes all the decisions based on humanitarian, economic and skills-based considerations. The applicant must provide information about their economic situation to prove their need for financial support. All information provided is assessed by LCC University, who then select the beneficiaries for the programme.

In addition, the applicant is required to demonstrate genuine interest in the studies they are applying to: LCC seeks students who have a real interest in the area of study, instead of using the programme merely as an escape from their current situation.

The application period is on-going, and decisions are made accordingly. MA studies start in the autumn and BA studies in the autumn and January. There is a separate application



for financial support, and the maximum amount of support is for 10 semesters or 5 years. There is a required number of credits per semester for getting financial support and there is also a possibility to apply for summer support.

**Transfer to the destination country:** When the programme was first launched travel expenses were covered. However, following negative experiences of some students rapidly moving on to other EU countries after arrival, the programme has chosen to no longer cover travel costs. This decision has also reportedly been taken as a means of screening out people who are not committed to the study programme.

**Visa and residence permit:** New students receive a national student visa valid for one year. During the first months of stay, students should apply for a temporary residence permit, which is given for a year and can be renewed. After completing their studies, graduates can apply for different types of visas in the same ways as any other applicant. Graduates can also extend their residence permit for one year after graduation to find work.

The programme has the potential to offer a permanent solution, as the study-based visa can last up to five years (usually four). After their studies, graduates can apply for a temporary residence permit for one year to look for work in Lithuania. They are also entitled to apply for refuge in Lithuania if necessary. In addition, five years of uninterrupted residence in Lithuania grants the right to apply for citizenship. Therefore, participants in the programme have a real possibility to remain in the country after graduating. So far the first four students who entered the programme have received their bachelors degree and stayed in Lithuania to work and some also continue their studies in state universities.

**Covered expenses:** The programme covers all costs except travel expenses: tuition fees, books, preparatory courses, monthly stipend for basic needs such as food, housing, health insurance, mentoring or psychosocial support and visa. The economic situation of each candidate is assessed during the interview. If they have financial means they should pay for the housing, visa or insurance by themselves. The candidates are not asked to show their account statement but there is a separate form where questions regarding the current economic situation are being asked.

**Programme's relation to labour market needs:** The programme is not closely connected to labour-market needs. The degrees provided reflect the LCC University's curriculum (liberal arts). However, LCC University does provide employment services for their students, which can also be used by those studying in the MES programme. These are fairly general services aimed at helping graduating students find work in their field of study.

**Results and lessons learned:** In total, 89 people have attended the programme since its commencement (2016-2021). Ten students have not completed their studies although two of them are on academic leave and might return to complete their studies.

The programme representative stressed the importance of ensuring that those selected are genuinely interested in the studies they are attending and that they have sufficient language and other necessary skills to pass courses and exams. When a programme functions well it attracts the interest of other actors, i.e. other educational institutions or government organisations, and is more likely to expand in the near future. Also, the number of applicants has been rising steadily as word about the opportunity has spread among the target populations. Good partners with contacts in the target populations are crucial in the selection process.

The MES representative mentioned that the programme has had a positive effect on local students' attitudes towards refugees as they have befriended the students attending the MES programme. The programme has also promoted a more positive image of refugees among the general population.

**Sources:** Interview with LCC representative; Lietuvos radijas ir televizija; LCC International University; About LCC University; LCCInternational University; Middle East Scholars.

#### 4.2.1.3 DAAD Leadership programmes (Germany)

The German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD) is an association of German institutions of higher education and their student bodies that supports the internationalisation of German universities. The association award grants and scholarships for both German citizens looking to study abroad and international scholars coming to Germany. DAAD is mainly funded by the federal government, but it also receives part of its budget from the EU and foreign governments as well as from private sector actors.

Assisting refugees to take up studies in Germany is a major part of DAAD's activities. It works in collaboration with higher education institutions and other partner organisations in developing various programmes to promote the integration of refugees in German universities. These programmes cover the whole period of study, from recognising skills and qualifications and language preparation to supporting integration at universities and all the way to transition to the job market after graduation.

DAAD has been the main actor in creating study-based complementary pathways in Germany. It has done this through so-called Leadership programmes that are complementary to German resettlement. First, Leadership for Syria ran from 2015 until the

end of 2019. It offered scholarships to over 200 Syrians. In 2021, DAAD launched a new Leadership for Africa programme modelled on the Syrian programme. Below, we explore both programmes in more detail.

### Leadership for Syria

In 2015, DAAD launched the 'Leadership for Syria' programme. The programme ran until the end of 2019 with the aim of offering Syrian academics a safe stay in Germany while obtaining an academic qualification. It was built on the 'No lost generation in Syria' idea, which was a political response in the early 2010s to the situation in Syria and the consequences for the Syrian population. The programme targeted refugees from Syria, offering them safe temporary stay in Germany while simultaneously using that time for academic education purposes. The core idea was that these educated young Syrians would play a crucial role in rebuilding and deciding the future of Syria once the conflict is over. In practice, however, since the conflict is still ongoing, the participants are still in Germany and the aim now is to integrate them into the German labour market.

The programme was targeted at Syrian citizens living in Syria, living as refugees in neighbouring countries, or already admitted and living in Germany. The scholarship was accompanied by a tight supervision programme by the hosting universities, including language courses and application training. The project was financed by the German government with a budget of EUR 15 million.

**Actors involved:** The programme was established and implemented by DAAD in close cooperation with UNHCR. The German Federal Foreign Office and The Ministry of Culture and Science of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia were the governmental partners and funders of the programme.

**Eligibility:** The programme was available to highly qualified Syrian high school graduates and students who fulfilled the requirements for bachelor's degree studies and who intended to actively contribute to the reconstruction of Syria after the civil war. The selection process included online applications and interviews focused on academic achievements, personality and motivation. University professors were actively involved during the selection process and participated in the interviews with the candidates; the selection interviews were conducted in Istanbul, Erbil, Cairo, Amman, Beirut and Bonn in March 2015. In addition, the applicant's refugee status was verified by UNHCR and close cooperation with UNHCR was maintained during the admission process and throughout the programme.

**Number of beneficiaries:** 221 (including 21 scholarships from federal state North Rhine-Westphalia). A total of 6,000 candidates applied, 500 were pre-selected and invited to

interview, and 221 applicants received a scholarship. Most received the scholarship as Master's students and a few as PhD or Bachelor students.

**Residence permit:** Participants have the legal status of student and receive a residence permit to study in Germany with the same rights as others with the same permit type. For instance, they are able to work and earn salary, although the DAAD scholarship limits the amount to 450 € per month and anything above is deducted from the scholarship. After graduation, participants can seek employment for up to 18 months. If the beneficiary finds employment, they can work for five years based on a permanent residence permit. After seven years they can apply for German citizenship. As Syria is not a safe country, most scholars have remained in Germany even after finishing their studies.

**Costs covered:** No precise information is available on allowances or sums included in the scholarship, but according to the available information the structure was much the same as in the current Leadership for Africa -programme (for details, see below). In short, the scholarship did not cover tuition fees and the study programme had to be in a state university that does not charge tuition fees. In addition, travel costs were covered, and the scholarship included a monthly allowance to cover other costs.

**Pre- and post-arrival services:** No information on pre-arrival services is currently available. Post-arrival services included 2-6 months of language courses and preparatory courses, orientation and study planning meetings, intercultural training as well as an obligatory programme on good governance and civic society. These were provided in the one location for all the participants. After choosing their higher education institution and moving on to their respective locations, the DAAD support services were at the student's disposal. Students also had the opportunity to participate in buddying and mentoring programmes.

### Leadership for Africa

In 2021 the DAAD launched its latest scholarship programme, Leadership for Africa, with funding from the German Foreign Office. It is closely modelled on the Leadership for Syria programme and is therefore broadly similar in detail. Below, we point out the key differences that can be distinguished between the two.

Leadership for Africa has two sub-programmes with different geographical reach. One covers Cameroon, Ivory Coast or Senegal and the other Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Sudan. The programme supports master's degree students at German universities, with the exception of the subjects of human, veterinary and dental medicine and public health, as well as law, art, music and architecture.

Both programmes have two main target groups:

1. Highly qualified refugees who hold refugee status and fulfil the necessary qualifications for Master's studies in Germany.
  - These participants must hold refugee status and have asylum in one of the target countries.
  - In addition, they must have completed a Bachelor's degree at least at the time of arrival in Germany.
2. Highly qualified graduates who are citizens of and reside in one of the target countries.
  - They also must have completed a Bachelor's degree at least at the time of arrival in Germany.

Hence, the Leadership for Africa programmes are not reserved solely for students with a refugee background. Half of the scholarships are earmarked for citizens from the countries mentioned above and the other half for refugees residing in these countries.

Pre-selection of refugee applicants is done by UNHCR based on their protection and admission criteria. The further selection process is similar to the process applied in the Leadership for Syria programme, involving online application and online interviews with the potential candidates to examine their potential.

**Number of beneficiaries:** During the first application period, the programme received 510 applications, of which 109 came from persons who had a recognised refugee status. During the application process, 51 persons were selected for a scholarship: 19 recognised refugees and 32 other Bachelor graduates from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan will start their studies at German universities in autumn 2021. The second round of applications was opened in late spring 2021 and this time the geographical reach included both sub-programmes.

**Covered expenses:**

The scholarship includes following allowances:

- If applicable, language course (2, 4 or 6 months) in Germany before the start of the study programme, including coverage of test fees for a German language certificate.
- Accompanying study programme.

- Monthly scholarship payments of 861 euros.
- Adequate health, accident, and private/personal liability insurance in Germany.
- Travel allowance.
- One-off study allowance.
- If applicable, family allowance and monthly rent subsidy

Tuition fees are not covered, and the university programme must be in a state university that does not charge tuition fees.

**Sources:** Interview with representative of DAAD; Interview with representatives of BMI; DAAD 2014; DAAD Scholarship Database n.d.; DAAD, 2021; DAAD - Refugees at Higher Education Institutions; UNHCR, n.d.

#### 4.2.1.4 Higher Education in Emergencies scholarship programme (Portugal)

The Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies (former Global Platform for Syrian Students; hereafter Global Platform) is a non-profit international multi-stakeholder organisation founded in 2013 by a former President of Portugal. It operates mainly in Portugal with the full support and close collaboration of the Portuguese Government, forming a kind of public-private partnership. Global Platform has three main objectives: 1) running an emergency scholarship programme for students from conflict-affected societies in need of protection providing academic opportunities to complete their education; 2) advocating for more support for higher education in emergencies, notably at international and regional levels; 3) setting up a Rapid Response Mechanism for higher education in emergencies (RRM). The emergency scholarship programme is presented below in more detail.

**Objective:** The programme's main objective is to provide education opportunities for students from conflict-affected societies in forced mobility and in need of protection, and to enable them to complete their higher education in a safe environment. The programme started as a response to the Syrian crisis in 2014. Since then, more than 300 students have benefitted from this scholarship programme. More than 750 annual scholarships have been awarded, mostly to forcibly displaced students at risk from Syria. Scholarships are renewed on an annual basis, the aim being to allow the students to complete their graduation. To date, 136 students have graduated, most at Master's degree level; nine students have also completed a PhD.

Most of the beneficiaries have been hosted in Portugal, but Global Platform has also awarded some scholarships to students in its target group in nine other countries. From 2017 onwards, the scholarship programme has been enlarged to include refugees in Portugal of any nationality within the framework of the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies (RRM), an umbrella platform that has been developed and implemented as an eco-system for a fast track to higher education in emergencies. This initiative is complementary to the resettlement programmes in which Portugal participates within the framework of the UN and the EU.

**Actors involved:** The Chairman and founder of Global Platform was the late President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio. Other founding institutional partners include notably the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Institute of International Education (IIE). Global Platform works collaboratively and has three core components: a network of partners, an academic consortium, and an emergency fund. Global Platform is made up of the widest possible range of stakeholders, welcoming participants from governments, NGOs, the private sector as well as individuals. The Academic Consortium consists of higher education institutions (HEI) that commit to provide tuition fee waivers to scholarship holders of the Platform. Currently, it comprises all HEIs in Portugal as well as some in Spain.

**Eligibility and selection process:** The scholarship programme is aimed at students in conflict-affected societies and students at risk and currently in situations of forced mobility, such as refugees and asylum seekers. Initially, the programme was only open to Syrian students residing in Syria. Since 2017, the programme has been expanded to other conflict affected areas as well as to refugees already residing in Portugal under the wider umbrella of the implementation of the Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies. Global Platform is currently planning to establish a scholarship programme for Afghan female students.

To apply to the scholarship programme, refugee status is not mandatory. Scholarships are also available to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and students at risk of forced mobility. The following eligibility criteria are applied to students who do not have a residence permit in Portugal:

- The student must be a citizen or national or permanent resident qualified to hold a valid passport issued by a conflict-affected country or must have refugee status or benefit from international protection.
- In addition, the student must be at least 18 years old, have excellent academic performance, hold a higher secondary certificate, have completed at least one year of studies with excellent marks and preferably be enrolled for the 2nd year or have completed a Bachelor's degree.

Other criteria, such as need of protection and being at risk (risk factor), are also taken into consideration as well as the civic profile of the candidate and gender balance.

**Application process:** Students apply to the scholarship programme individually by filling in a form from the Global Platform website. The application form is reviewed by a selection committee made up of at least three members. Virtual interviews have now been introduced as a complementary step of the selection process.

**Visa and residence permit:** Global Platform takes responsibility of the visa arrangements in close cooperation with the relevant Portuguese authorities. Upon arrival, students receive a student residence permit which is renewed each year until the student graduates/finishes their studies. After graduation the student receives a work permit and, if eligible, can apply for a permanent residence permit or citizenship. Students invited to Portugal are able to request international protection and asylum if they wish.

**Process of pre-departure and entry:** Global Platform is responsible for organising the departure, including visas, transportation and reception. Upon arrival, students are hosted by their higher education institutions (HEIs), but Global Platform follows up the integration process in close collaboration with its Focal Points at HEI. It also organises complementary activities, such as non-formal or informal education training during the summer.

**Covered expenses:** Funding for emergency scholarships comes from the Academic Consortium members (i.e. universities) for tuition fees and from the Emergency Student Fund. The Emergency Student Fund consists of voluntary donations and grants made to Global Platform by a wide range of donors, national and international, public and private. Funds raised are used to cover the students' needs, including a monthly allowance, accommodation, laptops and other materials, language courses, soft-skills training and other similar costs related to the study programme. All expenses are covered, including the cost of visas, transportation to Portugal if applicable, renewal of passports, ID documents, etc.

**Results and lessons learned:** More than 136 Syrian students have graduated with bachelor, master or PhD degrees with the help of the scholarship programme. More than 95% of the students have entered into the job market after completing their studies.

According to Global Platform, the success of the programme lies in its holistic approach, the close follow-up of students over the course of their studies and even before their arrival in Portugal, as well as in the ability to intervene at an early stage when problems occur (not only at an academic level, but also related to accommodation, social relations, well-being and integration, etc.). The Platform offers a full range of services and develops a kind of a 'care approach' in order to help students feel at home.



**Sources:** Information provided by Global Platform representative; European Commission 2021; Global Platform website, n.d.

#### 4.2.1.5 Syrian Scholars Initiative (Japan)

To participate in helping refugees and displaced people in need, the Japan International Christian University Foundation (JICUF) together with the International Christian University (ICU) and Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) launched the Syrian Scholars Initiative (SSI). The programme is coordinated by ICU.

**Relation to resettlement programme:** Japan started its resettlement programme in 2010, and it has received 194 refugees in total. Annually, Japan receives a few dozen refugees through the resettlement programme. The SSI programme is a complementary pathway as it increases the number of refugees provided with a durable solution in Japan. The programme does not automatically grant permanent residence for those who have completed the programme.

**Objective:** The goal of the programme is to provide education for 100 Syrian refugees over a period of five years (UNHCR 2020b). The Japan ICU Foundation states that their mission is 'to work with ICU to nurture global citizens who contribute to the well-being of humanity'. This is done partly by focusing on the themes of: 1) Sustainability, 2) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and 3) Peacebuilding.

**Actors involved:** The programme is run in collaboration with Japan International Christian University Foundation (JICUF), International Christian University (ICU), and Japan Association for Refugees (JAR). Government is responsible for visas and residence permits. Notably, a passport is not mandatory, but beneficiaries are highly encouraged to obtain one before coming to Japan.

**Eligibility:** The programme is offered to Syrian nationals residing in Turkey, Egypt or UAE. Applicants must be single with no dependents. Applicants should have graduated from high school or, optionally, can take a GED (high school equivalency diploma). English skills should be good, with a minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or TOEFL iBT 79.

In addition, applicants should demonstrate interest in studying in the major offered by ICU and interest in the Japanese language. The programme does not have an age limit, but those without a bachelor's degree or significant professional experience are preferred.

**Identification and selection:** ICU is in charge of the selection process, which is based on protection needs and skills. Applicants must be a Syrian national living in Turkey, Egypt or UAE and provide official certificates of English skills and a high school diploma.

**Covered expenses:** Visa application fee, travel expenses, housing in the campus dorm, living expenses, health insurance, and tuition are provided. Notably, the programme also covers travel expenses within the country of first asylum if the student has to travel from one city to another in order to reach the airport.

**Connection to labour market needs:** The emphasis seems to be on educating people with potential to help rebuild Syria. The programme does not have a focus on collaborating with the Japanese labour market to provide skilled workers after graduation.

**Integration:** Applicants have to show interest in Japanese culture and language, and those selected are required to study Japanese language once they arrive in Japan.

**Results and lessons learned:** The programme started in 2018 with two participants and two more arrived in 2019. Due to Covid-19, the programme was halted in 2020. The programme has since been reopened in 2021.

**Source:** Japan International Christian University Foundation; UNHCR 2020b.

Table 2. Comprehensive study-based complementary pathways

	Middle East Scholars	Syrian Scholars Initiative	Unicore	Leadership for Syria	Leadership for Africa	Higher Education in Emergencies
Country	Lithuania	Japan	Italy	Germany	Germany	Portugal
Programme initiator	LCC University	Japanese government and Christian University of Japan	UNHCR, University of Bologna	DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)	DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service)	Global Platform for Higher Education in Emergencies
Starting year	2016	2018	2018	2015	2021	2014
Is the programme actively connected to local labour market needs?	No	No	No	No	No	No
Number of people entered through the programme	15-20	2	43 admitted during the latest application round	221	51 in the first round of applications	Around 300
Is the need for protection assessed in the selection process?	Yes, official refugee status not required	Yes	Yes	Yes, UNHCR confirmed refugee status	Yes for participants with refugee background	Yes, official refugee status not required
Type of residence permit	Student visa	Student visa	Student visa	Student	Student	Student visa
Duration of permit	4-5 years		1 year, renewable until completion of studies	Until 18 months after completing the studies.	Until 18 months after completing the studies.	Scholarship length min. 1 year, renewable until end of studies; then the permit becomes a work permit/permanent/ nationality

	Middle East Scholars	Syrian Scholars Initiative	Unicore	Leadership for Syria	Leadership for Africa	Higher Education in Emergencies
Received rights related to permit type (compared to others with same permit type) same / limited / extended	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same	Same
Geographical scope	Refugees from Middle East region	Syrian nationals residing in Egypt, Turkey or UAE	Ethiopia	Syria	Two sub-programmes: 1. Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Senegal. 2. Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania.	Syria + other conflict affected societies
Tuition fee covered (fully / partially)	Fully	Fully	Fully	No	No	Fully
Travel and visa expenses covered (fully / partially)	Only visa, not travel expenses	Fully	Fully	Fully	Fully	Fully
Housing and other basic living expenses covered (fully / partially)	Fully	Fully	Fully	Monthly scholarship, rent subsidy and health insurance	Monthly scholarship, rent subsidy and health insurance	Fully
Pre-arrival support	English training before	Japanese courses after arrival to Japan and before the actual studies start	Yes, Italian courses, socio-cultural training, information about rights and duties	No information	No information	No
Post-arrival support	Yes, language courses and cultural integration	Yes, language courses and cultural integration	Yes, legal counselling, healthcare, psychological support, language training included	Language courses, cultural integration, study planning, support services	Language courses, cultural integration, study planning, support services	Yes, language, culture and social integration

## 4.2.2 Other study programmes for refugees

### 4.2.2.1 Student Refugee Program (Canada)

The Student Refugee Program (SRP) was established by World University Service Canada (WUSC), a non-profit development agency, in 1978. Today, the programme provides resettlement and higher education opportunities for around 130 people annually. The network of hosting universities consists of 95 Canadian campuses. The programme targets refugees currently residing in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Jordan and Lebanon. In total, more than 2,000 refugees have arrived in Canada through the programme.

**Legal context and relation to resettlement:** As an official Sponsorship Agreement Holder, WUSC is entitled to bring refugees to Canada as permanent residents. The participants in SRP are part of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) resettlement programme. This means that the refugees entering the country through the programme are considered part of Canada's resettlement admission target. Hence, by our definition, the SRP does not constitute a complementary pathway: it is not additional to Canada's resettlement programme. It is, however, regularly mentioned as a model case of a long standing education pathway for refugees (for examples see Coleman 2020; Fratzke et. al. 2021).

**Actors involved:** WUSC is responsible for coordination of the programme. It has partnered with UNHCR, IOM, as well as local NGOs provide support in the first countries of asylum. In Canada, WUSC has partnered with over 80 institutions and has strong cooperation with the government. The programme funders are the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; the Government of Ontario; institutional partners; and foundations and private Canadians.

**Eligibility:** Refugees between ages 18-25 who have lived in the first country of asylum for a minimum of three years can apply to the programme. They also must have UNHCR refugee status and come without dependents. The beneficiaries should also have copies of secondary school or university or college transcripts. The beneficiaries will study either in English or in French and therefore a high level of at least one of these languages is required. Another criterion is their perceived ability to successfully resettle in Canada.

**Application process:** The process of application consists of a language assessment, verification of documents by the Ministry of Education, and an interview with a panel comprising WUSC staff, UNHCR or a Canadian mission in the country, and a local education NGO. In addition, medical and security screening is carried out. The selected beneficiaries are matched with a suitable postsecondary institution. The matching process takes into consideration the personal needs and preferences of the refugee. In addition, they are provided language classes, IT classes, pre-departure courses, and help with the immigration process.

**Residence:** The selected refugee students become permanent residents in Canada.

**Post-arrival support:** The beneficiaries of the programme are provided 12 months of financial and academic support. As any other privately sponsored refugee in Canada, they are entitled to financial support, food and clothing, social and emotional support, as well as support to find housing. A key feature of this programme is the youth-to-youth sponsorship model, which encourages Canadian students to engage in the sponsorship.

**Lessons learnt:** SRP has proven to be very effective in terms of integration. According to a study conducted in 2007, 97% of the sponsored students had either completed or were in the process of completing their education programme, and 85% had become employed in their chosen field after graduation.

**Sources:** Student Refugee Program n.d.; Manks n.d.; Coleman 2020; Fratzke et. al. 2021; WUSC 2020.

#### 4.2.2.2 SPARK

SPARK is a Netherlands-based NGO that has worked since the mid-90s to improve refugees' opportunities for education and employment. SPARK operates mainly in countries in the Middle East that have large refugee populations, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

At present, SPARK is providing scholarships for Syrian students residing in the neighbouring countries of Syria. As SPARK supports refugees in their first country of asylum instead of creating a pathway to a safe third country we do not classify it as an actual complementary pathway.

SPARK is a relatively small NGO and has a unique approach in their work which allows it to act and respond rapidly to changing environments. They work closely with local authorities, educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders in order to avoid making a parallel educational system and to help the local stakeholders continue the work as independently as possible. They gather funds to pay the tuition fees for refugees and also negotiate with local universities to provide tuition fee discounts for refugees in order to be able to provide more scholarships. They also assist different actors in various other ways in designing programmes to help provide education for refugees.

In their current programme, which targets Syrian and Palestinian refugees, SPARK first starts negotiations with local partners such as higher education institutions and relevant government institutions. They hire volunteers to help with different administrative and other tasks and provide them with sufficient training for the job. They also administer the application process and monitor the programme once it is launched. SPARK also offers various types of support and assistance to the scholarship students in order to minimise student drop-out.

SPARK has produced a comprehensive manual that they are willing to share with others planning similar programmes. In summary, SPARK is a small, agile NGO that initiates educational programmes for refugees and keeps its own role as limited as possible in order to maximise the use of local institutions and their expertise. Their experiences and knowledge may be useful in the design of study-based complementary pathways, as many elements are the same, whether the idea is to move displaced people to safe third countries or to provide them proper education in the country of the first asylum.

**Source:** Spark 2021

#### 4.2.2.3 HOPES

HOPES was created in response to the Syrian crisis. The idea is to provide opportunities for education for young Syrians. The project is funded by the MADAD Fund, the European Union's regional trust fund in response to the Syrian crisis. Educational opportunities are provided in the first countries of asylum: Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and Jordan. These include academic counselling, language courses, and full scholarships. HOPES is implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in collaboration with its partners from the British Council, Campus France and EP-Nuffic. Similarly to SPARK, we do not consider HOPES to be an example of a complementary pathway as it does not provide access to a third country.

**Source:** HOPES (n.d.)

#### 4.2.2.4 DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative)

DAFI is one of the oldest scholarship programmes targeted at refugee and returnee students. It supports refugees in their country of asylum or home country. The programme is supported by the governments of Germany, Denmark and the Czech Republic, UNHCR, and private donors. The programme promotes refugees' self-reliance by providing opportunities for education, entrepreneurship and employment. Since 1992, over 18,000 people have benefitted from the programme. The programme also aims at promoting good relationships between refugees and host communities and offering hope and role models for refugee children and youth. The DAFI scholarship covers a wide range of costs and offers support for language learning and other issues that might prevent refugees from education. Currently, the programme is operational in 54 countries. Similarly to SPARK and HOPES, this programme is not considered a complementary pathway as it does not allow for admission to a third country.

**Source:** UNHCR 2019e, 2.

## 5 Other complementary pathways

### 5.1 Humanitarian pathways

**Humanitarian admission** programmes share a number of key characteristics. They provide individuals in need of international protection with admission, stay and effective protection in a third country. They have, to date, most particularly been used in situations involving large-scale displacement, and where a swift response is required. They are usually needs-based, being developed on a case-by-case basis to provide for admission and offer protection, although admission is often temporary in nature and refugee status is not granted. The eligibility criteria for humanitarian admission programmes may differ from those used for UNHCR or national resettlement programmes, and the selection process may be expedited and/or streamlined compared to usual resettlement procedures. Nonetheless, they generally involve protection considerations and safeguards that have similarities with resettlement. Humanitarian admission programmes often have an element of responsibility-sharing or solidarity with countries facing significant refugee influxes (see generally ERN+ 2018b; Wood 2020, and UNHCR 2019a).

Humanitarian admission programmes have been developed since 2013, in particular by some European countries in response to the lengthening duration of presence of Syrian refugees, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, and to political pressure applied by long-term Syrian residents in Germany and Austria, in particular. Next, we will examine the German and Austrian humanitarian admission programmes (HAPs). There are many similarities between them: for instance, the referral of possible beneficiaries is conducted by a variety of actors, and both programmes include an extended family admission component. Both have also evolved through 3 phases (HAP 1, 2 and 3). A key difference between the two is that while the German HAP is genuinely complementary to resettlement, the Austrian HAP closely resembles traditional resettlement (ERN+ 2018b). The German HAP is thus presented in more detail below.

#### 5.1.1 HAP Syria (Germany)

Germany has long experience of Humanitarian admission style programmes with the first programme implemented in 1956. Since the 1990s, these programmes have been running regularly and have targeted different groups. In this section, the focus is on the most recent and largest programme, the Humanitarian Admission Programme for Syria (HAP Syria). The HAP targeted Syrian refugees as well as stateless Palestinians and Kurds from Syria and



its neighbouring countries, as well as Egypt and Libya. The programme was established in 2013 due to the increasing numbers of Syrians in need of international protection. Through the pilot phase (HAP 1), 5,000 particularly vulnerable Syrian refugees were able to enter Germany and stay there for the duration and aftermath of the Syrian conflict. The programme was extended with two additional phases. The quota was extended first in 2013 with 5,000 (HAP 2) and in 2014 with 10,000 persons (HAP 3). The programme ran until 2016 and across the different phases a total of 19,047 persons in need of international protection were admitted to Germany (ERN+ 2018b).

**Actors involved:** The Federal Ministry of the Interior formed an agreement with the Interior Ministry and the Federal Länder. These two actors were responsible for administrative and legal provisions. UNHCR, Caritas and the German diplomatic missions were responsible for identification of persons meeting the admission criteria. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees was responsible for the selection process.

**Eligibility:** Syrians in need of international protection residing in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan were the main target group of the programme. However, a small number of stateless Palestinians and Kurds from Syria, its neighbouring states and Egypt were also admitted through HAPs 2 and 3.

Furthermore, UNHCR refugee status was not required. In the case of HAP 1, the beneficiary must have registered with UNHCR or Caritas Lebanon in Lebanon and applied for the programme. Humanitarian reasons were the most significant selection criterion for HAP 1, followed by family in Germany. Ability to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria after the conflict was considered a key criterion during the design phase, but its importance during the implementation stage was rather limited. In the case of HAPs 2 and 3, beneficiaries were proposed by UNHCR or the Federal Länder. Family ties in Germany were the most significant selection criterion for these two programmes, followed by humanitarian reasons and ability to contribute to reconstruction.

A valid passport was a prerequisite for admission but, in certain cases, a travel document for foreigner could be used if documents were missing. Beneficiaries admitted to the programme applied for a visa at one of the German diplomatic missions and usually organised the travel themselves.

**Admission:** The selection process was carried out by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. IOM was responsible for pre-departure information and assistance as well as cultural orientation courses (20 lessons providing information about political and legal aspects, history and practical advice).

**Residence:** Beneficiaries of the three HAP programmes received a residence permit (under section 23 of the Residence Act). The validity of this permit was usually 24 months. Since the HAPs intended to give protection for the duration of the conflict, the residence permits could be extended (24 months at a time) until the conflict is over.

They were thus allowed to pursue economic activity and entitled to job seekers allowance or social assistance meant for persons permanently incapacitated or above the age of 65. The beneficiaries are expected to return once the conflict is over. However, five years of residence in Germany may qualify for an unlimited permit if the eligibility criteria are met.

**Post-arrival:** The majority of beneficiaries were accommodated in reception centres. They could also apply to welfare benefits and were given counselling as well as a course to support integration (including language classes and information on living in Germany). After this stage, they were taken to the host locations where they received help with administrative issues as well as counselling and social support.

**Sources:** ERN+ 2018b Grote, Bitterwolf & Baraulina 2016; BMI n.d..

### 5.1.2 Austrian humanitarian programmes (I-III)

Austria had three humanitarian admission programmes for Syrians between years 2013–2017. The total number of refugees admitted through these programmes in September 2017 was 1,668, the overall goal being 1,900.<sup>10</sup>

**Admission:** Criteria used depended on the actor. Referrals made by UNHCR were based on established resettlement submission categories, putting an emphasis on vulnerability and protection needs. When referral was made by a family member, the beneficiary needed to belong to a target group of vulnerable people as defined by the Austrian government as well as have family ties with a person already having permanent residence in Austria.

The relation of these humanitarian admission programmes to resettlement seems ambiguous. Austria has referred to these programmes as humanitarian admission programmes, although parts of the programmes are similar to resettlement (Kratzman 2016, 9). On the Resettlement to Austria UNHCR website<sup>11</sup> the programmes are presented as resettlements. While the majority of admissions could indeed be seen as resettlement,

<sup>10</sup> We did not find updated information on the actual number of total cases admitted.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/dach/at/was-wir-tun/resettlement/resettlementnachoesterreich/resettlement-to-austria-english-information>

Kruz (2017) has explicitly noted that family cases within these programmes do not qualify as such due to different selection criteria and no UNHCR selection having been used.

**Main source:** ERN+ 2018b

## 5.2 Humanitarian visas

UNHCR (2019a, 9) has noted that 'Humanitarian visas can be used to admit individuals in need of international protection to a third country where they are sometimes subsequently provided the opportunity to apply for asylum, including through expedited procedures', mentioning France, Italy and Switzerland as examples. This is different from humanitarian admission programmes in which the legal status of an individual is typically determined before entry to a third country. It is, however, similar to the concept of Protected Entry Procedures, discussed above. Humanitarian visas have also been issued to facilitate family reunification in situations where existing legislation otherwise does not allow reunification and for other vulnerable refugees who are not able to receive adequate protection in their first countries of asylum. Humanitarian visas can function as a stand-alone pathway as well as be used in supporting other pathways, such as study-based pathways of community and private sponsorship programmes (UNHCR 2019a, 9).

### 5.2.1 Humanitarian Corridors (Italy)

Humanitarian Corridors are essentially sponsorship programmes (see section 5.4) that facilitate the travel, entry and integration of vulnerable people in need of international protection. Humanitarian Corridors in Italy is a prominent example of a programme that utilises humanitarian visas for entry to the country. On arrival to Italy, the beneficiaries apply for international protection. The beneficiaries are entitled to services supporting integration.

The first Humanitarian Corridor was established in 2015 in Italy when a coalition of faith-based organisations and the Italian Government signed a fixed-term Memorandum of Understanding that covered 1,000 Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon. The aim of the Memorandum of Understanding (since renewed twice) was to facilitate safe and orderly migration to Italy and prevent deaths of migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Since then, France, Belgium, Andorra, San Marino and Greece have established similar programmes. This subsection focuses on the Italian programme.

**Legal framework:** The concept was not new – the Italian legal framework did previously include a law that made it possible to sponsor migrants, but this law was later abolished.

Faith-based organisations called for the possibility for sponsorship to be reintroduced through the establishment of the Humanitarian Corridors programme. Reintroduction of the sponsorship programme was made possible by the EU's legal framework. In accordance with Article 25 of Regulation n.810/2009 of 13 July 2013, it is possible for EU member states to issue humanitarian visas valid for one single country when the national authorities deem it necessary. The beneficiaries are given a short-term visa (C-visa) to travel to Italy. On arrival, the request for international protection is submitted to the Frontier Office. The different countries have different processes for this: for instance, in France, the beneficiaries receive a humanitarian visa, in Greece the legal base is the EU relocation scheme.

**Objective:** The common objective of the Memorandum (article 2) is to ensure legal and safe arrival of 'potential beneficiaries of international protection, and more specifically of the most vulnerable subjects' to Italy. Furthermore, sociocultural integration is a central goal – Article 4 of the Memorandum ensures 'socio-cultural integration for an adequate length of time' (Ricci 2020). Since its establishment in 2015, the Memorandum of Understanding has been renewed twice. The programme has also expanded in terms of first countries of asylum and beneficiary groups. Between 2016 and 2017, the programme focused on Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon. In 2017, the programme was extended to cover Eritrean, South-Sudanese and Somali refugees whose first country of asylum is Ethiopia.

**Actors involved:** The faith-based organisations responsible for administration, namely the Federation of Evangelical Churches of Italy (FCEI), the Waldesian, the Methodist Churches, the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Episcopal Conference of Italy, are responsible for the administrative process in the transit country. These organisations are also fully responsible for funding the programme.

**Relation to resettlement:** Humanitarian Corridors is not part of the Italian resettlement programme. However, the faith-based organisations mentioned above have close cooperation with the national authorities responsible for the resettlement programme. This cooperation involves, for instance, sharing of best practices and integrated settlement services. This is discussed more closely in subsection 6.6.1. The eligibility criteria for the humanitarian corridor resemble those for resettlement (vulnerability), unlike several other pathways.

**Eligibility:** One of the following thresholds must be met:

- The beneficiary is defined as vulnerable as per European Directive 2013/33 of 26 June 2013 and is considered vulnerable due to age, gender or health status.

- The beneficiary's *prima facie* refugee status is recognised by UNHCR pursuant to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 implementing Protocol;
- The beneficiary's life or freedom is threatened because of armed conflict, large-scale violence or systematic human rights violations.
- The beneficiary has relatives in the country of resettlement (a complementary selection criterion)

**Process:** According to the Humanitarian Corridors website, the process of selection, entry and integration can be divided into five phases:

- **Identification and selection** of beneficiaries in the transit countries: the local staff of the responsible organisations carries out interviews and evaluate the reliability of the personal history described by the applicant. They also assess the need, commitment to the project, and capacity to live in the destination country – this is important, since the aim is to limit secondary movement towards other countries. The judicial situation of the applicant is assessed both in the country of transit and destination. If the applicant receives a positive response, the local staff initiates the administrative process for the release of a humanitarian visa. The type of visa the beneficiary receives depends on the country of destination. In the case of Italy, the beneficiary receives a short-term visa (C-visa).
- **Identification of hosting accommodations** in the destination countries: coordination in Italy to identify locations for hosting the refugees. Volunteer organisations and local associations across the country are also involved in this process.
- **Preparation of beneficiaries:** the potential beneficiaries receive information about the programme and their right of asylum. They also participate in training courses that focus on the language, cultural and socioeconomic aspects of the destination country.
- **Transfer to destination country:** when the visa application is completed and the beneficiaries have the visa, the responsible organisations organise travel checks and inform UNHCR, competent authorities in Italy, and the airline. They also organise medical checks for the beneficiaries. On arrival, a request for international protection is submitted to the Frontier Office. At this stage, the beneficiaries meet the person responsible for them, who also accompanies them to the final destination.

**Social inclusion and integration:** Humanitarian Corridors has adopted a 'widespread model' for integration. This means that a great variety of actors (families, parishes, local communities, etc.) are involved in the inclusion and integration of the newly arrived beneficiaries. The accommodation of the beneficiaries consists of apartments, shared apartments, reception centres or private rooms. The beneficiaries receive financial support (€30 per day per beneficiary, €15 for children). Beneficiaries have access to legal counselling, healthcare, intercultural mediation, psychological support, academic scholarship, language training, job counselling and vocational courses or internships (the beneficiaries are entitled and encouraged to obtain employment). Support is provided until the individual or the family can support themselves. Although initially envisaged to mean one year, this is in practice often about 18 months to two years.

**Number of beneficiaries:** As of June 2021, 3,700 people in total have arrived through this programme to Europe, a large majority of them (2,936) to Italy. In 2019, 90% were family units and 39% minors. New arrivals take place weekly.

**Lessons learnt:** As the expansion to new receiving countries and countries of asylum demonstrates, the Humanitarian Corridor programme has been well-received. The number of people arriving through this corridor is on par with Italy's resettlement programme.

One of the keys to its success is the high level of engagement it has managed to create especially in smaller communities – over 140 actors (families, local communities and parishes) and 3,000 volunteers have been willing to support the integration of the newly arrived beneficiaries.

Another key success factor is the regular coordination meetings between the stakeholders. Although the Italian resettlement programme and the Humanitarian Corridors programme are two separate pathways for people in need of international protection, the regular communication and information-sharing between these programmes has proven effective in identifying best practices and bottlenecks.

While the programme can be seen as a successful example of 'multi-stakeholder alliance' to identify solutions for international migration, as indicated in the Global Compact for Migration, there are certain challenges in terms of further expansion. Currently, the administrative and financial responsibility lies entirely with the faith-based organisations and further expansion of this programme could lead to too high an administrative burden. Therefore, the aim of the responsible organisations is that this sponsorship model becomes a practice that is re-recognised by law in Italy. Recently, a step towards a more centralised model was taken when the Ministry of the Interior and Sant'Egidio signed an agreement regarding the establishment of a new type of complementary pathway from Libya that foresees a shared responsibility to provide reception solutions.

**Sources:** Interview with a representative of the Ministry of the Interior; Interview with a representative of Sant'Egidio; Ricci, 2020; Wood, 2020; Sant'Egidio, 2019; Humanitarian Corridors, n.d.

## 5.3 Sponsorship-based programmes

According to UNHCR (2019a, 8) community sponsorship 'allows individuals, groups of individuals or organisations to come together to provide financial, emotional and practical support for the reception and integration of refugees admitted to third countries'.

As a complementary pathway, community sponsorship refers to a pathway for admission in which community sponsorship programmes allow sponsors 'to support the entry and stay of nominated refugees in third countries' (UNHCR 2019a, 8). The concept of community sponsorship is frequently also referred to as a tool for integration. In that sense, community sponsorship can be used as a mechanism to engage individuals and communities in the reception and integration of refugees' regardless of whether the refugees arrive through complementary pathways or resettlement programmes (UNHCR 2019a, 8; interview with IOM representatives). In this context it is also important to note that there is a difference between *sponsorship* and *mentorship* programmes. In the sponsorship programmes the main responsibility for supporting the reception and integration of refugees lies with non-state actors, while in the case of mentorship, those non-state actors would be the ones complementing the state while the latter retains main responsibility.<sup>12</sup>

### 5.3.1 Canadian resettlement and private sponsorship model

Canada is known for its welcoming immigration policies and embracing of multiculturalism. Foreign-born people make up almost 20% of Canada's population. Canada has been a highly prominent actor in refugee resettlement for decades: since the late 1970s more than 770,000 refugees have been relocated to Canada. In 2018 and 2019, no other country resettled more refugees (Van Haren 2021).

Canada's resettlement programme is designed to target refugees who have high protection risks. Private sponsorship and community engagement play a large role in the Canadian resettlement efforts. Currently there are three main programmes for refugee

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12 For more information on mentorship programmes, see: <https://eea.iom.int/publications/guidelines-piloting-mentorship-schemes> and <https://eea.iom.int/publications/paths-inclusion-training-community-mentors-communication-intercultural-and-social>

resettlement in Canada: The Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) programme, Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) programme and, most recently, the Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR) programme. In addition, there is a Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) programme for refugees with special needs related to health care or other special needs, but it is much smaller compared to other three. Some 20,000 to 30,000 refugees have been resettled to Canada annually through these programmes after the peak year of 2016 that saw almost 45,000 admissions. In recent years, PSR has been the most used of these three programmes. Since 2017, around 60% of all people receiving permanent residence through resettlement have come through private sponsorship programmes (IRCC 2020a).

The Canadian model is the longest running and the most extensive example of private sponsorship. There is an ongoing effort to advance private- and community-based sponsorship programmes globally as pathways of safe and legal migration for refugees. A number of such programmes have been piloted in Europe. In this study, we have examined community sponsorship from the UK and two programmes from Germany (see below), but examples can also be found in other countries such as Spain, Ireland and Belgium. These programmes are developed for the respective national contexts and are often civil society driven and ad hoc in nature. Canada is still the prominent example of a country where private sponsorship is an integral part of the immigration system.

The Canadian model of private sponsorship is invariably mentioned when talking about sponsorship-based complementary pathways, including the UNHCR Key Considerations document (2019a). Yet, in the Canadian context, private sponsorship is *part of* resettlement efforts, not complementary to them. Persons entering Canada through these programmes are part of the refugee admission targets, though they can be additional to UNHCR submissions. This makes the definition vague, especially in the case of the PSR programme, but, in our view, Canadian private sponsorship does not constitute a complementary pathway in the sense that we define the concept in this study. Additionally, our focus is mainly on study- and labour-based complementary pathways. Hence, we do not investigate the Canadian private sponsorship model further in this report. The Canadian model and its implications for Finland have been examined in a recent report commissioned by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Turtiainen & Sapir 2021).

**Sources:** Turtiainen & Sapir 2021; Van Haren 2021; Cheatham 2020; IRCC 2020a; ERN+ n.d.



### 5.3.2 Community sponsorship in the United Kingdom

The UK community sponsorship scheme was launched by the Home Office in 2016 and is inspired, to some extent, by the Canadian scheme. Civil society organizations lobbied for the possibility to sponsor refugees (see van Selm 2020b, 191), and the programme has received support from the Global Refugee sponsorship Initiative (GRSI). There are currently more than 100 UK sponsorship groups, which have welcomed more than 500 refugees over the first five years. In the UK all community sponsorship groups are trained by Reset, 'the UK's Community Sponsorship learning hub'. Sponsorship groups are formed by volunteers who prepare for the arrival of refugee families, source accommodation, and fundraise for costs. After the arrival of sponsored families, the sponsorship groups support them for one year, helping them to learn English, access social services, schools and employment.

**Key source:** <https://resetuk.org/>

### 5.3.3 Neustart im Team – NesT (Germany)

NesT is a pilot project launched in 2019. It enables the admission of up to 500 particularly vulnerable refugees additional to the German resettlement quota. It explores the possibilities of private sponsorship in Germany and, for the first time, enables church congregations, associations, companies and groups of private individuals to directly support the reception of refugees. In NesT, state and civil society work together from the start to facilitate integration.

Through NesT, refugees selected by UNHCR travel to Germany via resettlement and are supported by a mentor group. The refugees receive protection in Germany and contact with and support from mentors provides important start-up help with integration. Admission places to NesT are made available in addition to the previous resettlement places of the federal government.

**Actors involved:** The state (in particular the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) together with the Integration Officer (IO) and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and civil society work together from the start to facilitate integration.

UNHCR proposes the refugees on the basis of the usual resettlement criteria. BAMF is responsible for the operational part, in particular selection and matching and for arranging travel to Germany. BAMF also coordinates and cooperates with the so-called civil society contact point (ZKS). The ZKS provides information about the project, conducts training for the mentoring groups, accompanies mentor groups during their application

process and advises all interested parties on NesT. The ZKS is composed of representatives of three different civil society organisations: German Caritas Association, the German Red Cross and the Evangelical Church of Westphalia. BMI, IO and BAMF together form the Steering Group, which is responsible for strategic development of the project, working closely together with the ZKS.

A mentoring group is composed of at least five people who jointly undertake to provide moral and financial support to a refugee or a family. The mentor group commits to provide settlement support for one year and to find and finance housing for a period of two years. ZKS supports the mentoring groups in their endeavour (by answering questions, pre-checking application documents, etc.).

**Number of beneficiaries:** The pilot programme enables admission of up to 500 refugees. The pilot phase closes after that number is reached, but according to the interviewees the programme is likely to be extended after that. The pandemic has slowed the start of the project and until 2021, 57 refugees mainly from Syria, Somalia and Eritrea had come to Germany via NesT. More NesT arrivals are expected in the second half of 2021.

**Eligibility and application:** UNHCR selects the refugees residing in the first country of refuge based on resettlement criteria and suggests only as many as places are available. Beneficiaries must be approved UNHCR resettlement refugees. As part of the pilot phase, UNHCR selects these persons in the states of Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon and Niger. Additionally, BAMF conducts selection interviews and the security authorities carry out security interviews. There is also a security check on the main mentors.

**Pre- and post-arrival services:** Refugees arriving to Germany through NesT can take part in usual integration courses, language training and consultation appointments. They are matched with a mentor group before arrival in Germany by BAMF. The mentoring group usually meets the refugees for the first time at the central reception centre in Friedland. In the local community where the mentoring group lives, they provide the refugees with an apartment and support them with integration locally. Those seeking protection come into contact immediately with the host society and can take part in social life. Personal contacts between those in need of protection and mentors increase the acceptance of refugees and the willingness of society to accept them.

**Residence permit:** Refugees admitted through NesT receive a residence permit, initially for three years. This residence permit can then be extended and made permanent. This means that they have the right to take up employment from day one after their arrival in Germany. Typically, however, the refugees first need to acquire the necessary language skills for employment. Until then, they can apply for social benefits and can take part in integration and language courses.

**Lessons learned:** NesT has been affected by the Covid pandemic. Refugees who have arrived through NesT since 2019 have settled well. However, it is too early to draw conclusions regarding their future plans. NesT is a pilot project and is most likely intended to be prolonged and extended. By the end of 2022, the BAMF Research Centre will publish an evaluation report covering NesT's achievements.

**Sources:** Interview with representative of BMI; Interview with Caritas; Neustart im Team, 2021; UNHCR Deutschland (n.d.).

### 5.3.4 Privately sponsored federal state admission programmes for Syrians (Germany)

These programmes were established in 2013 in the majority of federal Länder (15 of 16, Bavaria being the sole exception) in agreement with the Ministry of the Interior. Most of these programmes ran for only one or two years. Admission programmes currently running exist in Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein, which have deadlines until the end of 2021, and Thuringia, where the programme has been extended until the end of 2022. Through these programmes 21,500 persons have been granted visas to Germany.

The sponsors were German citizens and Syrian citizens who have been living in Germany for at least a year. Through the sponsorship programme, they could bring Syrian relatives seeking protection to Germany. The target group was Syrian citizens and, in some cases, stateless persons living in Syria. In some Federal Länder, third parties could act as sponsors.

The sponsors assumed the costs of travel and stay and had to thus have the financial means to do so. Initially, the sponsors in many federal Länder were required to reimburse all public funds in accordance with the Residence Act (cost of travel, expenses of accommodation, cost of living, social support, etc.). However, in 2014 the requirement to cover medical expenses was lifted in order to alleviate the financial burden for the sponsors. The financial standing was assessed by the authorities on a case-by-case basis. The sponsors were required to sign a declaration of commitment. In 2016, the duration of the declaration was limited to three or five years, depending on how recent the case was.

The beneficiaries received a residence permit for up to two years with the possibility for extension. Pursuing economic activity or taking up studies was possible for persons holding a residence permit. It was also possible for the refugee to apply for asylum and this was also done by almost 50% of the refugees. In this case, the sponsor had to cover all costs.

**Sources:** Grote, Bitterwolf & Baraulina 2016; SVR, 2015; German Caritas Association n.d.

## 5.4 Family reunification

Although family reunification is often mentioned as part of complementary pathways, it is important to keep in mind that refugees have a legal right to family reunification under the Family Reunification Directive (European Union, Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003). In this sense, family reunification as a complementary pathway would only concern extended family members who otherwise would not qualify for family reunification (interview with IOM representative). As the number of resettlement places available is limited, UNHCR has encouraged resettlement States to facilitate family reunification also outside of their resettlement programmes. Ireland and Germany, for instance, have implemented family reunification programmes for extended family members of Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2019a, 10).

## 5.5 Other pathways

### 5.5.1 At risk programmes in Germany

In addition to resettlement and humanitarian admission, in Germany there are a number of programmes for people at risk. These programmes are administered and implemented by different organisations and foundations in Germany, partly financed by the German government. The target groups are artists, students and researchers and human rights defenders who are at risk in the country of residence or home country and thus not able to pursue their work or finalise their studies. The at risk programmes offer a safe stay and scholarship in Germany for a limited time. The programmes are closely linked to international organisations and programmes such as the Scholars at Risk Network and Scholar Rescue Fund. We have examined these in more detail in study-based pathways (see subsections 5.5.3 and 5.5.2) and hence will not examine the German programmes here in detail.

The four at risk programmes are:

- Hilde Domin Programme – Students at risk, run by the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD<sup>13</sup>
- Philipp Schwartz Initiative – Researchers at risk, run by Alexander von Humboldt Foundation<sup>14</sup>
- Elisabeth-Selbert-Initiative – Human rights defenders at risk, run by Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)<sup>15</sup>
- Martin Roth Initiative – Artists at risk, run by ifa<sup>16</sup>

### 5.5.2 Institute of International Education - Scholar Rescue Fund (case Finland)

The Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) is a global fellowship programme for threatened and displaced scholars. Since the programme's founding in 2002 nearly 950 scholars from 60 countries have been awarded with IIE-SRF fellowship and have been placed in 51 countries and almost 440 host partner institutions. In 2020, IIE-SRF fellows were hosted by higher education institutions in regions worldwide, including North America (38%), Europe (32%), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA; 26%). Additionally, scholars undertook fellowship appointments in East Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Scholars across the globe face targeted threats, civil conflicts, and other barriers to their work, a reality reflected in the diverse region-of-origin representation amongst IIE-SRF fellows. To date, the programme's awarded scholars have hailed from MENA (63%), Eastern Europe (14%), Sub-Saharan Africa (11%), South and Central Asia (6%), East Asia (3%), and Latin America (3%).

The IIE-SRF programme works closely with the hosting institutions, which can be academic institutions all over the world including universities, colleges and research centres, to arrange temporary academic appointments where scholars can safely resume

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13 For more information see Hilde Domin Programme website at <https://www.daad.de/en/the-daad/what-we-do/sustainable-development/funding-programmes/funding-programmes-for-students-a-z/hilde-domin-programm/>

14 For more information see Philipp Schwartz Initiative website at <https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/bewerben/foerderprogramme/philipp-schwartz-initiative>

15 For more information see Elisabeth-Selbert-Initiative website at <https://www.ifa.de/en/fundings/elisabeth-selbert-initiative/>

16 For more information see Martin Roth Initiative website at <https://www.ifa.de/en/fundings/martin-roth-initiative/>

their academic work. IIE-SRF provides a fellowship package consisting of a USD \$25,000 fellowship grant (typically matched by the host institution), health insurance, relocation funding to the host campus, and support for professional development and language training opportunities, in addition to the dedicated expertise and guidance provided to fellows and partners before, during, and after the fellowship. IIE-SRF appointments typically range from 9 to 12 months, and scholars are eligible to apply for a renewal of the fellowship for up to one additional year. The funding provided by IIE-SRF and its partners is intended to comprise a level of support similar to that of other visiting positions at a given institution. As many fellows are accompanied on fellowship by their families, the programme aims to secure placement for fellows in locations where they can bring their dependents, find appropriate housing and live comfortably, considering family size. IIE-SRF and Scholars at Risk often work in collaboration to support scholars seeking to undertake fellowship appointments in locations world-wide.

Finland is one of the countries where scholars are placed, and the following explains in detail how the IIE-SRF programme operates in Finland.

**Background and objective of IIE-SRF in Finland:** The objective of the Scholar Rescue Fund programme is to support scholars at risk to continue their academic work in a safe academic institution. The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) launched a Higher Education in Emergencies partnership with the Institute of International Education in 2016. The objective of the partnership with the Scholar Rescue Fund programme in Finland is to support researchers that come from conflict affected societies, particularly from Syria and Yemen. The background to launching the partnership was the humanitarian crisis in Syria, in response to which during 2014-2015 the Finnish National Agency for Education searched for options for how to provide opportunities for Syrian scholars and students to continue their work in a safe country. As an international actor active in supporting both scholars and students from conflict regions, IIE presented a good partnering option for EDUFI. Having an existing funding scheme for young scholars enabled EDUFI to launch a concrete collaboration with the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund.

Altogether, since 2016 six scholars and their families have arrived through the programme to Finland and continued their academic work in Finnish host universities.<sup>17</sup>In addition, three scholars have confirmed appointments.

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17 Later, in 2017 and 2019, Finnish National Agency for Education and IIE started another partnership, where Syrian students were awarded scholarships (IIE Scholarship Fund for Syrian Students, see: <https://www.iie.org/programs/syria-scholarships>), and altogether 4 students came to Finland for their Master studies at Finnish higher education institutions.

**Actors involved:** IIE-SRF and the Finnish National Agency for Education have engaged in a Higher Education in Emergencies partnership since 2016. Other actors include Finnish universities, which host the scholars. IIE-SRF works together with many international institutions.<sup>18</sup>

**Eligibility:** IIE-SRF chooses scholars for its programme based on their academic skills and qualifications and the urgency of the threats they face. Scholars from any country can apply to the programme and refugee status is not necessary. Professors, researchers, and public intellectuals from any academic discipline who cannot work in their home country safely due to targeted threats, persecution, or conflict are qualified to apply to the IIE-SRF programme.

Preference is given to scholars who:

- Hold a PhD or highest degree in their field and have significant teaching and/or research experience at a university, college, or other institution of higher learning;
- Have an established record of published research;
- Demonstrate superior academic accomplishment or promise;
- Are facing or have recently fled from immediate, targeted threats to their life and/or career in their home country or country of residence;
- Will benefit their home and/or host academic communities.

**Visa and residence permit:** Scholars arriving to Finland with their families apply for a regular residence permit for researchers. Due to the countries of origin of the scholars and the location of the Finnish missions, the application and arrival process sometimes requires additional support and solutions. In addition, students selected through the framework of the IIE Scholarship Fund for Syrian students arrive in Finland with a regular residence permit for students. The hosting institution has been the main contact supporting the arrival process and the IIE and the EDUFI have provided their support when needed.

**Process of pre-departure and entry:** The host universities are responsible for introducing scholars to the campuses and related practicalities. In addition to the normal services for incoming visiting scholars, scholars within the framework of the Scholar Rescue Fund and EDUFI partnership are provided with additional support and guidance especially with the

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<sup>18</sup> For more information see: <https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/alliance/>.

arrival process and practical settlement in Finland, as well as settling into the academic community, based on the case-by-case needs of scholars. EDUFI funding for the first year includes a 5,000 euro settlement grant to cover additional costs. The host institution has the main responsibility (with support from EDUFI and IIE-SRF) for legal and practical arrangements (such as providing assistance for the arrival process, housing arrangements, and providing practical information).

**Identification and selection:** IIE-SRF is responsible for selecting the scholars to the programme. The IIE-SRF Selection Committee makes the final decisions on fellowship awards. Typically, after the scholar is selected to the SRF programme, IIE-SRF starts matching the scholar in need of a fellowship host with a potential host partner. The host partner can state their own preferences for which scholars they are willing to host based, for example, on the academic discipline, skills and home country. In Finland, preference has been given to scholars from crisis areas, especially Syria and Yemen, and selection has been made based on candidates selected to the IIE-SRF programme. An important part of the selection process has also been matching scholars' academic disciplines and skills with the possibilities that the universities can offer.

**Transfer to destination country:** IIE-SRF and the host institution or country will assist transfer to the destination country, should the fellow need to relocate. In practice, scholars who have travelled to Finland are assisted by the IIE-SRF staff.

**Covered expenses:** The IIE-SRF provides USD 25,000 as a scholarship and the host institution is expected to match or exceed this amount. In Finland, EDUFI covers the matching funding. This scholarship covers the scholar and his/her family's living costs. IIE-SRF also provides additional financial support, including up to USD 5,000 in relocation costs and funding for health insurance, as well as support for professional development and language training opportunities, in many cases.

**Results and lessons learned:** The maximum length of the fellowship period is two years. After the fellowship period ends, the researcher can return to their home country, if that is possible, or they can seek to continue their work in the host country or a third country. IIE-SRF encourages scholars to seek further funding for research and other possible opportunities at an early stage in the fellowship period. Through the IIE-SRF Alliance – the programme's global network of individuals, institutions, and organisations that offer practical support to the programme's fellows and alumni – IIE-SRF also provides support for post scholarship career planning during and after the fellowship period. However, the programme does not provide financial support or arrange additional positions after the fellowship period ends, and the scholar is responsible for making career plans for the future.



It is of utmost importance to ensure that the scholarship period matches both the scholar's and the host institution's interests, as this provides the best conditions for planning future career options. As mentioned, it is also important to start post-scholarship career planning early on, even though, in many cases, this period may be demanding due to settling in to a new country and a new academic culture and environment. Most scholars are seeking opportunities to continue their research in Finland after the fellowship period and a number of them have already secured research positions.

From the perspective of the scholar, there are many uncertainties related to the application process, visa process, and future plans after the fellowship period. Scholars may need economic, academic, and psycho-social support before and after arrival in the host country, which can be provided to them by IIE-SRF and the host institution. When the scholars enter Finland, universities and the Finnish National Agency for Education also provide other needed support, such as language courses.

According to a recent IIE-SRF alumni survey and corresponding impact report (2021), the global results indicate that scholars who have entered the programme have been able to gain important skills, such as leadership and collaboration skills, and gained more knowledge of the professional and academic field in question. Participation in the programme has also had a positive impact on scholars' post-fellowship career. Scholars have also positively impacted their home countries, even if not all scholars have returned.

Sources: Interview with Finnish EDUFI officials; Information provided by IIE-SRF representative; IIE-SRF, n.d.,<sup>19</sup> IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund 2021.

### 5.5.3 Scholars at Risk and SARF

Established in 2000, Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network based in New York. Its mission is to promote academic freedom and protect scholars who are threatened by persecution and violence in their home countries. SAR arranges positions of sanctuary at universities and colleges, enabling such scholars to continue their work. It has around 500 members based in 42 countries. Scholars in need of protection can apply directly to SAR to find a temporary research position in a safe country to continue their career. The funding mechanisms vary between hosting countries, and the following chapters will introduce how SAR operates in Finland as a case example.

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<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/applicants/frequent-questions/> and <https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/about-us/by-the-numbers>

Scholars at Risk Finland (SARF) was founded in 2017. Parallel to this, the Academy of Finland identified SAR as a priority and the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) launched a partnership with the Institute of International Education (IIE), including the IIE's Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF) activities in Finland (see previous section 5.5.2).

Most Finnish universities are now members of the network, paying an annual fee of USD 5,000. In the initial phase (2017–2019), the Universities Finland (UNIFI) Secretariat handled most of the practical and administrative work. Since 2020, the University of Turku has chaired and provided the secretariat for SARF. In 2021-22 the Secretariat will pass to the University of Helsinki, with the University of Tampere assuming this role for 2023-24.

Thus far, around 10 scholars have been hosted by Finnish universities who have used a number of ad hoc means of financing this provision, including monies from the Kone Foundation and the Academy of Finland's PROF15 funding, in addition to internal funding. A key issue for scholars who have been hosted is what happens after the initial period of funding ends. Previous research examining the experience of SAR academics in Finland (Kärki 2020) has suggested that there is a real need to make provision for the long-term futures of such scholars, rather than looking at short-term funding models.

**Source:** Information provided by SARF representative; Scholars at risk n.d.

## 6 Cross-sectional overview of complementary pathways

*This chapter presents a cross-sectional view of complementary pathways and related programmes and provides answers to all six research questions and their sub questions listed in Section 1.2. Instead of answering each question and sub-question in the order presented in Section 1.1, Chapter 6 is organised into five main themes. Section 6.1 provides an overview of complementary pathways in terms of their aims and scale. Section 6.2 looks at how they are structured and organised nationally, thus providing answers to research question 1. Section 6.3 focuses on issues of eligibility and selection of beneficiaries as well as the geographics of complementary pathways, providing answers for research questions 2 and 6. Section 6.4 deals with the residence permits and legal status of beneficiaries, answering research questions 3 and 4. Section 6.5 discusses the support services available for migrants prior to and after migration and answers research question 5.2. The topic of research question 5, cooperation with stakeholders, is touched upon in several sections. Answers to these questions are based on our work, focusing mainly on labour- and study-based complementary pathways. These two types differ from other types of complementary pathways like humanitarian and sponsorship-based programmes in some respects. While the answers given in this chapter mostly reflect our work on labour- and study-based complementary pathways, we also refer to other programmes where appropriate.*

### 6.1 Setting the scene

#### 6.1.1 What are the aims of complementary pathways?

Based on the UNHCR Three Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, complementary pathways aim at providing 'safe and regulated avenues that complement resettlement and by which refugees may be admitted in a country and have their international protection needs met while they are able to support themselves to potentially reach a sustainable and lasting solution' (UNHCR 2019b, 7).

As Wood (2020) has noted, resettlement and complementary pathways share the same key objectives: providing protection and durable solutions for people in need of international protection as well as promoting responsibility sharing internationally. However, unlike resettlement, complementary pathways strive to serve several more objectives. Wood

calls these 'subsidiary objectives', which encompass not only benefits for refugees but also address the interests of governments, private actors and host communities (Wood 2020, 20-28).

She makes a further distinction between different types of complementary pathways, declaring that while humanitarian pathways focus on providing safe entry for people wishing to seek asylum, education and labour mobility pathways 'are designed for non-humanitarian purposes and directed primarily at the economic interests of states' (Wood 2020, 9). However, this may be too rigid an interpretation, and it might be important to consider the aims of all key actors.

In the programmes explored in our report, the nature of arrangements made varies from programme to programme as seen in the previous chapters. Yet, some key differences between labour- and study-based programmes can be found.

In labour-based complementary pathways, the employers, and to some extent governments as well, seek mostly economic interests, but this is not entirely so. In labour-based pathway programmes examined in this report, the role of NGOs has been crucial in building of these pathways. They clearly have had humanitarian motives. For the most NGOs involved in creating contemporary labour-based programmes, TBB and the UNHCR for instance, the fundamental goal of labour-based pathways is to offer opportunities for those in need of protection to move into a safe third country in the capacity of a highly skilled professional. Thus, they do not only offer a way out of an oppressive situation, but also a more empowering and self-reliant role for individuals, instead of the somewhat passive role of a refugee.

At the same time, labour-based pathways are labour market driven, in the sense that the selection of individuals is always done by employers based on their needs. However, employers may also prefer to use these channels due to their humanitarian aspect. Therefore, the fundamental aim of the pathways is to provide opportunities for those in need of protection and to make labour markets in the receiving country more capable of employing 'refugee talent'. It also should be noted that, in the case of fully economic motives, it would be more feasible to recruit people other than those in need of protection and rather streamline the process further, instead of adding various services and concessions to support it. Therefore, it may be assumed that the goal of governments and employers also has humanitarian aspects, not only economic.

Yet, from the governmental perspective, the labour-based pathways are often targeted at alleviating chronic labour shortages in certain occupations in demand or regions in need of work force. Hence, the existing pathways are not always fully market driven, and the governmental partners often restrict their scope. It is also easier to find jobs

for displaced people when the pathways are linked to permit types where demand for labour is high. Some pathways are based on labour shortages in specific employment sectors in the receiving country (e.g. the solution cooperated with TBB to employ nurses in the UK). Additionally, labour-based pathways can be built to target labour shortages in geographical regions – typically rural areas. In Canada, in Phase 2 of the EMPP programme, the government is exploring the possibilities of both sectoral and regional approaches with two test initiatives. The regional experiment is a community-driven model where refugees with relevant skills are connected to local employers in need of labour in rural areas. The other experiment is a sector-driven model that aims to match skilled refugees to job opportunities in sectors with chronic labour shortages.

These test initiatives have not yet started, however, and it is therefore not possible to assess their impact. In general, the number of refugees entering through labour-based complementary pathways is still small and the impact of existing programmes on labour shortages at the regional or national level is modest at best. Labour-based complementary pathways offer significant potential to give skilled refugees the opportunity to achieve safety, protection and empowerment, while simultaneously increasing the workforce in receiving countries that are suffering from labour shortages. However, our research indicates that this potential could best be realised by ensuring the pathways are mostly labour market driven. Placing additional limitations, on the occupations permitted through the program, for example, can leave large groups of skilled refugees, who could very likely find employment in a third country through these pathways, unable to make use of them.

Most study-based programmes share the aim of helping students and scholars to continue their careers and meet their needs for international protection. Many programmes simply seem to aim at providing educational opportunities for refugees or people in need of international protection.

The German Leadership programmes (see subsection 4.2.1.3) aim for temporary protection and the return of refugee students to rebuild their home countries when circumstances allow. In practice, however, the Leadership for Syria programme has seen most of its participants stay in Germany, since Syria is not considered a safe country. The Leadership for Africa programme also has the aim of helping the home countries of students, but the newly launched programme has yet to produce its first graduates, and it is unclear what will happen after they graduate. The IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund (see subsection 5.5.2) has partially the same objectives as the German Leadership programmes, yet one of its key results has been that scholars have been able to impact their home countries whether they return or stay in the third country. Similar to Leadership for Syria, also Syrian scholars participating in the IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund programme in Finland have faced similar challenges.

Although the connection to local labour market needs seems to be unclear in many study-based programmes, it is plausible to assume that most programmes are trying to provide skilled workers for the local labour market. For instance, the Higher Education in Emergencies programme also assists graduating students in finding jobs. The results are remarkable, with 95% of graduates having entered the labour market. The Middle East Scholars programme (MES) also aims at responding to Lithuania's decreasing population by attracting people to Lithuania and motivating them to stay in the country.

The programme-specific aims have been described in more detail in chapters 3-5.

### **6.1.2 Labour and study-based complementary pathways are still relatively new and small-scale**

Despite the fairly long historical roots of complementary pathways, they remain a relatively new phenomenon. This is particularly the case for study- and labour-based complementary pathways, which tend to be small-scale, ad hoc programmes, often still in the pilot phase.

The total number of people who have migrated to third countries via complementary pathways is unknown. A 2021 OECD–UNHCR study mapped the first-time residence permits issued by OECD countries and Brazil to citizens of Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Venezuela, which together encompass 62% of all displaced persons in 2019 (OECD & UNHCR, 2021). Based on the study, approximately 1.5 million first-time residence permits were granted between 2010 and 2019 to citizens of these countries on the grounds of family, work or study. The share of family permits was 67%. For comparison, in the same time period 2.2 million nationals of the same seven countries were granted subsidiary protection or refugee status and nearly 600,000 refugees were resettled to Brazil and OECD countries. These figures give us a very rough idea of the scale of complementary pathways – understood in a very wide sense (OECD & UNHCR 2021; Wagner & Katsiaficas 2021). These numbers do not, however, tell us about the actual use of complementary pathway programmes. There were also severe data shortcomings in the study. For instance, it was not possible to distinguish whether the recipients of work, study and family permits arrived directly from their home countries or via countries of first asylum. But, as Wagner and Katsiaficas (2021) point out, the numbers indicate that many people in unsafe countries already use existing pathways outside the refugee regime, when their resources allow for that (OECD & UNHCR 2021; Wagner & Katsiaficas 2021).

When it comes to formal programmes, Wood (2020, 26) has pointed out that some pathways (e.g. expanded family reunification and humanitarian admission programmes) might envisage quite significant numbers of people, whereas others, like the labour

market and study pathways that are the focus of this study, are likely to be relatively small. The largest humanitarian programme surveyed in this study, HAP for Syria in Germany, admitted nearly 20,000 people to the country. In labour- and study-based programmes, the number of admissions was in the tens or low hundreds at most (see tables 1 and 2 for numbers of beneficiaries of the labour- and study-based programmes presented in this report). One issue with the numbers admitted might be that, as 'complementary' to resettlement, it could be viewed as inappropriate for these pathways to admit significantly more people to a country than a resettlement programme admits annually. However, complementary pathways are partly intended to boost the number of places available for organized third country protection and there is nothing clear to suggest that they must remain smaller than the other solutions they complement. There is perhaps more reason to insist that complementary pathways do not replace any resettlement opportunities, since resettlement programs focus on the most vulnerable people whereas labour- and study-based complementary pathways target qualified individuals.

Most of the contemporary models of labour- and study-based complementary pathways discussed here are based on pilot programmes and their relevance may lie in their future potential, rather than current practices. Wood (2020, 27) has, however, pointed out that the modest scale of these complementary pathways is, in many cases, perhaps not only a reflection of their early stage. The resource-intensive nature of securing complementary pathways for individual refugees may partly explain the small numbers. They could also reflect a mismatch between the pathways and the qualifications and needs of refugees. In that sense, HAPs, sponsorship-based programmes and family reunification may perhaps have more potential to grow big. On the other hand, some recent labour-based pilots have increased their target numbers significantly, and while they are still modest, this may also indicate a routinisation of practices and consequently increasing numbers of users in the future.

## 6.2 National organisation of pathways

There is a growing interest towards exploring the possibilities of complementary pathways within national governments, but in general, the current programmes are built bottom-up rather than top-down and the initiators are usually non-governmental actors. There are some exceptions, though, where the government has been active in creating a complementary pathway. This is especially visible in some humanitarian programmes that are extensions, or, as in the case of German, precursors of government-led resettlement programmes (e.g., see HAP Syria, subsection 5.1.1).

Overall, our research indicates that, for the time being, national governments do not have comprehensive strategies or common core ideas for building complementary pathways.

In practice, the role of the national government may vary from programme to programme, also within a country. Governments sometimes provide funding, but many programmes are also funded by non-state actors. Often, the role of the government is limited to ensuring legal context and safeguards, but in some programmes public authorities have an operational role as well, often as coordinators between different actors. The role of the state also varies obviously depending on whether a pathway is created on the basis of existing laws or as a policy, or whether new laws are required.

### 6.2.1 Coordination and cooperation

The process of setting up a complementary pathway is complex and there are usually many actors involved. The programmes are often designed by non-governmental organisations and in the receiving country the actors include, for instance, ministries, educational institutions (in the case of study-based programmes) and employers (in the case of employment-based programmes). For some programmes, the government has taken on the role of overall coordinator between different actors. These examples include the Canadian EMPP programme (see subsection 3.2.2) and NesT in Germany (see subsection 5.3.3).

In labour-based complementary pathways (such as TBB cooperated models) close cooperation is needed between the NGOs responsible for the practical operation of the programme and government officials when adjusting permit practices (facilitated entry practises) and fees to serve refugees. In addition to immigration administration, labour-based pathways engage a wide array of governmental actors, since they are directly related to employment and economic policies as well as migration policies. Hence, the labour administration often has a role in labour-based pathways. Labour-based pathways also require coordination with and between governmental organisations and agencies on all levels of administration from central to local government officials. Other key stakeholders include international organisations, such as UNHCR, and the employers. Additional stakeholders are the providers of language testing and integration services. These are typically provided in cooperation between regional and local government officials, NGOs, private sponsorship groups and/or local communities. Also, professional recruiting services may be used if needed.

Study-based programmes are mostly initiated by educational institutions. Once the refugee has a study place, getting a student visa is possible, depending on the receiving country's visa policies. The organisation in charge of the programme should be aware of the government policies regarding the visa permits and make sure the populations that the programme is targeting do not face categorical legal barriers to admission. Educational institutions actively discuss with relevant governmental actors to make sure



the government is aware of the programme and its goals and to ensure smooth permit processes. UNHCR also negotiates with national governments, encouraging them to dismantle systemic barriers preventing refugees from accessing education (interview with UNHCR Nordic & Baltic office's representatives). According to our interview with an MPI analyst, having some level of governmental involvement in the creation and operation of a programme facilitates finding solutions to difficulties such as visa barriers in the case of study-based pathways. The issue of legal barriers is also discussed in section 6.4.

Humanitarian programmes are typically implemented in cooperation with an array of stakeholders including national and local governments, IOM, UNHCR, civil society and local service providers (ERN+ 2018b, 27).

There is a general absence of national government-led coordination between different complementary pathway programmes as well as between complementary pathways and resettlement. Yet, complementary pathways have synergies between each other and resettlement programmes, for example in the provision of services to immigrants with a refugee background. As more complementary pathways are created, governments make more efforts towards coordination. Italy is a case example of this development (see Box 1 in subsection 6.2.2), although it, too, is still in the early stages of adopting a more comprehensive approach to complementary pathways and is currently only building coordination between humanitarian pathways and resettlement programmes.

Further information on coordination and cooperation within the programmes is provided in chapters 3-4, in the sections presenting the actors involved in each programme.

## 6.2.2 Relation to resettlement

We examined the relation between complementary pathway programmes and resettlement in more detail in three countries: Italy, Germany and Canada<sup>20</sup>. Each of these countries has a resettlement programme in addition to complementary pathway programmes, but the resettlement programmes differ in size and significance. The three case countries exemplify the differences between longstanding resettlement countries and emerging countries of resettlement. Canada started resettlement already in the early 1970s and, in recent years, has resettled almost 30,000 refugees per year; more than any other country in the world (see subsection 5.3.1). In Germany, resettlement procedures have been carried out since 2012. In 2021, Germany allocated 6,700 places for resettlement. Germany also has a long history with humanitarian admission programmes

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<sup>20</sup> As mentioned in Section 1.3, these three countries were initially selected as our case countries.

dating back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century on which to draw for its contemporary programmes (for more on HAP Syria, see subsection 5.1.1). The Italian resettlement programme was established in 2015 and has resettled around 500 refugees annually.

The differences in relation to resettlement are also reflected in the case countries' approach to complementary pathways. Canada has a strongly developed and extensive resettlement effort that has long included a private sponsorship model alongside government-sponsored programmes and has only recently begun to explore the possibilities of labour-based complementary pathways. Study opportunities have, through WUSC, long been part of resettlement efforts under the longstanding Canadian private sponsorship model, but this is not considered a complementary pathway under the terms of our study (See subsection 4.2.2.1). Germany, on the other hand, has for long relied on humanitarian admission type programmes as a form of targeted, and mostly limited, resettlement, and humanitarian complementary pathways play a major role in the government's answer to the recent Syrian displacement crises (pre-dating the very large 2015 migration arrivals). In Italy, the rapid increase of sea arrivals in the last decade and the human losses suffered during the dangerous journey over the Mediterranean have sparked interest in complementary pathways as a way to establish new, safe pathways for people in need of international protection alongside the modest number of refugees coming through resettlement programme. Yet, complementary pathways – as well as resettlement – are a rather new phenomenon in Italy, and the government is still searching for its role in them (see Box 1 for more details).

By definition, complementary pathways are complementary to resettlement and do not, or should not, affect resettlement programmes or refugee admission targets or quotas. Hence, the programmes we examined were additional to resettlement and we found no evidence that they would have affected resettlement efforts. In Australia, the first labour-based pathway pre-pilot experiment was based on humanitarian visas and affected the resettlement quota, but the current programme relies on work-based permits, making it additional to resettlement (see subsection 3.2.1). Importantly, it should be noticed that there is also labour market oriented refugee pathway (Community Support Programme) where employers may be sponsors for the arrivals as part of the overall quota for the refugee and humanitarian programme. This should not be mixed with complementary pathways although they also combine labour migration and refugee policies.

As Wood (2020) has pointed out, the fairly straightforward idea that complementary pathways should be additional to resettlement can be more ambiguous in practice, for instance due to the variety of ways in which complementary pathways as well as resettlement are implemented at state level. For further discussion on the issue of additionality, see e.g. Wood 2020, p. 24-25 and section 7.2 of this report.

### ***Italy: National coordination of complementary pathways and relation to resettlement***

**The Italian complementary pathways do not have any formalised connection to the National Resettlement Programme or Italian asylum policy at large. They are independent programmes that are financed by non-state actors. Recently, though, the government has taken steps towards a more coordinated approach.**

In the case of the UNICORE programme, the role of the Italian state in designing, implementing and monitoring complementary pathways is limited to the issuance of visas – a process that takes place through the Italian Embassy in Ethiopia. The Humanitarian Corridors programme involves state actors to a larger extent. The programme is based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of the Interior. At the design phase, the Italian authorities, including the National Commission for Asylum, gave advice on which transit countries to prioritise. This was to ensure that all beneficiaries arriving to Italy through the programme can be granted asylum in Italy.

Furthermore, although separate programmes, there are clear synergies between the implementation of the Humanitarian Corridors programme and the National Resettlement Programme since the steps taken during the process are similar, albeit separate. For instance, both beneficiaries of the resettlement programme and Humanitarian Corridors go through a pre-identification process through fingerprinting at the Italian embassies. On arrival at the airport in Italy, the same police department processes both resettlement beneficiaries and beneficiaries arriving through the Humanitarian Corridors programme. Since there is also overlap between these programmes in terms of countries, the actors involved in the implementation of these programmes coordinate in order to avoid overburdening the authorities. The non-governmental organisations working with Humanitarian Corridors coordinate and collaborate regularly with those working on resettlement.

The resettlement unit of the Ministry of Interior plans to standardise the monitoring mechanisms and set indicators that could be used to monitor both the resettlement programme and Humanitarian Corridors. The aim is to follow the beneficiaries up to 18–24 months after arrival in order to identify best practices or challenges linked to these programmes.

Recently, a significant step towards increased cooperation between the resettlement programme and the Humanitarian Corridors programme was taken. In June 2021, the Ministry of the Interior signed a protocol with the Comunità di Sant'Egidio and the Evangelical Churches Federation with the aim of starting a new complementary pathway from Libya for 500 beneficiaries. The pathway foresees a shared responsibility to provide reception solutions. UNHCR is also part of the new protocol, and they will be in charge of the selection of beneficiaries or verification of referrals coming from the faith-based organisations. This new pathway will also be a hybrid between the national resettlement programme and the Humanitarian Corridors programme in the sense that the faith-based organisations will be responsible for the beneficiaries for the first six months, after which the beneficiaries will be transferred to the Italian reception system. As a result, the financial and administrative burden is shared between the state and the faith-based organisations.

**Sources:** Interview with representative of the Ministry of the Interior; Wood 2020.

### 6.3 Eligibility and selection process of beneficiaries

Complementary pathway programmes often involve cooperation with organisations working in host countries to identify possible applicants. UNHCR country offices have also played an important role in sharing information about scholarship programmes in particular. Recently, UNHCR has also launched an online database 'Opportunities' containing information about scholarship opportunities for refugee students. Labour mobility opportunities will be added to the platform at a later stage (Fratzke et al. 2021, 51).

As mentioned in Section 2.1, Wood (2020) has suggested that complementary pathways can be categorised, for instance, as needs- vs qualifications-based complementary pathways. Although all complementary pathways are for people in need of international protection, in labour- and study-based pathways the eligibility of candidates is often evaluated primarily on professional or academic qualifications rather than on vulnerability or the level of need for international protection. Other selection criteria, such as gender equality, are also applied by the programme initiators (see, e.g., Higher education in emergencies programme, subsection 4.2.1.4).

In labour-based programmes, selection is largely qualification-based and education and work experience are important eligibility criteria. In study-based programmes, academic background and qualifications as well as language skills are among the selection criteria (see e.g. UNICORE in subsection 4.2.1.1). Within labour- and study-based programmes, employers and educational institutions play a major role in selecting beneficiaries. In practice, in labour-based programmes employers make the final selection and in study-based programmes universities ultimately select suitable students for their courses. In the Institute of International Education - Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF), the objective is to choose scholars whose skills and knowledge match the research institutions' needs, and the universities can decide which scholars they are willing to host.

In some programmes (e.g. UNICORE) the applicants' refugee status is recognised in cooperation with UNHCR, but in many programmes actual refugee status is not required. Instead, the programmes are often targeted at those in need of international protection by making the programme available for specific national groups or based on the applicant's country of origin and the country of first asylum / current country of residence. For instance, in the case of TBB's Talent Catalog, the applicants are mostly Syrians from Jordan and Lebanon, where TBB also has their offices, whereas the Syrian Scholars Initiative is targeted at Syrian nationals currently residing in Turkey or Egypt (see subsection 4.2.1.5). Also, for example, the Higher Education in Emergencies programme uses 'risk factor' as one of its four selection criteria (see subsection 4.2.1.4). For more on the eligibility and selection processes of the examined labour- and study-based programmes, see chapters 3 and 4.

Just as in the case of labour- and study-based pathways, also other complementary pathways, such as humanitarian programmes, are usually open to people from a particular country of origin who are displaced in specific countries of first asylum, e.g. Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon, or Eritrean, South-Sudanese and Somali refugees whose first country of asylum is Ethiopia in the case of Humanitarian Corridors. As regards the specific criteria for eligibility for international protection, various parameters are used. For example, in the case of Humanitarian Corridors one out of the four criteria must be met; three of the criteria concern vulnerability, and one concerns having relatives in the receiving country (see subsection 5.2.1; for details on the eligibility and selection process of the other programmes examined, see Chapter 5).

## 6.4 Residence permit and legal status

According to our research, almost all of the current study- and labour-based pathways provide beneficiaries with regular (employment- and study-based) residence permits and visas (see also Fratzke et al. 2021, 35). Therefore, the rights of beneficiaries arriving through

complementary pathways do not differ from those of other migrants entering through regular channels. WUSC's Student Refugee Program (not a complementary pathway although often discussed as one, see subsection 4.2.2.1) was the sole exception, where the permit was based on private sponsorship with residence granted on a humanitarian basis.

The reliance on legal models already in use when creating new programmes is probably in part due to the fact that labour- and study-based complementary pathways are rarely state-initiated or state-driven. The strategy of using existing labour- and study-based permits or programmes is attractive for many reasons: the process may be faster and more cost-effective as no legislative changes are needed. Another advantage is that in many countries the number of work and study visas issued is not subject to the same limitations as those of humanitarian programmes (Fratzke et al. 2021, 44). Using humanitarian-based permits or programmes would either involve using quotas reserved for resettlement or require issuing more humanitarian admission permits annually, which might require a challenging and time-consuming political process.

Relying on existing study and work permits could, however, be problematic because there are known common legal barriers that might make it difficult or impossible for many refugees to enter or stay in a destination country using these permit types. These barriers include language requirements, costs, proof of financial means, and proof of intention to return (Fratzke et al. 2021, 41-43).

Permit processes are often facilitated under complementary pathway programmes, and might include flexibility to the extent allowed by legislation. Echoing the words of many interviewees, this aims to level the playing field between applicants with a refugee background and a non-refugee background when they are applying through regular labour- or study-based immigration channels. Facilitation can include a number of different measures. Usually, the officials working on applications are aware that they are dealing with people with a refugee background in these programmes and provide understanding and flexibility as much as is allowed by the legislation. This could be supported by foreign ministries sharing information with consular officials about specific programmes, as suggested in the UNHCR-MPI report (Fratzke et al. 2021, 47), among many other examples. Typically, a more relaxed protocol on documentation, including travel documents and proof of earlier studies or work experience, is adopted, acknowledging the challenges refugees might have in providing the extensive paperwork needed for applications. Additionally, financial facilitation is often included and, in some cases, officials waive some or all payments related to the application process or provide access to loan programmes or other means to cover travel costs and settlement funds requirements. Applicants themselves also almost always receive support – usually from non-governmental actors responsible for running the programme – throughout the whole application process. This includes helping with the application details as well as preparing for interviews.

In the case of labour-based channels, there are clearly two different basic options when crafting the pathway. The first one builds on existing permits (e.g. for health care or certain industry-related permit types). In these cases, there is no need for substantial changes for permits as such, but changes may be needed to some elements, like payments, documents, travel support and other solutions that make it possible for people in fragile situations to use this pathway. Furthermore, permits usually include the opportunity to arrive with family, and most importantly, aim to ensure protection if work ends, e.g. by providing asylum; if not, other solutions leading to permanent stay can be applied.

The second type, currently mostly a work in progress, aims to provide a specific permit type (e.g. Refugee Talent, Australia) for those in need of protection by including some elements discussed above to these pathways in a systematic way and as part of the broader immigration policy regime.

For study-based pathways, an MPI interviewee noted that most programmes aim to help refugee students transition to work permits and eventually, permanent residence, thus providing a durable solution. In Japan, where refugee students have struggled to enter the labour market, humanitarian status has been given to the students after they have finished their studies. Under the Higher Education in Emergencies programme, which mostly operates in Portugal, beneficiaries receive a student residence permit, which is renewed every year until graduation. After that, a work permit can be issued or the graduate student can apply for permanent residency. Upon arrival, the student can also apply for asylum and ask for international protection if desired. In general, the right to stay in the country of residence ceases when the students finish their studies and there is no other ground that can be used to apply for a visa or residence permit. (See also Fratzke et al. 2021, 27; 46; 76-77.)

Humanitarian pathways are somewhat different from study- and labour-pathways with respect to the residence permits and legal status of the beneficiary. In the Humanitarian Corridors pathway, the stay of the beneficiary is based on the need for international protection. However, the legal basis of entry is a humanitarian visa, a short-term document granted for entry. Each country that has established a Humanitarian Corridor grants visas according to their own laws. In Italy, beneficiaries are given a C-visa to enter the country. On arrival, a request for international protection is submitted (see subsection 5.2.1).

For details on eligibility and visa and residence permits in relation to specific contemporary pathway programmes, please refer to chapters 3 to 5 and the corresponding subheadings in this report. For further information on legislative and non-legislative solutions, refer to Fratzke et al. 2021, 44-49.

## 6.5 Support services

When refugees arrive in a third country via labour and study pathways, they do not typically receive the same level of support as refugees who arrive through humanitarian pathways or resettlement. The services provided for beneficiaries of labour and study programmes are rarely designed for people with a refugee background. Service providers, such as private businesses and higher education institutions, might also lack knowledge on issues such as psychosocial counselling (Fratzke et al. 2021, 37).

Currently, in existing labour-based complementary pathways the pre-arrival services are predominantly provided by NGO partners operating in the sending countries. For example, in the Canadian EMPP programme the NGOs responsible for the practical work, TBB and RefugePoint, provide support for candidates in their country of departure throughout the entire process. Provision of post-arrival services, however, varies both within and between programmes. Government-provided services available for immigrants entering through labour migration channels are typically more limited compared to humanitarian channels and, as noted above, not specifically designed for people with a refugee background. Hence, NGOs operating in receiving countries, employers, local communities and private sponsorship groups have a large role in post-arrival service provision in existing labour-based complementary pathways.

The role of the non-governmental service providers is somewhat different in each programme and even for each individual candidate within the programmes. For example, in the UK and Australia, TBB has established local NGO partners that they work with to provide integration services, but in Canada TBB works with various partners depending on the situation of the individual candidate. The diversity of providers and the services they provide often puts a lot of administrative burden on the NGOs responsible for the practical implementation of these programmes in seeking to ensure that the refugees entering through labour migration channels receive the support they need. Hence, there is a need for a more coordinated and structured approach to service production to make the current NGO-led model of labour-based complementary pathway more sustainable and scalable.

With respect to study-based pathways, in their scoping paper on student scholarship opportunities for refugees, ERN+ (2017, 22) has listed forms of support that can be offered for refugee students during study programmes in addition to financial help for registration, tuition and accommodation fees. These forms of support include pre-departure orientation, support on arrival, internships and part-time work, language courses, mentoring, networking, and post-graduation advice.



Based on our data, in practice, a wide variety of support services are used depending on the programme. Examples include:

- In the Japanese study-based Syrian Scholars Initiative, beneficiaries start Japanese language courses after they arrive in Japan in the summer, in advance of their main studies in the autumn. Language courses and courses on Japanese culture and society are continued during the studies (see subsection 4.2.1.5).
- LCC University's programme in Lithuania provides preparatory English courses and, during their studies, students also participate in orientation and language courses aimed at helping them integrate into Lithuanian society. (see subsection 4.2.1.2).
- The Higher Education in Emergencies programme gives full support to students, including language courses and psychosocial support, and they apply a 'care approach' (see subsection 4.2.1.4).
- DAAD was mentioned as an example of a programme that offers quite extensive support for students to facilitate their entry to employment. The support includes mentoring and job searching guidance (interview with MPI). The Higher Education in Emergencies scholarship programme also offers similar support and has achieved good results with this approach (see subsection 4.2.1.4).

For more examples of pre- and post-arrival services offered for refugees migrating to a third country via complementary pathways, see chapters 3 and 4.

## 7 Discussion and future considerations

*This chapter offers some evaluative comments on how the current pathways function and considers the future prospects for complementary pathways.*

### 7.1 Prospects and key concerns

Complementary pathways have the potential to offer valuable opportunities for refugees who cannot integrate in a first country of asylum or return home. In addition to achieving safety and some level of protection, work and study related complementary pathways in particular offer some refugees opportunities to lead an independent life: in social status terms, 'refugee' is, for many, not a welcome identity. At the same time, as beneficiaries of labour- and study-based pathways do not usually have a protection status, the opportunity for them to apply for asylum in the event that their immigration status expires and they are unable either to return or otherwise remain in the destination country is vital.

Complementary pathways are also a way to share responsibility among states and ease pressure in first countries of asylum. Furthermore, they may offer direct benefits to many countries, just like Finland, who are struggling with skills and labour shortages and an aging population.

Despite the huge potential, currently the number of refugees entering through labour- and study-based complementary pathway programmes is small compared to most resettlement programmes and dwarfed by the number of people in need of international protection globally. Some government-led humanitarian complementary pathway programmes operate on a larger scale, but most humanitarian and sponsorship programmes explored in this report also benefit only a fairly small number of refugees.

How can complementary pathways be made more sustainable and expanded, to ensure that a considerably larger share of people in need of international protection have the opportunity to benefit from them? Based on our analysis of literature, interviews and existing programmes, the following points should be considered when planning

and implementing complementary pathways in general, and labour- and study-based programmes in particular.<sup>21</sup>

1. **Remove legal barriers.** Our analysis indicates that the biggest structural challenges for creating and scaling up employment and study pathways lie in the standard requirements for legal entry and stay. Removing legal barriers and addressing loopholes in a systematic way is a pre-requisite to making visa systems more accessible for refugees. The UNHCR-MPI report (Fratzke et al. 2021, 40) suggests that in order to expand complementary pathways: 1) existing study and work visas can be used or adapted, 2) refugee-specific work or study visas can be established, and/or 3) a broader humanitarian entry category can be used or created to allow for refugee sponsorship by a university or an employer.
2. **Cooperation and coordination.** Creating networks between and within public, educational and private sectors is essential to exchange knowledge and facilitate expanding work- and study-based programmes. Compared to resettlement programmes, complementary pathways tend to involve more actors, particularly NGOs, universities and colleges, and employers. This highlights the importance of efficient cooperation not just between various actors in the receiving countries, but also between them and the actors involved in the sending countries.
3. **Funding and financial issues.** Most current labour- and study-based complementary pathway programmes are organised as public-private partnerships with a variety of funding sources. A steady, more systematic, source of funding is essential for establishing and expanding programmes on the broadest level. Consideration should also be given to the type of expenses an individual faces when entering through these pathways. Many refugees arriving on work and study pathways need assistance or subsidies to cover visa fees, travel and living expenses, health insurance and other essential costs. Governments and private sector actors must assess how such costs can best be met to improve the chances of success for beneficiaries over the longer-term.

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21 All four issues have also been addressed in the UNHCR-MPI 2021 report, and the first three points were addressed by MPI's senior policy analyst Susan Fratzke at our World Refugee Day seminar (June 18, 2021).

- 4. Develop Standard Operating Procedures.** Creating a functioning workflow for a complementary pathway programme on national level and clearly defining the role of different governmental and non-governmental actors in its operation is essential to make the programme scalable. This includes the whole process from identification and selection of candidates to application of permits and all the way to traveling and integration into the receiving country as well as provision of services for people entering the country through the pathway.

In our view, the issues presented above suggest that states should take a more active role in the development and operation of complementary pathways to make them a durable solution for refugees and others in need of international protection. This is especially true in countries such as Finland and other European states, where the public sector traditionally has a strong role across immigration policy and in integration of refugees.

Currently, most complementary pathways, especially labour- and study-based pathways, are NGO-led programmes that operate within the confines and parameters of existing immigration legislation. They are based on cooperation between different actors and the public sector often has quite a limited role. This has proven to be an agile way of quickly creating a variety of programmes and pilots. However, only governments can provide sustainable solutions to regulative and legal issues, particularly with regard to legal admission and acceptance into national welfare systems. Hence, to expand programmes and to integrate them into national immigration policies, more extensive involvement of the governmental authorities is likely to be required. National authorities would often be the natural operator to take the role of coordinator, since large-scale programmes bring together a variety of actors at regional and national levels of government and from outside the government.

Government authorities have a central role in determining the type of documentary evidence required for visa provision, for example, an area in which refugees can struggle when applying from countries of first asylum. Additionally, if the state acts as coordinator, it is better positioned to develop synergies between resettlement programmes and complementary pathways. For example, people entering through labour- and study-based complementary pathways often need services similar to those in place for people arriving through resettlement but do not have access to them, since they use existing economic migration channels. Also, public funding can be a more sustainable solution compared to private funding and should complement private funding sources especially in strong welfare states such as Finland.

These issues are already being explored by governments in many of the countries we have examined in this report, but the work is still in its early stages and many questions

are yet to be answered. NGOs and other non-state actors will continue to have a sizable role in the development and operation of complementary pathways, but to make them more durable, strong cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors is required in the foreseeable future.

Last, but not least, to make complementary pathway programmes truly functional, it is essential that, in line with UNHCR Key Considerations (UNHCR 2019a, 14) that refugees themselves should have a key role in both designing and implementing complementary pathways.

## 7.2 How do complementary pathways compare to resettlement?

In an attempt to theoretically distinguish between resettlement, complementary pathways and regular migration, Wagner and Katsiaficas (2021,1) have noted that while resettlement offers opportunities for the most vulnerable refugees who need a lot of support, those refugees with most social capital - connections, wealth and education - might be able to use regular migration channels (assuming they are made accessible for them). Complementary pathways are an option for the in-between group; refugees who have some social capital, have qualifications and are prepared to take the initiative, but who are unable to seek third-country immigration opportunities without assistance.

As a result of displacement, refugees face several barriers that make it impossible for many of them to access international study and work opportunities through regular migration channels. In this sense, instead of seeing complementary pathways as an extra service provided for refugees, they can be seen as 'levelling the playing field' (Wood 2020, 20).

Two recurrent themes emerged in the literature on complementary pathways and our interviews with immigration specialists. Many pointed out that although skilled beneficiaries of complementary pathways often do not wish to apply for asylum or obtain refugee status, but to be viewed on their personal and professional merits, it is important to make sure that safeguards, such as the possibility to apply for asylum, remain in place.

Many of the key informants interviewed also emphasised that ensuring that the complementary pathways remain truly additional to and separate from resettlement is of vital importance. Implementing complementary pathways should therefore not mean letting go of resettlement, or that complementary pathways would be integrated into resettlement programmes. What is important is that complementary pathways, in working alongside resettlement, should increase the number of people gaining access to effective

protection and solutions, and certainly not bring about any diminution in resettlement places.

An alternative to further development of complementary pathways might be to significantly expand resettlement. However, to reach the same target groups, such an expansion would need to be not only quantitative, in terms of the number of refugees offered resettlement, but also qualitative. Resettlement, in particular national programmes which rely on UNHCR referrals, is very much focused on vulnerabilities. Those who have skills and qualifications, are self-sufficient or otherwise showing resilience in their displacement situation might not obviously qualify under the vulnerability criteria. Some national programmes are broader. But employment and study-based complementary pathways are clearly targeted at refugees who display talents and seek opportunities not normally associated with resettlement at present. This qualitative distinction might be at the heart of their 'complementary' nature. A construct of resettlement as the core durable solution for the vulnerable, with pathways for the more resilient refugees seems to be the emerging model. The alternative might be broadening resettlement selection criteria to allow it as a singular approach to include a broader range of refugees.

A recent survey conducted in Finland indicates that the views of the general public towards labour migration in Finland are more positive than before. Nearly half (48%) of the Finnish population agree that due to aging and diminishing population facilitating immigration is required. 34% disagree with the statement. In the same survey 85% agreed with the statement that "asylum seekers and labour-based immigration are completely different issues, which should be clearly distinguished" (Kurronen 2021). To conclude what this means for attitudes towards labour- and study-based complementary pathways, which presumably are not very well known among the lay people yet, another survey should be conducted.

## Annex 1

### **How could a well-functioning complementary study programme be created? learning from existing programmes**

There should be common understanding and willingness between educational institutions and relevant government ministries and institutions in order to create a well-functioning study-based pathway. This understanding should cover the goals and the purpose of the programme. Educational institutions' eligibility criteria and the standards for those qualified to apply need to be in line with the laws and rules of the receiving country, so that there are no surprises with respect to residence permits or visas after an applicant has been selected to the programme. The expectations of prospective students need to be well managed, in particular so that they are aware of the legal status implications and the prospects for longer-term opportunities in the destination country.

It is advisable that a small grant be given to those selected to the programme so that lack of financial resources does not prevent people from applying. Such a grant should, at a minimum, be sufficient to cover travel costs within the country of first asylum as well as travel costs to the destination country and location of study, as well as (initial) living expenses.

Applicants are often required to provide an official language test certificate or an official translation of previous studies. While universities understandably wish to maintain academic standards, rigid application systems can treat refugees unfairly. For example, requiring certain documents that are impossible to obtain due to reasons beyond the control of the applicant can unfairly exclude many potential applicants from the process (UNHCR 2020a, 9-10.) Measures should be taken to avoid this.

Places providing official language tests may be physically too far or too expensive for the refugee to access (UNHCR 2020a, 10). The cost of these certificates and lack of opportunities to participate in a language test such as TOEFL may prevent people otherwise eligible from applying. Therefore, it would be optimal if these expenses were covered by the programme. It is also possible to assess language skills by other means, such as online exam or interview, or using local partners for skills assessment. Some programmes provide language training before departing from the first country of asylum. This is useful in further building a connection between the receiving educational

institution and the beneficiary. It is also useful for the beneficiary as his or her language skills are prepared for the upcoming studies.

To support full integration and the possibility for decent living during studies, in addition to a monthly allowance, it should be made possible, through visa status, for students to work at least part-time during their studies. Being able to work some hours helps the beneficiary of the programme to integrate and increases their chances of employment after graduation.

Some existing study-based complementary pathways and scholarship programmes have features that can exclude many potential applicants. These can, for example, be related to age, nationality or religion (UNHCR 2020a, 8). Many programmes accept only people under 30. The necessity of making such restrictions should be carefully evaluated in order not to exclude people unnecessarily. It can be well argued that people over 30 can be productive to society if granted the opportunity to educate themselves. Many refugees have not been able to study due to prolonged conflict and are therefore older than most students in tertiary education. This should not be considered a barrier to pursuing higher education.

Limitations based on nationality or religion should also be carefully assessed. Individual study programmes may focus on one nationality at a time due to limited resources or because it is easier to operate in a limited geographical area, but ensuring inclusiveness in the programme design, or the potential for replication, is essential and all eligibility criteria must be well grounded.

For a complementary pathway to ensure equal accessibility for men and women, granting residence permits for family members is essential. Many women find it impossible to pursue education in a foreign country without their family for cultural reasons. Many, if not most, programmes require the applicant to be single. One exception is the 'Japanese initiative for the future of Syrian refugees' launched in 2016 by the Japanese government, which includes the nuclear family (spouse and children) (UNHCR 2019a, 5; UNHCR 2020a, 4). As being able to immigrate with family supports integration, it is recommended to grant residence permits for close family members of the beneficiary.

Refugees do not necessarily have access to information on existing study-based pathways. Therefore, special attention to this consideration is needed in programme marketing and communications. According to our interviews, word spreads when people learn about new opportunities. Many of the interviewed experts on study-based pathways also told that the number of applications grew exponentially in just few years, indicating the vast need for educational opportunities (e.g. Lithuania's Middle-East Scholars & Canadian programme run by WUSC). However, even if there are a lot of applications coming in, it is important to actively promote the opportunity in new areas and through different



communication channels so that people who are eligible to apply can learn about the opportunity as widely as possible.

Finally, close cooperation between ministries of immigration and education is important to ensure that the whole process functions well and the safety interests of the receiving country have been taken into account.

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## INTERVIEWS

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- Interview with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) 26 March 2021.
- Interview with the UNHCR Headquarters Geneva and UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe 31 March 2021.
- Interview with the UNHCR Representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries 12 March 2021.
- Interview with representatives of Finnish National Agency for Education, 28 Apr 2021.
- Interview with a representative of TBB UK, 14 April 2021.
- Interview with representatives of Cedefop, 15 April 2021.
- Interview with representatives of TBB Australia, 24 April 2021.
- Interview with representatives of TBB Canada, 17 May 2021.
- Interview with a representative of DAAD, 19 May 2021.
- Interview with representatives of BMI, 20 May 2021.
- Interview with representatives of UNCHR Italy, 20 May 2021.
- Interview with a representative of Sant'Egidio, 27 May 2021.
- Interview with representatives of Caritas, 4 June 2021.
- Interview with a representative of LCC University, 5 Jul 2021.
- Interview with a representative of Global Task Force on Education, 7 Jul 2021.
- Interview with a representative of World University of Canada, 7 Jul 2021.
- Interview with a representative of the Ministry of the Interior of Italy, 14 July 2021.
- Interview with a representative of L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), 16 Jul 2021.
- Interview with a representative of Refugee Studies Center, Oxford University, 13 Aug 2021.
- Interview with a representative of RefugePoint, 6 Sep 2021.
- Discussion with a representative of TalentLift (Canada) 8 Oct 2021.
- Information provided by email from Global platform representative, 24 Sep 2021.
- Information provided by email from SARF representative, 28 Sep 2021.
- Information provided by email from IIE-SRF representative, 8 Oct 2021.

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