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Models of Private Sponsorship:

Past and Present Programs, and How the Private Sector Can Create Alternative & Complementary Pathways or Expand Resettlement for Refugees

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Introduction

Private sponsorship, typically categorized as a pathway “alternative” or “complementary” to traditional state-led resettlement of refugees, has enjoyed increased global attention since the so-called European refugee crisis began capturing headlines in 2014-2015. Drawing on the successes of Canada’s robust private sponsorship model, several countries have implemented or plan to implement some form of sponsorship. New programs allow non-governmental actors to utilize private resources and volunteer capacity to increase the number of refugees resettled in their country and to improve the resettlement and integration process that a refugee experiences upon arrival.

This paper proposes that private sponsorship can constitute either refugee resettlement or an alternative and complementary pathway, depending upon the legal status it provides beneficiaries to enable their travel to the destination country. While many private sponsorship programs resettle refugees by rendering a decision on their status in advance and providing them with a secure, long-term status immediately upon their arrival, other programs use humanitarian or similar visas to allow beneficiaries an alternative way to get to the country and then request asylum. Creating an alternative and complementary pathway can allow a country to experiment with private sponsorship before implementing a private sponsorship resettlement program or a more formalized pathway that more closely resembles resettlement.

This paper reviews past and present programs that incorporate some degree of private sponsorship. It groups these programs into three categories to illustrate the distinction between private sponsorship as resettlement versus private sponsorship as an alternative and complementary pathway. This paper describes different ways for private sector involvement to expand resettlement, as well as create alternative and complementary pathways.

Traditional private sponsorship programs, which draw most directly from the Canadian model and operate as a type of resettlement, include Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. **Private sponsorship and humanitarian visa programs**, which use private sponsors and/or resources to bring a refugee to the country through a humanitarian visa that will allow them to claim asylum on arrival, can be found in Argentina, Switzerland, Poland, and Slovakia. The **Humanitarian Corridors programs** in Italy, France, and Belgium function much like humanitarian visa programs in terms of beneficiaries’ status but operate in a more formalized way and on a larger scale.

After defining private sponsorship and its possible elements, this paper summarizes the three categories of private sponsorship: traditional private sponsorship programs, exemplified by the Canadian private sponsorship program; hybrid private sponsorship-humanitarian visa programs; and Humanitarian Corridors programs. Each section and the profiles within it

explore which and how private sector actors are involved, which and how refugees are able to access and benefit from the programs, and what aspects of the programs show promise for further development. It concludes with a short note on private sector engagement in the United States.

This paper advances available information on both private sponsorship and alternative and complementary pathways by describing three models of private sponsorship in which private actors can provide expanded resettlement, an alternative and complementary pathway, or a hybrid of the two models. In doing so, it explores how private sector actors might not only create alternative and complementary pathways, but also expand resettlement and the resources available for refugees in their destination country.

I. Defining Refugee Resettlement, Alternative & Complementary Pathways, and Private Sponsorships

A. Refugee Resettlement

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines resettlement as “the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement.”¹ Resettlement is one of three durable solutions available to refugees, the other two being voluntary repatriation to the country of origin and local integration in the host country.² Not every country resettles refugees; countries with resettlement programs generally partner with UNHCR to establish a scheme for resettling a certain number of refugees annually. As of 2016, 37 countries offer such resettlement programs.³

The international resettlement regime is marked by lengthy processes that necessitate close collaboration between UNHCR and host country and resettlement country governments. Generally, refugee resettlement as a migratory path from one state to another is restricted to those persons designated as “Convention Refugees.” These are refugees who fall within the scope of the 1951 UN Convention, which defines a refugee as any person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”⁴ UNHCR has a process for determining whether an individual meets this definition,⁵ and then

¹ UNHCR, “Resettlement,” <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html>.

² UNHCR, “The 10-Point Plan: Solutions for Refugees,” Ch. 7, p.187, <http://www.unhcr.org/50a4c17f9.pdf>.

³ UNHCR, “Information on UNHCR Resettlement,” <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/information-on-unhcr-resettlement.html>.

⁴ UN General Assembly, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137, Article 1(A), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html>.

⁵ UNHCR, “Refugee Status Determination,” <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/refugee-status-determination.html>.

considers the most vulnerable of the refugees who come to its attention to be referred for resettlement in a third country with a resettlement program.⁶ Most resettled refugees are considered for resettlement because UNHCR refers them to a resettlement state, though some governments consider individuals identified through other means in addition to or instead of UNHCR referrals.

Governments and private sector entities that create private sponsorship and other types of programs may include individuals who are not Convention refugees as potential beneficiaries. Where relevant, the paper will note whether potential beneficiaries must meet the Convention definition of refugee or some other criteria to be eligible for a program.

B. Alternative & Complementary Pathways (ACP)

However, this government-led resettlement process is only *one* of a number of avenues of relocation available to refugees. Other avenues include family reunification, labor migration, student visas, and, in some cases, humanitarian visas and/or private sponsorship. These other avenues are collectively termed “alternative and complementary pathways” (ACPs), defined by the OECD as:

“. . . [A] channel of migration not necessarily designed for refugees, but which can be used by refugees, in order to avoid using costly and often dangerous routes through the asylum channels. They complement standard resettlement programmes. These pathways include labour, international study and family migration, as well as humanitarian visas and private sponsorship schemes.”⁷

There is no commonly agreed-upon definition of “humanitarian visa,” but in most humanitarian visa programs, “beneficiaries are admitted by a State in view of being granted (often initially short-term) residence in receiving countries, with the possibility of reviewing the ongoing need for protection in the future.”⁸ Sometimes called humanitarian admissions programs, they “complement[] States’ traditional resettlement programmes” and “can be a

⁶ UNHCR, “Resettlement Procedures: The Case Identification and Determination Process,” <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/3bd58ce9a/resettlement-procedures-case-identification-determination-process.html>.

⁷ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Migration Policy Debates N.12: Are there Alternative Pathways for Refugees,” Sept. 2016, <https://www.oecd.org/els/mig/migration-policy-debates-12.pdf>.

⁸ European Resettlement Network+, “Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways of Admission for Persons in Need of International Protection,” March 2018, p. 9, <https://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/ERN%2B%20Humanitarian%20Admission%20Programmes%20in%20Europe%20-%20Expanding%20complementary%20pathways%20of%20admission%20for%20persons%20in%20need%20of%20international%20protection.pdf>.

flexible and responsive tool that has the potential to provide an additional solution or pathway for large numbers of persons in need of international protection and act as a responsibility sharing mechanism.”⁹ A core feature is expedited procedures, allowing beneficiaries to arrive and be admitted for protection relatively quickly. These programs can potentially allow access to a broader range of beneficiaries—e.g., to internally displaced persons or individuals whose family relationships might not otherwise allow them to be relocated together—or to a more targeted demographic, such as members of a certain religious group, nationals of a certain country, or individuals in a particular country of first asylum.

C. Private Sponsorship

The International Catholic Migration Commission defines private sponsorship as “a public-private partnership, which facilitates legal entry for certain refugees through formal commitments by private actors of financial, social and/or emotional support for reception and integration.”¹⁰ The Migration Policy Institute has noted that “the legal and procedural frameworks used to operate [resettlement, humanitarian admission, and other protected forms of entry] often overlap, and that states themselves vary considerably in how they define or classify such programs.”¹¹

The public-private partnership of a private sponsorship program “facilitates legal entry,” but the legal entry can take multiple forms. Where a refugee’s legal entry occurs after they have been approved for resettlement and they accordingly arrive to the country with a long-term legal status, they are being resettled; the only major divergence from traditional state-led resettlement is the source of the resources used for refugee integration, which come at least in part from private actors instead of the state. Where a refugee is granted a visa for legal entry into the country where they can then claim asylum, the legal entry constitutes a pathway alternative or complementary to resettlement and would typically be termed a “humanitarian visa” program.

D. Elements of Private Sponsorship

Sponsorship can be desirable to a state for a number of reasons: it incorporates private resources; it allows citizens and residents to engage more directly with refugees; it creates a constituency with favorable attitudes towards refugees; it can lead to better and faster social

⁹ Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁰ International Catholic Migration Commission, “The Role of Churches and Christian Organisations in Community-Based Sponsorship Programmes of Refugees in Europe: Challenges, Opportunities, and Next Steps [Draft],” July 13, 2017, p. 2, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/concept-note-church-conference-september-2017.pdf>.

¹¹ Susan Fratzke and Brian Salant, *Migration Policy Institute*, “Tracing the Channels Refugees Use to Seek Protection in Europe,” September 2017, p. 12-13, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/tracing-channels-refugees-use-seek-protection-europe>.

and economic integration for the new arrivals; it can be made accessible to refugees who fall outside of the Convention definition; it provides a way to resettle more refugees than a state would otherwise resettle; and the different models offer flexibility to experiment with sponsorship before creating a longer-term program within or alongside a state's government-led refugee settlement.

Its drawbacks, however, are also demonstrated by the experiences of the countries whose programs are described below: high sponsorship costs and the naming process can make private sponsorship discriminatory or more difficult to access for the most vulnerable; a program without sufficient vetting and oversight can struggle in appropriately selecting beneficiaries and ensuring their needs are met upon arrival; it runs the risk of privatizing states' commitments to resettle refugees themselves; and when slots are limited, it might replace or justify limits on the right to seek asylum.

Private sponsorship can augment both the number of resettlement slots and the resources available to resettle refugees by involving private, non-state actors in resettlement. In its most robust form, private sponsorship creates capacity for additionality, meaning that a certain number of refugees, above and beyond the number the destination state's government has already agreed to resettle through public government resources, are resettled or have their entry to the country facilitated. In a less robust form, a private sponsorship program might replace government resources for resettlement, but can still increase resources available for new arrivals.

A sponsorship scheme itself can be an ad hoc, short-term response to a perceived need—such as with Poland and Slovakia's one-time programs in which church organizations brought Middle Eastern Christians for resettlement, or the temporary German programs for Syrian refugees—or it can be designed as a permanent program that will exist alongside a state's other pathways, such as the Canadian program. Sometimes a shorter-term response or informal mechanism can be the starting point for a longer-term program, as with Ireland's and New Zealand's new sponsorship pilots or France's Humanitarian Corridor, based on an infrequently-used humanitarian visa pathway that existed prior to the Corridor. Often private sponsorship works as an ad hoc, shorter-term alternative and complementary pathway that, once successful, can be converted into a formalized long-term program.

1) Selecting Sponsors

Sponsors can be family members, groups of individuals, or organizations—non-governmental, religious, or other—in the country of resettlement. Some countries overlap their private sponsorship program with their family reunification program, in which case sponsors must have a qualifying type of family relationship with the beneficiary. Otherwise, groups or individuals or organizations will either apply directly to the government when they wish to undertake a sponsorship, or develop a preexisting relationship with the government allowing them to propose particular cases.

2) Selecting Refugees

The sponsored refugees might be nominated by a potential sponsor, or they might be drawn from an existing government or UNHCR stream. In the former situation, a group of private citizens might name a particular refugee they want to bring from abroad, or a sponsoring organization working on-the-ground in a country of first asylum might generate a list of applicants to propose. In the latter situation, a sponsoring group or organization takes on refugees with whom the state has already had contact, drawn from UNHCR's existing list of cases for referral or from cases already in the pipeline of the sponsor's country's government-assisted resettlement program. The means of selection, as well as the eligibility criteria, can impact the degree to which a program targets the most vulnerable refugees. While UNHCR referrals are reserved for those determined to be the most vulnerable and in need of resettlement, a more flexible program might not take into account vulnerability beyond considering whether a potential beneficiary meets the program's definition of the term refugee.

Eligibility might be restricted by nationality, religion, family relationships or other ties in the destination country, current location, particular vulnerability criteria, whether or not a refugee meets the formal Convention definition or some alternative definition, linguistic capabilities, education or work history, and eligibility or lack thereof for other immigration pathways to safety. A few states have used the Convention definition to determine eligibility, while others have taken advantage of the flexibility of new and privately-funded programs to target displaced populations who are in need but fall outside the scope of the Convention.

3) Scope of Sponsors' Responsibility

The role of sponsors vis-à-vis both sponsored refugees and their state is also highly variable. A state might take on the full process of screening proposed candidates, or the sponsoring entity might take on more significant initial interviews or screening of candidates prior to proposing them. The state might grant approval for resettlement prior to refugees' arrival, or it might grant permission via a humanitarian visa for a refugee to arrive at the country and seek formal status. This protected status might be indefinite or for a set and renewable period of time.¹²

Sponsors' commitments vary in duration and in substance: sponsors might be required to take on any combination from a large menu of costs and tasks, from airfare to housing and food to social integration. The destination state's government might provide for some needs, such as healthcare, or for none at all; and plans can vary for government assistance if a sponsor fails

¹² Samatha Arnold and Emma Quinn, *European Migration Network*, "Resettlement of Refugees and Private Sponsorship in Ireland," ESRI Series Number 55, December 13, 2016, p. 4, <https://www.esri.ie/publications/resettlement-of-refugees-and-private-sponsorship-in-ireland/>.

to meet requirements or the sponsorship period comes to its predetermined end point. Finally, a state's government might set firm requirements and maintain oversight over a sponsorship program, or it might leave the program's terms and operations more open for the sponsoring entity to decide as it sees fit.

II. Traditional Private Sponsorship Programs: Sponsorship as Resettlement

The Canadian Model

Initially modeled on a short-lived sponsorship program in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, the federal Canadian private sponsorship program has become the largest private sponsorship program and the reference point for new or expanding programs around the world. Since its inception in 1978, Canada's program has resettled over 275,000 refugees. The program operates on the principle of "additionality": every refugee resettled through private sponsorship is over and above the annual target of refugees resettled through the Canadian government.¹³ Private sponsorship is a variation on government-assisted resettlement which replaces some or most government-provided resources with those of private actors.

The Canadian federal government sets an annual "target" for the number of privately-sponsored refugees under its Immigration Levels Plan for the upcoming fiscal year.¹⁴ As the refugee crisis made the news in 2014-2015, particularly regarding the large number of Syrian refugees displaced to neighboring countries or attempting dangerous journeys to Europe, Canada experienced a renewed and overwhelming interest of its citizens in the program.¹⁵

For fiscal year 2018, the "target" is 18,000 privately-sponsored refugees, as well as 1,500 refugees coming through the "blended-visa" model,¹⁶ in which sponsors apply to be matched with refugees whose cases have already been identified for resettlement by UNHCR and

¹³ Canadian Council for Refugees, "Private Sponsorship of Refugees," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/private-sponsorship-refugees>; Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227, art. 154 (Can.), available at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf>; Government of Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Evaluation of Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP)," Sec. 1.2(2), July 7, 2016, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/resettlement-programs.html>.

¹⁴ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: "Notice – Supplementary Information 2017 Immigration Levels Plan," October 31, 2016, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/notices/2016-10-31.asp>.

¹⁵ Kathleen Harris, *CBC News*, "Extraordinary Initiative: Canada's Private Refugee Sponsorship System Exported as Model for the World," Dec. 14, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-refugees-privately-sponsored-global-initiative-1.3895704>; Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, *New York Times*, "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13.,'" March 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>.

¹⁶ Government of Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Notice: Supplementary Information 2018-2020 Immigration Levels, November 1, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2018.html>.

reviewed by the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship and cover some, but not all, of the costs of resettlement.¹⁷ Both of these figures are additional to the target of 7,500 refugees for traditional government-assisted resettlement cases.¹⁸ The sponsorship program has garnered interest internationally as well: the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, a joint initiative between the UNHCR, the Canadian government, the University of Ottawa's Refugee Hub, and two private philanthropic foundations, was founded in 2016 to promote and support private sponsorship programs abroad.¹⁹

Still, Canada's program has encountered challenges. Interest in the program grew so large in the mid-2010s that the program now has a backlog of tens of thousands of sponsorship applications waiting for approval.²⁰ Furthermore, much of the Canadian government's involvement is front-loaded into the application and security screening process, leaving sponsors with less support as they navigate particular refugee-sponsor relationships with a wide range of needs and vulnerabilities.²¹

The federal private sponsorship program operates in nine of Canada's ten provinces. The exception is Quebec, which operates its own program. The general contours of the Quebec program are similar, but some of the key differences are briefly noted in each respective section below.²² Due to a significant backlog of applications, Quebec temporarily suspended its program in January 2017²³ and the program will not be open to new applications until August 2018.²⁴

¹⁷ In the BVOR Program, the Government of Canada gives up to six months of income support, while the private sponsors give six months of financial support and up to a year of social and emotional support. See Government of Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Blended Visa Office-Referred Program - Sponsor a Refugee," last modified July 26, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/blended-visa-office-program.html>.

¹⁸ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: "Notice – Supplementary Information 2017 Immigration Levels Plan," October 31, 2016, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/notices/2016-10-31.asp>.

¹⁹ Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, "What We Do: About GRSI," <http://www.refugeesponsorship.org/who-we-are>.

²⁰ Nicholas Keung, *The Star*, "Refugee Sponsorship Groups Urge Canada to Clear Backlog," June 20, 2017, <https://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2017/06/20/refugee-sponsorship-groups-urge-ottawa-to-clear-backlog.html>.

²¹ See, e.g., Jodi Kantor and Catrin Einhorn, *The New York Times*, "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13.'", March 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html>.

²² For an overview of key differences, see Canadian Council for Refugees, "Key Differences Between the Options in Quebec and the Rest of Canada," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/overview-program-options-key-differences>.

²³ The Canadian Press, *CBC*, "Quebec to Temporarily Suspend All New Private Refugee Sponsorship Applications," Jan. 9, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-to-temporarily-suspend-all-new-private-refugee-sponsorship-applications-1.3928227>.

²⁴ Government of Quebec: Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, "Collective Sponsorship," <https://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/humanitarian-immigration/collective-sponsorship/index.html>.

1) Selecting Sponsors

Canada's federal program envisions four types of groups or entities that can undertake a sponsorship. Groups of Five, Community Sponsors, Sponsorship Agreement Holders, and Constituent Groups. A Group of Five (G5) is defined as "five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, who are at least 18 years of age, live in the expected community of settlement and have collectively arranged for the sponsorship of a refugee living abroad." The individuals act as guarantors for provision of necessary support during the yearlong sponsorship term.²⁵ Their individual contributions, both financial and non-financial, are assessed along with a settlement plan before a sponsorship is approved.²⁶

A Community Sponsor (CS) is an organization located in the community where the refugee is expected to resettle, which is able to make an organizational commitment to sponsor. The organization can be for-profit or non-profit and incorporated or unincorporated. The CS must have its financial and settlement plan approved by the Resettlement Operations Center in Ottawa and demonstrate its ability to make the required financial commitment.²⁷

A Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) is an "[i]ncorporated organization[] that [has] signed a formal sponsorship agreement with Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada" (IRCC),²⁸ the Canadian government agency responsible for refugees and immigration. SAHs are usually religious, ethnocultural, or humanitarian organizations; they may be local, regional, or national. They assume overall responsibility for managing any and all sponsorships under their agreement with IRCC. An SAH may directly sponsor refugees and/or work with constituent groups.²⁹ As of July 2017, there are 104 SAHs spread throughout nine of Canada's ten provinces.³⁰

²⁵ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

²⁶ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *IMM 5373A E: Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5373AE.pdf>.

²⁷ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Sponsorship Agreement Holders – Sponsoring Refugees*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/sah.asp> (last modified March 20, 2017).

³⁰ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – Sponsorship Agreement Holders*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/list-sponsors.asp> (last modified June 27, 2017).

A Constituent Group (CG) is a group based in the sponsored refugee's expected community of resettlement, which can be authorized by an SAH under the SAH's agreement to sponsor and provide support to the refugee. The SAH must approve the CG's sponsorship application and resettlement plan before submitting to the Resettlement Operations Center in Ottawa.³¹

Although the four types listed above are the only entities able to initiate a sponsorship application themselves, it is also possible for other partners to participate in sponsorship. An SAH, CS, or CG (but not a G5) can formalize a partnership with or "co-sponsor" with another organization or individual, including member(s) of the sponsored refugee's family already living in Canada.³²

Whereas the federal program specifies the total number of persons who can be sponsored each year, the Quebec program limits the number of cases (which can include a single person or several people) that can be submitted each year. Quebec provides for three types of sponsors. An organization with an umbrella agreement has an agreement with the Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, which is the provincial-level equivalent of the federal-level IRCC, specifying the number of applications that can be submitted by the organization that year. An organization with an umbrella agreement is not required to submit a settlement plan. The "Group of 2 to 5" operates similarly to the "Group of 5." Fewer members are required than under the federal program, and the group does not have to provide a settlement plan. Lastly, a nonprofit organization meeting legal incorporation requirements can serve as a sponsor itself or can partner with an individual Canadian resident to co-sponsor.³³

2) Selecting Refugees

There are two mechanisms through which a refugee can be referred for private sponsorship. The first is "naming," or sponsor-referred: the sponsoring group can itself put forward the name of a refugee or refugee family that it would like to sponsor. Alternatively, the sponsorship group can opt to be matched with a government-selected refugee through the BVOR program. The Resettlement Operations Center in Ottawa maintains a list of cases identified by UNHCR and selected for resettlement in Canada. These "visa-referred" cases are typically able to travel more quickly because they have already gone through most required processing.³⁴

³¹ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

³² Ibid.

³³ Canadian Council for Refugees, "Key Differences Between the Options in Quebec and the Rest of Canada," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/overview-program-options-key-differences>.

³⁴ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*,

There are two legal categories of refugees who qualify for private sponsorship. The first is the “Convention Refugee Abroad.” Refugees in this category must (1) meet the Convention refugee definition, (2) be outside of Canada, and (3) have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period, of another durable solution.³⁵ The second is the “Member of the Country of Asylum Class.” To qualify for the Country of Asylum Class, a refugee must (1) have been, and continue to be, seriously and personally affected by civil war, armed conflict or massive violations of human rights, (2) be outside of all of their countries of nationality and habitual residence, and (3) have no reasonable prospect, within a reasonable period, of another durable solution.³⁶ There are no nationality restrictions on eligibility.

A G5 or a CS must include proof with its application that each applicant has been recognized as a refugee by UNHCR or by a foreign state.³⁷ There was a limited exemption to this requirement for Iraqi and Syrian refugees, which expired in 2017.³⁸ An SAH or CG, however, can sponsor both Convention refugees and Country of Asylum Class refugees. The Country of Asylum Class has higher standards, but may be useful where a refugee’s nationality or current country location would be an obstacle to UNHCR recognition.³⁹ For example, a Palestinian refugee who had been living in Syria would fall under the jurisdiction of UNRWA and would not be eligible as a Convention refugee, but could be sponsored as a member of the Country of Asylum Class by an SAH or CG.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

³⁵Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Convention Refugee Abroad Class: Eligibility Criteria,”

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/convention-abroad.asp> (last modified Feb. 24, 2014); Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227, arts. 144-45, (Can.), available at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf>.

³⁶ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, “Country of Asylum Class: Eligibility Criteria,”

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/tools/refugees/resettlement/eligibility/asylum.asp> (last modified Feb. 24, 2014); Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227, arts. 146-47 (Can.), available at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf>.

³⁷ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

³⁸ Government of Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, “ARCHIVED: Temporary Public Policy to Facilitate the Sponsorship of Syrian and Iraqi Refugees by Groups of Five and Community Sponsors,” Dec. 19, 2016, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/sponsorship-syrian-iraqi-refugees-groups-five-community-sponsors-2017.html>.

³⁹ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17, 2017).

However, because sponsors are allowed to “name” the refugee(s) they would like to sponsor, the Canadian program’s beneficiaries are not always the most vulnerable as refugees referred for resettlement by UNHCR would be. There is a degree of vulnerability inherent in meeting the required definitions for the Canadian program, but beyond those definitions, there is no assessment or comparative analysis of applicants’ vulnerability. One study found that privately-sponsored refugees tend to have higher education rates, higher proficiency in English or French, and more social capital.⁴⁰

A positive refugee status determination is not required for Quebec’s program, regardless of the type of sponsor.⁴¹ However, refugees must be recognized by IRCC as either a “Convention Refugee Abroad” or as falling into the “Country of Asylum Class.” The Canadian federal government determines whether the refugee meets these definitions, and then Quebec assesses potential beneficiaries. Quebec will consider vulnerability and integration potential, including personal qualities, language proficiency, work experience, level of education and resourcefulness, and whether any first- or second-degree relatives reside in Quebec.⁴²

3) Scope of Sponsors’ Obligations

Applications are initiated by the sponsors, who must include a “settlement plan” that meets government standards in their application to the Canadian government. A Group of 5 must have at least three members who contribute financially.⁴³ Sponsorship approval requires sponsors to commit to a set of logistical and financial responsibilities for the refugee(s) they are sponsoring, which typically last for 12 months after the refugee’s arrival in Canada (or until the refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first). In exceptional cases in which sponsors and the government anticipate in advance that a refugee will need more time to become self-sufficient, the sponsorship commitment can be extended for up to 36 months. Sponsors’ responsibilities include: covering the cost of food, rent, and utilities; providing clothing and furniture; locating interpreters; assisting with healthcare needs; school and language course enrollment; help finding employment; and cultural orientation and emotional support.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Craig Damian Smith, Tea Hadziristic, Lina Alipour, Op-Ed, *NewsDeeply*, “Private Sponsorship is Not a Panacea for Refugee Integration,” April 4, 2017, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2017/04/04/private-sponsorship-not-panacea-for-refugee-integration-researchers>.

⁴¹ Canadian Council for Refugees, “Key Differences Between the Options in Quebec and the Rest of Canada,” <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/overview-program-options-key-differences>.

⁴² Government of Quebec, Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, “Sharing of Responsibilities between the Federal and Québec Governments,” <https://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/humanitarian-immigration/humanitarian-immigration/sharing-responsibilities.html>.

⁴³ Canadian Council for Refugees, “Key Differences Between the Options in Quebec and the Rest of Canada,” <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/overview-program-options-key-differences>.

⁴⁴ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, *Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program – 2. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/ref-sponsor/section-2.asp> (last modified May 17,

If the sponsor receives government approval, the sponsored refugee then undergoes the same processing and screening as a government-resettled refugee would: processing at an overseas office, an interview to assess the refugee claim, and three admissibility checks by the visa office, which may involve a further interview for security and criminality screening.⁴⁵ As with Canadian government-resettled refugees, the International Organization for Migration handles the refugee's orientation and travel scheduling.

In the Quebec program, a "Group of 2 to 5" must have all members make a financial contribution. In most cases the income of the sponsors is the only thing that counts towards the financial requirements, and not in-kind donations or fundraised money. Similarly, for sponsoring nonprofits, only the assets and funds of the nonprofit itself are counted towards the financial requirements.⁴⁶ Sponsors' obligations are similar to those of sponsors in the Canadian federal program.⁴⁷

III. Private Sponsorship Programs Drawing on the Canadian Model

In Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, sponsorship programs draw heavily from the Canadian model and function as resettlement. Each program allows individuals and/or organizations to cover financial and logistical needs of refugees. The German, New Zealand, Irish, and United Kingdom programs target Syrian refugees, while the Australian program is in theory open to a broader list of nationalities. The German and Irish programs have focused on family relationships between sponsor and beneficiary. In Germany and Ireland, family members propose their relatives; in New Zealand and Australia, sponsoring organizations propose refugees; and in the United Kingdom, sponsors are matched at random with refugees who have already been referred by UNHCR for resettlement in the UK through its government-assisted resettlement scheme. Sponsored refugees are "additional" to the quota for government-assisted resettlement slots in Germany, Ireland, and New Zealand. In

2017); Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227, art. 154 (Can.), available at <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "Check Application Processing Times," <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/information/times/index.asp> (last modified July 28, 2017); Government of Canada: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, "After the Interview," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/application-in-process-after-the-interview>.

⁴⁶ Canadian Council for Refugees, "Key Differences Between the Options in Quebec and the Rest of Canada," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/overview-program-options-key-differences>. For more information on calculating the financial requirements, see Canadian Council for Refugees, Private Sponsorship Toolkit, "Group of 2 to 5: Income Calculation," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/application-sponsor-group-2-5-income-calculation>, and "Nonprofit Organization: Financial Capacity," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/application-sponsor-non-profit-organization-income-calculation>.

⁴⁷ Canadian Council for Refugees, Private Sponsorship Toolkit, "General Information - Group of 2 to 5," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/application-sponsor-group-2-5-general-info>, and "Non-Profit Organization: General Information," <http://ccrweb.ca/en/psr-toolkit/application-sponsor-non-profit-organization-general-info/>.

the United Kingdom and Australia, sponsorship refugees count towards the government's resettlement commitments.

All but Ireland provide, in theory, unlimited residence in the destination country. Ireland's past program provided a renewable two-year permit, and the government has not yet announced whether its developing pilot will provide time-limited residency or not. All five of these countries' programs approve beneficiaries before they depart. Approved beneficiaries arrive via a resettlement program, and the program provides resettlement rather than an alternative pathway to get to the country and claim asylum.

Germany

In 2013, Germany's federal government set up a framework to allow the individual states (*Länder*) to implement private sponsorship programs. 15 out of the 16 *Länder* have implemented some kind of private sponsorship program; Bavaria is the one *Land* that did not opt in.⁴⁸ However, most *Länder* have since allowed their programs to expire.⁴⁹

There is no overall quota at the federal level for sponsorships. Several *Länder* set state-level quotas, but some of them have since revoked the quota and allowed the program to expand. The overall German resettlement quota is not reduced based on private sponsorship. At the end of 2015, 21,500 people had been admitted via private sponsorship.⁵⁰ Many *Länder*' programs expired during 2017, although Thuringia has extended its program until the end of 2018.⁵¹

Although the program did not necessarily target the most vulnerable of refugees through its criteria and selection process, it did significantly expand the number of refugees at a time of great need and facilitate access to safety for Syrians without requiring recognition as a refugee.

1) Selecting Sponsors

⁴⁸ Janne Grote, Maria Bitterwolf, and Tatjana Baraulina, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany: Focus-Study by the German National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN), Working Paper 68, 2016, p. 41, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/EMN/Studien/wp68-emn-resettlement-humanitaere-aufnahme.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

⁴⁹ Caritas Friedland and Caritas Germany, Resettlement.de, "Current Admissions - Resettlement," <http://resettlement.de/en/current-admissions/>.

⁵⁰ Janne Grote, Maria Bitterwolf, and Tatjana Baraulina, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Germany: Focus-Study by the German National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN), Working Paper 68, 2016, p. 6, http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/EMN/Studien/wp68-emn-resettlement-humanitaere-aufnahme.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

⁵¹ Caritas Friedland and Caritas Germany, Resettlement.de, "Current Admissions - Resettlement," <http://resettlement.de/en/current-admissions/>.

The German private sponsorship programs were designed primarily to allow for sponsors to bring over Syrian refugees with whom they have a family relationship. Sponsors are German or Syrian citizens who have German residence and have resided in Germany since January 1, 2013. Several *Länder* have changed the January 1, 2013 requirement and replaced it with a requirement that the sponsor has lived in Germany for 6 months or a year, depending on the *Land*.⁵²

2) Selecting Refugees

The application process and eligibility criteria also vary between the *Länder*. A beneficiary must be a Syrian citizen or a stateless resident of Syria who fled due to conflict. With some exceptions, the beneficiary is expected to be either still in Syria or in a neighboring country. The recognized family relationships required by most *Länder* are broad - typically, parents, children, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, and their spouses and children. Beneficiaries do not need UNHCR recognition, but are subject to the same exclusion criteria as other refugees and asylum seekers.⁵³

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations'

Sponsors are responsible for the costs of beneficiaries' travel and stay, typically with a five-year pledge. The sponsor must be able to demonstrate this financial capacity, though in some *Länder* a third committed party can make this financial showing. If a sponsor fails to make payment, the government will step in, but retains the right to seek reimbursement from the sponsor for any public benefits dispensed.⁵⁴

Australia

Following a Canadian-influenced four-year "Community Proposal Pilot,"⁵⁵ the Australian government is now in the early stages of implementing a new "Community Support Program" allowing private individuals and organizations to sponsor a limited number of refugees.⁵⁶ The

⁵² Janne Grote, *Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and European Migration Network*, "Resettlement, Humanitarian Admission Programmes and Private Sponsorship in Germany," Dec. 15, 2016, http://emn.ie/media/04_EMNConference_ResettlementGermany_Grote_15.12.161.pdf.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Susan Kneebone, Asher Hirsch, and Audrey Macklin, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, Opinion, "Private Resettlement Models Offer a Way for Australia to Lift Its Refugee Intake," Sept. 19, 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-19/private-resettlement-a-way-for-australia-to-lift-refugee-intake/7857988>.

⁵⁶ Frances Voon, *University of New South Wales: Sydney, Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law*, "What if Other Countries Copied Australia's Border Security Example," Sept. 23, 2016, <http://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/what-if-other-countries-copied-australias-border-security-example>.

pilot program, launched in June 2013 and ended in June 2017, provided up to 500 privately-sponsored visas per year under Australia's broader Humanitarian Programme of refugee resettlement.⁵⁷ Although initially well-received, the pilot program was criticized for the small number of spots relative to actual applications for sponsorship, the high cost of sponsorship, and the lack of additionality.⁵⁸ Australia's Refugee Council described it as "essentially...a more expensive family reunion pathway for those desperate to get their family members to safety."⁵⁹

The new Community Support Program offers an increased 1,000 places as part of Australia's overall refugee numbers (16,250 for 2017-2018 and 18,750 in 2018-2019). Although the overall figures present in an increase in Australia's total refugee quota - which was 13,750 in previous years - the 1,000 sponsorship slots are part of that overall government figure rather than an additional set of places above and beyond the current year's 16,250.⁶⁰

The new Program faces criticism similar to that of the pilot: a small number of spaces, a lack of additionality, age- and employability-based preferences likely to exclude the most vulnerable, and prohibitively high costs.⁶¹ The Australian government expects to save 26.9 million AUD (approximately \$20.036 million USD⁶²) over the coming four years, also prompting the criticism that the Program simply privatizes resettlement and shifts costs onto the

⁵⁷ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, "Community Support Programme: Discussion Paper," June 2015, p. 13, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cps-consultation.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Susan Kneebone, Asher Hirsch, and Audrey Macklin, *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, Opinion, "Private Resettlement Models Offer a Way for Australia to Lift Its Refugee Intake," Sept. 19, 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-19/private-resettlement-a-way-for-australia-to-lift-refugee-intake/7857988>; Ben Doherty, *The Guardian*, "Australia Resettles Only a Sixth of the Promised Syrian Refugee Intake," Sept. 1, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/sep/02/australia-resettles-only-a-sixth-of-promised-syrian-refugee-intake?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.

⁵⁹ Refugee Council of Australia, "The Community Support Program: Providing Complementary Pathways to Protection or Privatising the Humanitarian Program," July 4, 2017, <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/ourwork/16445/>.

⁶⁰ Khanh Hoang, *University of New South Wales: Sydney, Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law*, "Risks and Rewards in Australia's Plan for Private Sponsorship," May 16, 2017, <http://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/publication/risks-and-rewards-australias-plan-private-sponsorship>.

⁶¹ Refugee Council of Australia, "The Community Support Program: Providing Complementary Pathways to Protection or Privatising the Humanitarian Program," July 4, 2017, <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/ourwork/16445/>.

⁶² All conversions from AUS to USD calculated on 24 May 2018.

community.⁶³ The Program formally commenced in spring 2018 with the appointment of ten Approved Proposing Organisations (APOs).⁶⁴

Although the program will not take vulnerability into account, the new program will be accessible to refugees who have not received UNHCR recognition and/or who do not have pre-existing ties with Australia.

1) *Selecting Sponsors*

In the Community Proposal Pilot, the federal government designated five “Approved Proposing Organizations,” (APOs), the organizations that could submit applications on behalf of specific individuals, families, organizations, or businesses to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.⁶⁵ To be approved by the government as an APO, these organizations had to be “well-established, with strong administrative and governance frameworks, and a charter for assisting humanitarian entrants,” demonstrate their strong volunteer network and provide evidence of their experience in “governance and administration, financial management, resettlement of humanitarian entrants, and engaging with community organisations.”⁶⁶

In the new Program, sponsorship requests are still facilitated through APOs, but the government appointed a new set of ten APOs in spring 2018 after a competitive application process. The Australian “supporters,” on whose behalf the APO submits an application for the desired beneficiary, can be individuals, families, businesses, or community organizations that enter into an agreement with the APO.⁶⁷

2) *Selecting Refugees*

In the Pilot, local Supporting Community Organizations (SCOs) and individuals identified potential beneficiaries to propose, approached an APO to propose a candidate, and the APO had to approve the candidacy in order for the process to move forward.⁶⁸ The APO then

⁶³ Gabrielle Chan, *The Guardian*, “Budget Expected to Expand Sponsorship Program for Refugees - At Cost of \$40,000 Each,” May 5, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/may/05/budget-could-expand-private-sponsorship-program-for-refugees>; Asylum Insight, “Private Sponsorship,” last updated May 3, 2018, <http://www.asyluminsight.com/private-sponsorship/#.Wlwmq7bMzUo>.

⁶⁴ Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, “The Community Support Program,” <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/refu/offs/community-support-program>.

⁶⁵ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, “Community Support Programme: Discussion Paper,” June 2015, p. 13, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cps-consultation.pdf>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; see also Lauren Russo, *Kerdo Legal*, “Humanitarian Visas: the Community Proposal Pilot is Now Open until 29 July 2016!,” July 13, 2016, <http://migration-lawyers.net.au/humanitarian-visas-the-community-proposal-pilot-is-now-open-until-29-july-2016/>.

supported their visa application and, if successful, the individuals or SCOs helped the nominated refugees resettle in Australia.⁶⁹

A beneficiary had to be in need of humanitarian protection overseas, have established family or community connections in Australia acting as their SCO or individual sponsor, and meet Australia's standard health and character requirements for immigration. They also generally had to be outside of their country of origin, although this was not an absolute requirement.⁷⁰ APOs' applications were prioritized over the regular government-assisted resettlement cases in the Special Humanitarian Program for faster processing.⁷¹

In the new Program, beneficiaries must meet similar requirements. An applicant must be outside of Australia and their home country; be subject to substantial discrimination amounting to a gross violation of human rights in their home country; be aligned with Australia's resettlement priorities; and meet certain health and character standards. The primary applicant must be between 18 and 50 years of age, have "functional" English, and either have an offer of employment already or be likely to become financially independent within a year of their arrival in Australia. However, applicants need not have existing links to Australia, and sponsors can be individuals, organizations, or businesses with no preexisting connection. Priority is given to applicants who are willing to live and work in regional Australia rather than in major cities.⁷²

In April 2018, media reported that nationals of eight countries in certain countries of first asylum would be prioritized for the Program: Afghanistan (if currently located in Pakistan), Bhutan (if currently located in Nepal), the Democratic Republic of Congo (if currently located in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, or Zambia), Eritrea (if currently located in Ethiopia), Ethiopia (if currently located in Kenya), Myanmar (if of Karen or Chin ethnicity and located in Thailand, Malaysia, or Indonesia), and Iraq and Syria (for both of these latter countries, if women, children, or a family and located in Lebanon, Jordan, or Turkey). Nationals of other countries that had been eligible for inclusion in the earlier Pilot, such as Iran or Somalia, would likely not be accepted. The Australian government commented only that settlement priorities are considered on an annual basis by the government, but APOs and settlement service providers told media that an "unofficial list" of origin countries had been circulated.⁷³

⁶⁹ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, "Community Support Programme: Discussion Paper," June 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cps-consultation.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Refugee Council of Australia, "Report: Addressing the Pain of Separation for Refugee Families," Nov. 2016, p. 4, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RCOA_Report_Family_Reunion11-16-WEB.pdf.

⁷² Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, "The Community Support Program," <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/refu/offs/community-support-program>.

⁷³ Ben Doherty, *The Guardian*, "South Sudan, Somalia and Iran Excluded from One of Australia's Refugee Programs," Apr. 4, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/apr/05/south-sudan-somalia-and-iran-excluded-from-one-of-australias-refugee-programs>.

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

In the Pilot, community sponsors paid visa costs and resettlement costs for 12 months, with the APO monitoring and evaluating that assistance.⁷⁴ In addition to the costs of medical checks, travel to Australia, initial housing, and living expenses, an individual or community group proposing a refugee to an APO was required to pay visa application fees of 19,124 AUD (approximately \$14,115 USD) for the first applicant plus 2,680 AUD (approximately \$1,978 USD) for each additional family member; a non-refundable 11,000 AUD (approximately \$8,119 USD) fee to the APO; and a 5,000 AUD (approximately \$3,690 USD) bond refundable only when the sponsor had fulfilled obligations to help resettle the beneficiary in the first year post-arrival.⁷⁵

APOs are responsible for not only submitting applications to the government, but also for connecting employers with potential applicants, overseeing the provision of resettlement services post-arrival, and helping beneficiaries to become financially independent within a year of arrival. An APO can sponsor a beneficiary itself, but if the APO submits an application on behalf of a sponsor, then the APO can choose whether to charge fees to cover the costs of the aforementioned services.

The APO lodging the application must prove its ability to “to enable the applicant to achieve financial self-sufficiency within the first year of arrival in Australia.” This occurs through the funding of the Australian “supporters,” unless the APO is acting as the sponsor itself rather than on behalf of someone else.⁷⁶ Sponsors pay for a 19,000 AUD (approximately \$14,402 USD) visa fee, as well as travel costs, medical screenings, and a 20,000 AUD (approximately \$15,160 USD) bond. Resettled refugees have immediate access to government services like Medicare as well as Centrelink, a part of the Department of Human Services that both administers social services and distributes welfare, but if they access any social security payments within the first 12 months, sponsors are required to pay those costs back to the government.⁷⁷

New Zealand

⁷⁴ Australian Government, Department of Immigration and Border Protection, “Community Support Programme: Discussion Paper,” June 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cps-consultation.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Refugee Council of Australia, “Report: Addressing the Pain of Separation for Refugee Families,” Nov. 2016, p. 4, https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RCOA_Report_Family_Reunion11-16-WEB.pdf.

⁷⁶ Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs, “The Community Support Program,” <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/refu/offers/community-support-program>.

⁷⁷ Asylum Insight, “Private Sponsorship,” last updated May 3, 2018, <http://www.asyluminsight.com/private-sponsorship/#.Wlwmg7bMzUo>; Australian Government, Department of Human Services, “Centrelink,” <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/centrelink>.

In response to public demand, New Zealand has begun implementing a private community sponsorship pilot program. Announced in 2016,⁷⁸ the New Zealand government created in 2017 a visa category for “Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship,” designed to “provide an alternative and additional form of admission for refugees to New Zealand to complement the annual quota” and “provide an additional opportunity for community organisations to actively engage in refugee resettlement, and to build local communities that welcome refugees.”⁷⁹

A government-approved list of organizations will sponsor up to 30 refugees who will arrive in New Zealand by June 2018.⁸⁰ The quota will be in addition to the 1,000 refugees who will be resettled in 2018 through the traditional government resettlement program. Throughout the planning and implementation of the pilot, New Zealand has been working with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative out of Canada’s Refugee Hub. The country’s Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment will complete an evaluation of the pilot by the end of 2018, which will be used in considering whether to extend or expand the program.⁸¹

The significant eligibility requirements for primary refugee applicants will likely impact the vulnerability profile of beneficiaries, but the pilot’s slots are in addition to the government-assisted refugees referred by UNHCR for their vulnerability. If successful, the pilot could be the basis for a larger program with broadened eligibility to include more vulnerable refugees.

1) Selecting Sponsors

The government solicited applications from community organizations⁸² and then selected a list of four community-based organizations throughout the country to serve as sponsoring organizations.⁸³

2) Selecting Refugees

The pilot is intended to consist of 25 refugees, but may be increased up to 30 to enable qualifying family groups to be resettled together. To be eligible, a refugee and all qualifying

⁷⁸ Benedict Collins, *Radio New Zealand*, “Community Groups to Sponsor Refugees,” June 14, 2016, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/306309/community-groups-to-sponsor-refugees>.

⁷⁹ Government of New Zealand, New Zealand Immigration, “Refugee and Protection,” <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/refugee-and-protection-unit#community>.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *NZ Herald*, “Community Organizations Soon to Sponsor Refugees Settling in NZ Through Pilot Programme Announced by Government,” Jan. 26, 2018, https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11982523.

⁸² Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, “Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category,” last updated Nov, 7, 2017, <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category>.

⁸³ Government of New Zealand, New Zealand Immigration, “Refugee and Protection,” <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/refugee-and-protection-unit#community>.

family members must be recognized by UNHCR as refugees. The refugee can either be nominated by the community organisation or referred by UNHCR and then allocated to the community organisation.⁸⁴ However, they must complete an expression of interest and be invited to apply to the program before making a visa application.⁸⁵

The primary applicant must be between 18 and 45 years of age; be in good health, as demonstrated by a medical examination; be of good character, as demonstrated by providing a police certificate from any country; demonstrate English language ability; have certain educational or employment experience; and not be eligible for residence under any other family-based immigration category.⁸⁶

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

Upon arrival, sponsored refugees will attend a two-week program at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre (MRRC), the centralized reception center where refugees resettled through the traditional government program spend their first six weeks after arrival in an orientation program.⁸⁷

Following the refugees' time at MRRC, they will be resettled in communities throughout the country, where sponsors will be responsible for most resettlement costs for two years after arrival. This includes the refugees' accommodation, English courses, connecting the refugees to local services like healthcare and schooling and employment opportunities, for two years after arrival, and general support towards the sponsored refugee becoming self-sufficient.⁸⁸ An estimated cost has not yet been provided.

⁸⁴ Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Amendment Circular No. 2017/14: Amendments to the New Zealand Operation Manual," Dec. 21, 2017, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/amendment-circulars/amendment-circular-2017-14.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Government of New Zealand, New Zealand Immigration, "Visa Factsheet, Community Sponsored Refugee Resident Visa," <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/apply-for-a-visa/visa-factsheet/community-sponsored-refugee-resident-visa>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.; Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Amendment Circular No. 2017/14: Amendments to the New Zealand Operation Manual," Dec. 21, 2017, <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/amendment-circulars/amendment-circular-2017-14.pdf>; Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category," <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/media-centre/news-notifications/community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category>.

⁸⁷ Anna Bracewell-Worrall, *Newshub*, "Sponsors Chosen for New Scheme to Bring in Additional Refugees," Jan. 26, 2018, <http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2018/01/four-nz-churches-chosen-to-sponsor-refugees.html>; Zac Fleming, *Radio New Zealand*, "Where Refugees Go When They Arrive in New Zealand," Dec. 5, 2017, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/2018624303/where-refugees-go-when-they-arrive-in-new-zealand>.

⁸⁸ Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, "Amendment Circular No. 2017/14: Amendments to the New Zealand Operation Manual," Dec. 21, 2017,

Ireland

Like New Zealand, Ireland is working with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative to develop a private sponsorship program inspired by the Canadian model.⁸⁹ Since the September 2017 announcement committing to a new sponsorship program, no substantive details on the program design have been made public,⁹⁰ but the Irish government will reportedly make a formal announcement of the program in July 2018 and open applications to sponsors in September 2018.⁹¹

Ireland has previously experimented with private sponsorship through its one-off Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme (SHAP) in 2014, created in response to the escalating humanitarian situation in Syria. SHAP had a six-week application window in March and April 2014.⁹² There was no cap or quota set for SHAP. Eligible sponsors applied on behalf of 308 individuals and 119 individuals were given permission to come to Ireland.

According to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, a significant number of the program's beneficiaries have applied for protection in Ireland since the program's closure. SHAP was characterized as an additional initiative to complement existing standard resettlement,⁹³ through which Ireland had already committed to accepting up to 90 Syrian refugees referred by UNHCR.⁹⁴

Criticisms of SHAP include the temporary nature of permission to remain in Ireland, the potentially long duration of sponsors' financial obligations, and the very short application

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/amendment-circulars/amendment-circular-2017-14.pdf>; Anna Bracewell-Worrall, *Newshub*, "Sponsors Chosen for New Scheme to Bring in Additional Refugees," Jan. 26, 2018,

<http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2018/01/four-nz-churches-chosen-to-sponsor-refugees.html>.

⁸⁹ Irish Refugee Council, "Press Release: Refugee & Migrant Coalition Welcomes Irish Government's Commitment to New Community Sponsorship Refugee Programme," Sept. 19, 2017,

<http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/news/refugee-migrant-coalition-welcomes-irish-governments-commitment-to-new-community-sponsorship-refugee-programme/5929>.

⁹⁰ Government of Ireland, Ministry of Justice and Equality, "Parliamentary Questions: 116. Deputy Clare Daly asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the details of the community sponsorship programme for refugees committed to by the Government in September 2017; the progress towards establishing same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [43178/17]," <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PQ-11-10-2017-116>.

⁹¹ *The Irish Times*, "New to the Parish: Homs to Wicklow," June 22, 2018,

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/new-to-the-parish/homs-to-wicklow>.

⁹² Samantha Arnold and Emma Quinn, *European Migration Network*, "Resettlement of Refugees and Private Sponsorship in Ireland," ESRI Series Number 55, December 13, 2016, p. ix,

<https://www.esri.ie/publications/resettlement-of-refugees-and-private-sponsorship-in-ireland/>.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁹⁴ Government of Ireland, Ministry of Justice and Equality, "Press Release: Minister Shatter Announces Humanitarian Admission Programme to Assist Syria and Surrounding Countries," March 12, 2014, <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR14000073>.

window.⁹⁵ Whether the new community sponsorship program will address these concerns through its program design remains to be seen. However, SHAP's balancing of both family reunification and vulnerability as dual priorities would be a strong foundation for the selection process in the future program.

1) Selecting Sponsors

Both Irish citizens born in Syria and Syrian nationals with legal residency in Ireland could apply to bring up to four of their most vulnerable family members to Ireland.⁹⁶

2) Selecting Refugees

Sponsored family members could be currently in Syria or displaced from Syria in surrounding countries. A sponsor had to prioritize up to two of the four nominated family members, although the program tried to be flexible in order to avoid splitting families.⁹⁷ After prioritizing family unity, the next priority was given to certain especially vulnerable groups: elderly parents, children, unaccompanied mothers and children, single women and girls at risk, and persons with disabilities.⁹⁸

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

To apply as a sponsor, the Irish citizen or resident was required to submit evidence of their income⁹⁹ and to cover the cost of the beneficiaries' visa fees, travel to Ireland and maintenance after arrival for the period of residency. Refugees admitted via SHAP were barred from applying for or receiving non-insurance-based social welfare payments or housing services, although they did have access to essential medical treatment, as well as state education for those under the age of 18.¹⁰⁰

SHAP conferred permission to remain in Ireland on a temporary basis for up to two years. Although there was no automatic right to renewal of this permission, SHAP beneficiaries can have their permission renewed on an individual basis subject to good character and security

⁹⁵ Samantha Arnold and Emma Quinn, *European Migration Network*, "Resettlement of Refugees and Private Sponsorship in Ireland," ESRI Series Number 55, December 13, 2016, p. 47-50, <https://www.esri.ie/publications/resettlement-of-refugees-and-private-sponsorship-in-ireland/>.

⁹⁶ Government of Ireland, Department of Justice and Equality, Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, "Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme Information Leaflet," March 20, 2014, p. 2, <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/SHAP%20FAQ%2014-3-2014.pdf/Files/SHAP%20FAQ%2014-3-2014.pdf>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Samatha Arnold and Emma Quinn, *European Migration Network*, "Resettlement of Refugees and Private Sponsorship in Ireland," ESRI Series Number 55, Dec. 13, 2016, p. 48, <https://www.esri.ie/publications/resettlement-of-refugees-and-private-sponsorship-in-ireland/>.

checks. As the sponsor is required to continue support for the duration of temporary residence, there is no provision to transition to public services when permission is renewed.¹⁰¹

United Kingdom

In July 2016, the UK introduced an experimental community sponsorship system based on the Canadian model in order to help them reach their goal of resettling 20,000 Syrians. It “empowers and enables” community groups to take on the role of welcoming and supporting a refugee family.¹⁰²

Any refugees admitted through the sponsorship program count towards the overall quota rather than augmenting the UK’s previous resettlement commitments. Although the program could be made more robust if rooted in additionality, the UNHCR referral required for refugee eligibility ensures that the program targets extremely vulnerable refugees. As most refugees resettled in the UK now are Syrian, most community sponsorships will likely resettle Syrian refugees, but other refugees from the Middle East might also be sponsored.¹⁰³

In its first year the program moved very slowly. As of the program’s first anniversary in July 2017, 53 refugees had been resettled through ten sponsorship groups.¹⁰⁴ That month, the UK government announced a 1 million GBP funding pot to help community groups with sponsorship.¹⁰⁵ As of June 2018, 25 Syrian refugee families had reportedly been resettled throughout the country via community sponsorship.¹⁰⁶ The UK continues to work with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative to promote and expand the program.¹⁰⁷

1) Selecting Sponsors

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 48-50.

¹⁰² Government of the United Kingdom, Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: Guidance for Prospective Sponsors,” July 19, 2016 (revised July 2017), p. 2, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554048/2016-09-16_Full_Community_Sponsorship_Guidance_-_for_govuk.pdf.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁴ Matthew Saltmarsh, *UNHCR*, “UK Pushes to Deepen its Community Refugee Scheme,” July 29, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2017/7/596f2d1b4/uk-pushes-to-deepen-its-community-refugee-scheme.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Government of the United Kingdom, “News Story: Home Secretary Announces £1 Million to Help Communities Support Refugees,” July 19, 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-1-million-to-help-communities-support-refugees>; see also Lucy Ballinger, *BBC News*, “Highs and Lows as Small Town Sponsors Refugee Family,” July 22, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-40641352>.

¹⁰⁶ Daniella Cheslow, *National Public Radio*, “‘Your Children are Safe’: A Town in Wales Welcomes Refugees from Syria,” June 6, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/06/615762704/your-children-are-safe-a-town-in-wales-welcomes-refugees-from-syria>.

¹⁰⁷ Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, “Refugee Sponsorship Hits the Road to Mark First Anniversary of UK Program,” July 2017, <http://www.refugeesponsorship.org/uploads/596ecc9090efa.pdf>.

Sponsors must fall into one of three categories of registered charities in the UK. The organization must name an individual with a permanent and senior position in the organization as “lead sponsor.” The lead sponsor must be able to hold other personnel accountable for implementation, although the government also monitors the beneficiaries’ resettlement.¹⁰⁸

2) Selecting Refugees

Unlike sponsorship programs in Canada or Australia, sponsors in the UK cannot nominate a particular person or family for sponsorship. Refugees are referred by UNHCR and go through the UK’s vetting process before being matched with a sponsor, which cannot select a specific beneficiary but may turn down a family proposed by the Home Office.¹⁰⁹

3) Scope of Sponsors’ Obligations

Sponsors must demonstrate organizational or individual experience working with refugees or vulnerable people; provide evidence of adequate financial resources secured for sponsorship (at least £9,000, but assessed on a case-by-case basis; proof of security depends on total income), and ability to provide suitable and sustainable accommodation for a minimum of two years.¹¹⁰ The UK pays for beneficiaries’ travel to the UK, and adults are eligible for either immediate employment or Job Seekers Allowance. Both adults and children have free access to the National Health Service¹¹¹ and families can also claim housing benefits.¹¹²

To initiate an application, a sponsor must first obtain written approval from local authorities, which in some counties requires approval at both the district and county councils. Authorities can object based on insufficient capacity to accommodate a family in the proposed housing area (e.g., a lack of places in local schools); concerns about community tensions in the proposed housing area; when they have reason to believe that the organization is not suitable

¹⁰⁸ Government of the United Kingdom, Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: Guidance for Prospective Sponsors,” July 19, 2016 (revised July 2017), pp. 9, 13, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554048/2016-09-16_Full_Community_Sponsorship_Guidance_-_for_govuk.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Government of the United Kingdom, Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: Guidance for Prospective Sponsors,” July 19, 2016 (revised July 2017), p. 6, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554048/2016-09-16_Full_Community_Sponsorship_Guidance_-_for_govuk.pdf.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹¹ Citizens UK, “Full Community Sponsorship of Refugees Launched in the UK: First Refugees Expected to Arrive Within Weeks,” July 19, 2016, <http://www.citizensuk.org/full-community-sponsorship-of-refugees>.

¹¹² Caritas Social Action Network and Caritas Diocese of Salford, “Community Sponsorship Guide,” p. 7, <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Caritas-Community-Sponsorship-Guide-v2.pdf>.

to undertake the resettlement of vulnerable adults and children; or “another appropriate reason.”¹¹³

After obtaining local approval, a sponsor develops a “detailed and credible” support plan for the UK’s Home Office, demonstrating that the sponsor meets the minimum requirements and has safeguards in place to ensure that the sponsor does not present a risk to the resettled family, and the resettled family is able to report any problems that arise. The government then proposes a family for resettlement and, if the sponsor and local authority both agree, the resettled family arrives about six weeks later.¹¹⁴

Sponsors are expected to provide a welcome pack of groceries and £200 cash (approximately \$267 USD¹¹⁵) per refugee upon arrival for initial expenses and to ensure that the families has enough money to live on, while their claim for government benefits is being processed.¹¹⁶ In addition to their financial commitment and finding housing, sponsors are responsible for a variety of support similar to that of Canadian sponsors, including meeting the family at the airport, assisting with access to medical and social services, enrollment in school or language courses, assisting with employment, and providing interpretation services. These responsibilities last for a year after arrival apart from housing, which must be provided for two years.¹¹⁷

IV. Private Sponsorship and Humanitarian Visa Programs: Private Sponsorship as an Alternative & Complementary Pathway (ACP)

Private sponsorship can also be an alternative and complementary pathway, functioning as an additional pathway for refugees to get to a safe country and then claim asylum. Argentina, Switzerland, France (which is discussed again in the Humanitarian Corridors section, for which it has a more formalized program), Poland, and Slovakia have all used some degree of private sector involvement to grant a “humanitarian visa” or the equivalent to beneficiaries.

Argentina, Poland, and Slovakia do not have traditional government-led resettlement programs as exist in Canada, the United States, or many other countries. Poland and Slovakia do take “quota refugees” from the European Union’s relocation of asylum-seekers, but the EU scheme targets refugees who are already in Europe and so it does not constitute a pathway for those seeking resettlement.

¹¹³ Government of the United Kingdom, Home Office, “Community Sponsorship: Guidance for Prospective Sponsors,” July 19, 2016 (revised July 2017), p. 10, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/554048/2016-09-16_Full_Community_Sponsorship_Guidance_-_for_govuk.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 11-12.

¹¹⁵ Converted from GBP to USD calculated on June 1, 2018.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

Humanitarian visas can be a long-term pathway to complement a country's refugee resettlement (see France, below), but can also be a shorter-term response to a particular population's need, especially where a country does not already have infrastructure in place for a formal resettlement program. Because humanitarian visas offer a chance to claim asylum rather than resettlement, such a program can be more ad hoc—and therefore easier and cheaper to put together, because it requires less front-end investment. Argentina's program began in 2014 to target Syrians fleeing civil war, while Poland and Slovakia's one-off programs in 2015 both targeted Middle Eastern Christian populations.

Private sponsorship-humanitarian visa programs can otherwise vary along the same parameters as traditional private sponsorship programs do, from identity of sponsors to eligibility of beneficiaries to what resources private sponsors will provide.

Argentina

In the absence of a traditional, government-assisted resettlement program, Argentina established a hybrid humanitarian visa and private sponsorship program in 2014 for Syrians fleeing their country's civil war.¹¹⁸ As of late 2017, 320 Syrians were living in Argentina after entering through the program. Argentina is working with the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative to expand the program, as well as to establish a more formal government resettlement program.¹¹⁹

In the meantime, the governments of individual provinces are also able to resettle refugees; the provincial government of San Luis, for instance, pledged public funds to sponsor at least 50 families in their province, including 30 to be selected by UNHCR rather than by individual sponsors. Those resettled by San Luis receive accommodation, general financial support for two years, health insurance, funds for public transportation, the opportunity to pursue further education, and Spanish courses. San Luis residents are encouraged to offer practical support to new arrivals.¹²⁰

1) Selecting Sponsors

¹¹⁸ Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, "Programa Siria," <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/>; Jack Adwinckle, UNHCR, "Escaping War at Home, Syrian Couple Start Over in Argentina," Apr. 12, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/4/58e4b61a4/escaping-war-home-syrian-couple-start-argentina.html>.

¹¹⁹ Frederick Bernas, UNHCR, "Syrian Refugees Reap Benefits of Argentina's New Visa Rules," Nov. 10, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/11/5a0586774/syrian-refugees-reap-benefits-argentinanew-visa-rules.html>.

¹²⁰ Jack Adwinckle, UNHCR, "Escaping War at Home, Syrian Couple Start Over in Argentina," Apr. 12, 2017, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/4/58e4b61a4/escaping-war-home-syrian-couple-start-argentina.html>.

In the program's first year, sponsors had to be family members of the sponsored refugees, but this requirement was lifted by a 2015 amendment to broaden the pool of potential sponsors.¹²¹ Sponsors now must be Argentinian citizens or legal residents.¹²²

2) Selecting Refugees

Sponsored beneficiaries of the program can be Syrians; family members of Syrians, regardless of the family members' nationality; and Palestinians who were living and receiving UNRWA support in Syria prior to being displaced by the conflict.¹²³ Those eligible can be internally displaced and enter directly from the country of origin rather than from a country of first asylum.¹²⁴

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

The selected beneficiary first files a request for an entry permit with their local consulate, including certification of their lack of criminal record in their country of origin or habitual residence;¹²⁵ the sponsor initiates an application by presenting a letter of invitation with a declaration of character, promising to assist the refugees in all aspects of their resettlement in Argentina and committing to provide "accommodation and maintenance" for the first year

¹²¹ Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, "Normative Framework: Disposition DNM 4683/2016,"

<http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/indexSiria.php?marco>; Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, "Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union," Dec. 2015, p. 30, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹²³ Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, "Normative Framework: Disposition DNM 4683/2016," <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/indexSiria.php?marco>; Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, "Programa Siria: Cartilla Informativa," p. 2, <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/pdf/CARTILLA%20POTENCIALES%20BENEFICIARIOS.pdf>; Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, "Programa Siria: Folleto," <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/pdf/FOLLETO.pdf>.

¹²⁴ Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, "Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union," Dec. 2015, p. 5, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>.

¹²⁵ Argentina, Comisión Nacional Para Los Refugiados, "Solicitud de Estatuto de Refugiado" <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/conare/index.php?estaturefugiado>.

after arrival.¹²⁶ An organization can endorse the sponsor and assume the role of guarantor,¹²⁷ or an organization can itself sponsor if it consists of people who can collectively support the beneficiary financially.¹²⁸ Either the refugee(s) or the sponsor pays the costs of traveling to Argentina, though no visa or immigration fees are charged.¹²⁹

Upon arrival, a sponsored refugee is treated as a “temporary resident.” They are granted a two-year residence permit, renewable by one year, after which they are eligible for permanent resident status.¹³⁰ They can also apply for asylum and recognition of their refugee status on arrival.¹³¹ Although sponsors make a one-year financial commitment upfront, they remain responsible for maintenance costs until the refugee leaves the country or acquires permanent resident status, and the government does not provide any resettlement assistance. The cost of accommodation and maintenance is not specifically quantified, and services or integration assistance beyond the financial are not specified either.¹³²

France

¹²⁶ Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute* “Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union,” Dec. 2015, p. 30, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>; Frederick Bernas, *UNHCR*, “Syrian Refugees Reap Benefits of Argentina’s New Visa Rules,” Nov. 10, 2017, “<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/stories/2017/11/5a0586774/syrian-refugees-reap-benefits-argentinas-new-visa-rules.html>.”

¹²⁷ Argentina, Ministerio Del Interior y Transporte, *Thomson Reuters*, “Programa Especial de Visado Humanitario para extranjeros afectados por el conflicto de la Republica Árabe Siria. Prórroga de la vigencia,” Sept. 22, 2015, <http://thomsonreuterslatam.com/2015/09/programa-especial-de-visado-humanitario-para-extranjeros-afectados-por-el-conflicto-de-la-republica-arabe-siria-prorroga-de-la-vigencia/>.

¹²⁸ Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “Programa Siria: Cartilla Informativa,” p. 3, <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/pdf/CARTILLA%20POTENCIALES%20BENEFICIARIOS.pdf>; Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “Programa Siria: Recomendaciones Para Llamantes - Requerentes,” p. 4, <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/indexSiria.php?docform>.

¹²⁹ Argentina, Ministerio Del Interior y Transporte, *Thomson Reuters*, “Programa Especial de Visado Humanitario para extranjeros afectados por el conflicto de la Republica Árabe Siria. Prórroga de la vigencia,” Sept. 22, 2015, <http://thomsonreuterslatam.com/2015/09/programa-especial-de-visado-humanitario-para-extranjeros-afectados-por-el-conflicto-de-la-republica-arabe-siria-prorroga-de-la-vigencia/>.

¹³⁰ Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, “Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union,” Dec. 2015, p. 5, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>.

¹³¹ Government of Argentina, Ministry of the Interior, Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “Special Humanitarian Visa Program: Integration,” <http://www.migraciones.gov.ar/programasiria/indexSiria.php?integracion>.

¹³² Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, “Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union,” Dec. 2015, p. 5, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>.

Prior to its Humanitarian Corridors program, France already had an infrequently-used humanitarian visa pathway allowing individual French residents or organizations to sponsor an asylum-seeker located outside of the country.¹³³ These “national D-type” visas are the same type of long-stay visa the French government issues to people coming to France for family or business. When used in the humanitarian context, they are typically known as “*visas asile*.”¹³⁴

French humanitarian visas in this context are relatively ad hoc, as the criteria for issuing them is not codified in legislation. Visa issuance is entirely discretionary and does not necessarily have significant private sector involvement.¹³⁵ More recently, however, humanitarian visas have been used in a more formal way: beginning in 2014, faith-based organizations and religious communities approached the French government about issuing visas to persecuted minorities in the Middle East. This humanitarian visa pathway is ongoing.¹³⁶

From 2012 to 2016, over 400 of the 8,900 asylum-seekers who arrived with a humanitarian visa were legally assisted and resettled through private resources of family members, local networks, and religious dioceses led by the Catholic Church’s Order of Malta.¹³⁷ The French government has not described it as a private sponsorship scheme,¹³⁸ but as a scheme that combines private actors and significant private resources with a humanitarian visa, it fits in this category of hybrid humanitarian visa/private sponsorship programs.

In addition to providing useful experience for a more formalized pathway (the Humanitarian Corridors program), this visa program has enabled France to provide safety to a significant number of people above and beyond those resettled via UNHCR. Although the vulnerability profile of beneficiaries may vary, the program’s flexibility has allowed it to encompass

¹³³ Claire Higgins, The Lowy Institute, *The Interpreter*, “Humanitarian Corridors: Safe Passage but Only for a Few,” Aug. 4, 2017, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/humanitarian-corridors-safe-passage-only-for-few>; European Migration Network+, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?,” p. 39, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹³⁴ European Migration Network+, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?,” p. 10, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³⁶ European Resettlement Network+, “Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement,” Sept. 2017, p. 21, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>.

¹³⁷ European Migration Network, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?,” p. 21, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

certain vulnerable individuals not eligible for traditional resettlement, such as persecuted minority Iraqi nationals who have not been able to flee outside their country.¹³⁹

1) Selecting Sponsors

Any private French citizen or organization may propose to sponsor an individual for a humanitarian visa. The pathway remains open to persons with no sponsor, though most humanitarian visas are issued to sponsored individuals.¹⁴⁰ Refugees already in France through resettlement or successful asylum applications can use the humanitarian visa pathway to reunite with extended family members with whom their relationship would not qualify under France's normal family reunification provisions. The sponsoring family members might receive support from NGOs or religious organizations, as Iraqi refugees have from the Order of Malta.¹⁴¹

Organizations, especially religious organizations, also often serve as sponsors. This can be ad hoc, as with proposals by private citizens or family members to sponsor, but since 2014 have typically occurred through a more streamlined procedure between religious organizations and the French Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs.¹⁴²

2) Selecting Refugees

Criteria for issuing humanitarian visas are not codified, so there are no formal eligibility restrictions. Beneficiaries can, in theory, come from any country of origin or country of first asylum. UNHCR recognition is not required: beneficiaries might be Convention refugees, non-Convention displaced persons, or persons who have not yet been displaced but are being persecuted and are in need of protection.¹⁴³ The European Resettlement Network has noted that “in the absence of a legislative definition, in practice, non-displaced persons [who receive French humanitarian visas] are those with a specific profile which gives rise to a certain risk factor, for example journalists, human rights activists, LGBTI persons.”¹⁴⁴

Where private resources are involved, a French resident or organization can name the particular beneficiary and commit to financially supporting the new arrival, after which the

¹³⁹ European Resettlement Network+, “Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement,” Sept. 2017, p. 32, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ European Resettlement Network+, “Feasibility Study: Towards a Private Sponsorship Model in France,” Apr. 2017, p. 11 and p. 14, footnote 23, <http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/ERN%2B%20Private%20Sponsorship%20Feasibility%20Study%20-%20Towards%20a%20Private%20Sponsorship%20Model%20in%20France.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 10, footnote 22.

named beneficiary would apply at the consulate in their current country of first asylum.¹⁴⁵ When considering an application, the Ministry of Interior Affairs might ask the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons for an opinion on the applicant's need for protection.¹⁴⁶ The pathway has been frequently used by Iraqi refugees who arrived in France in the late 2000s and early 2010s to reunite with family members.¹⁴⁷

Faith-based organizations and communities approached the French government in 2014 about humanitarian visas in response to persecution of minorities in the Middle East, particularly by the Islamic State in Iraq. The French Ministries of the Interior and of Foreign Affairs began utilizing the Erbil and Baghdad consulates to consider visa requests by persecuted minority Iraqi nationals. A government information note, as summarized by the European Resettlement Network, described eligibility here as “persons fearing serious threat or personal persecution who have close family in France or strong ties with France or are in a situation of specific vulnerability.”¹⁴⁸

This de facto program expanded soon after to Syrian nationals living in Turkey, Jordan, or Lebanon, with no religious restrictions. The number of humanitarian visas rose significantly in the following years.¹⁴⁹

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

Again, in light of the general lack of codification, there are no universal formal obligations. In practice, sponsors take on the basic costs of travel, accommodation, and basic needs upon arrival. The faith-based organizations and communities that approached the French government in 2014 agreed to take on the expenses of travel, reception, and accommodation for beneficiaries. They also might step in when individual sponsors, such as families, struggle to provide necessary assistance to the beneficiaries they have agreed to sponsor. Over the past few years, some of these services have become more streamlined. For example, the Federation of Protestant Mutual Aid began coordinating a reception network of volunteers and churches for sponsored Syrians, while the Order of Malta created an assistance program for

¹⁴⁵ Claire Higgins, The Lowy Institute, *The Interpreter*, “Humanitarian Corridors: Safe Passage but Only for a Few,” Aug. 4, 2017, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/humanitarian-corridors-safe-passage-only-for-few>; European Migration Network, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?,” p. 39, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹⁴⁶ European Resettlement Network+, “Feasibility Study: Towards a Private Sponsorship Model in France,” Apr. 2017, p. 10, <http://www.resettlement.eu/sites/icmc/files/ERN%2B%20Private%20Sponsorship%20Feasibility%20Study%20-%20Towards%20a%20Private%20Sponsorship%20Model%20in%20France.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Iraqi humanitarian visa recipients that covers French language courses, employment guidance, and integration assistance.¹⁵⁰

Switzerland

From September to November 2013, Switzerland offered a “facilitated family reunification program” for Syrians with refugee status or permanent residence in Switzerland. This was an expansion on a previous program, which allowed Swiss residents to bring members of their “core” family (spouse and children under 18) to Switzerland. The September 2013 expansion made a broader range of family relationship, detailed below, eligible for sponsorship. Initially the program had no financial or material sponsorship component, but an amendment in November 2013 stipulated that the sponsor be able to cover significant costs for beneficiaries.

The program received over 8,200 applications over its short lifespan. Processing continued for applications already filed by the 29 November 2013 program termination, and eventually a total of 4,700 visas were granted.¹⁵¹ While the program had no quota or target number, most media reports suggest that the Swiss government expected far fewer applications and that the financial requirements for sponsorship, as well as the program’s fast termination, were due to the unexpectedly high volume of applications.¹⁵² Though the program did not consider vulnerability criteria, it did allow for family reunification between relatives beyond the more restrictive relationships provided for in the normal Swiss family reunification program. The overwhelming interest in the 2013 program suggests that any future private sponsorship program would likely be viable.

1) Selecting Sponsors

A sponsor had to have legal status in Switzerland and bear a qualifying family relationship with the desired Syrian beneficiaries. The sponsor could be a Swiss citizen, or could have some other kind of legal residence, including that of a resettled refugee or successful asylum-seeker.

2) Selecting Refugees

To be eligible for sponsorship, the beneficiary needed a family relationship to a relative with legal status in Switzerland: “core family,” i.e. spouses and children under 18 years; relatives

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵¹ Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, “Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union,” Dec. 2015, p. 33, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 18, footnote 76; Ray Smith, *Inter Press Service*, “Swiss Spring for Syrian Refugees Passes,” Jan. 25, 2014, http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/01/swiss-spring-syrian-refugees-passes/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=swiss-spring-syrian-refugees-passes.

in ascending and descending line and their core family, i.e. grandparents, parents, children over 17 years, grandchildren); and siblings and their core family. At the time of application, the beneficiary was required to have left Syria after the start of the crisis in March 2011, to be in Syria, Egypt, or one of Syria's neighboring countries, and to not have an ordinary residence permit in any of those countries.¹⁵³

C. Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

Initially the facilitated family reunification program did not have a sponsorship element, but on November 4, 2013 an amendment was introduced requiring the host (sponsor) to demonstrate sufficient living space and funds to provide for invited family members.¹⁵⁴ This transformed the program from a basic family reunification program into a private sponsorship program. The level of financial resources required for a warranty statement varied by state (canton), but some demanded a warranty statement of 30,000 Swiss francs, roughly 30,000 USD at the time.¹⁵⁵ The government bore no costs of resettlement.

A potential sponsor would send documents proving the family relationship to the potential beneficiary, and the beneficiary would approach the closest Swiss embassy and apply for a Limited Territorial Visa, valid for entry into Switzerland and a stay of 90 days. The costs of travel and the visa were paid by the relatives in Switzerland or the applicants themselves. Once in Switzerland, the beneficiaries would apply for asylum or, more commonly, temporary protection.¹⁵⁶

Poland

Both Poland and Slovakia (see next section) utilized ad hoc programs and private resources in 2015 to resettle a small number of Christian refugees from Syria and Iraq.

Upon the proposal of the Eстера Foundation, a Polish Protestant NGO, Poland agreed in spring and summer of 2015 to take in 50-60 Christian Syrian refugee families. The Eстера Foundation

¹⁵³ Seraina Nufer, *Rights in Exile*, "Facilitations for Family Reunification of Syrian Refugees in Switzerland," Sept. 30, 2013, <http://rightsixinexile.tumblr.com/post/62780995243/facilitations-for-family-reunification-of-syrian>.

¹⁵⁴ Judith Kumin, *Migration Policy Institute*, "Welcoming Private Engagement: How Private Sponsorship Can Strengthen Refugee Resettlement in the European Union," Dec. 2015, p. 33, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/welcoming-engagement-how-private-sponsorship-can-strengthen-refugee-resettlement-european>

¹⁵⁵ Asylum Information Database, "Swiss Government Reinstates Restrictions for Non-Core Relatives in Syria to Join Family in Switzerland," Dec. 9, 2013, <http://www.asylumineurope.org/news/09-12-2013/swiss-government-reinstates-restrictions-non-core-relatives-syria-join-family>.

¹⁵⁶ Seraina Nufer, *Rights in Exile*, "Facilitations for Family Reunification of Syrian Refugees in Switzerland," Sept. 30, 2013, <http://rightsixinexile.tumblr.com/post/62780995243/facilitations-for-family-reunification-of-syrian>.

proposed that charities, businesses, or churches cover these refugees' living costs.¹⁵⁷ Estera was involved in the selection of candidates with the Polish Foreign Ministry, as well as their travel and integration upon arriving in Poland.¹⁵⁸ To be eligible, refugees had to show their certificate of baptism and be recommended by clergymen.¹⁵⁹

The 158 refugees were given visas at the Polish embassy in Beirut, and then traveled on a specially-chartered plane to Warsaw.¹⁶⁰ Each family was assigned to a Christian community—local communities, parishes, or Polish families—to help them integrate and given permanent resident status.¹⁶¹ In addition to paying for the refugees' travel costs, Estera also covered their living expenses for a year after arrival and Polish language education.¹⁶² The Polish government covered refugees' healthcare costs for that time period.¹⁶³ A significant part of Estera's funding for the program came from the UK-based Barnabas Fund.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ Associated Foreign Press, *Daily Mail*, "Poland Offers Asylum to Christian Syrian Refugees," May 26, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3097967/Poland-offers-asylum-Christian-Syrian-refugees.html>.

¹⁵⁸ European Migration Network, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?," p. 23, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Foy, *Financial Times*, "Poland Favors Christian Refugees from Syria," Aug. 1, 2015, <https://www.ft.com/content/6edfdd30-472a-11e5-b3b2-1672f710807b>.

¹⁶⁰ Radio Poland, *Thenews.pl*, "50 Syrian Christian Families Arrive in Warsaw," July 11, 2015, <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/213366.50-Syrian-Christian-families-arrive-in-Warsaw>.

¹⁶¹ Natalie Ojewska, *Al Jazeera*, "Poland's Modest Refugee Policy Proves Controversial," Nov. 9, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/11/poland-modest-refugee-policy-proves-controversial-151101102513587.html>; European Migration Network, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?," p. 23, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

¹⁶² Estera Foundation, <http://web.archive.org/web/20170822195248/http://fundacjaestera.pl/en/activity.php> (archived Aug. 22, 2017)

¹⁶³ Henry Foy, *Financial Times*, "Poland Favors Christian Refugees from Syria," Aug. 1, 2015, <https://www.ft.com/content/6edfdd30-472a-11e5-b3b2-1672f710807b>.

¹⁶⁴ Associated Foreign Press, *The Sun Daily*, "Syrian Christians Find Sanctuary with Polish Families," July 20, 2015, <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/1494733>; European Migration Network, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works?," p. 38-40, Nov. 9, 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-00_resettlement_synthesis_report_final_en.pdf.

Since the end of this initial program, the Polish government has reportedly considered opening a humanitarian corridor program,¹⁶⁵ potentially to bring Christian Syrians with serious medical needs to the country for treatment.¹⁶⁶

Such a humanitarian corridor would consider a vulnerability—in this case, serious medical needs—in a way that the previous program did not. Future programs will have significant experience to draw on and could consider not only vulnerability criteria but also a pool of potential beneficiaries expanded beyond members of the Christian faith.

Slovakia

Similarly, a group of private actors collaborated with the Slovakian government in 2015 for an ad hoc program combining elements of humanitarian admission with private sponsorship.¹⁶⁷ The program, however, was initiated abroad when a team of largely U.S.-based religious freedom advocates advocated and fundraised for the resettlement of internally-displaced Iraqi Christians fleeing the Islamic State in Kurdistan. The effort included Nina Shea, director of the U.S.-based Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute; American talk-show host Glenn Beck; a Chaldean-Catholic priest running a camp for displaced Christians in Erbil; and Slovak-Catholic priests and officials.¹⁶⁸

The team hired a specialist to conduct interviews with potentially suitable candidates at the camp,¹⁶⁹ and then paid for an interpreter to support Slovakia's Ministry of the Interior staff's personal interviews with the families.¹⁷⁰ The team covered the costs of government security checks and a final list of candidates was approved by Slovakia's Prime Minister and Minister of

¹⁶⁵ Domenico Agassor Jr., Vatican Insider World News, *LaStampa.it*, "Polish Church Chooses Humanitarian Corridors for Refugees," June 9, 2016, <http://www.lastampa.it/2016/06/09/vaticaninsider/polish-church-chooses-humanitarian-corridors-for-refugees-hFvgcpuNEoeFpi06YIDvnK/pagina.html>.

¹⁶⁶ Associated Press, *VOA News*, "Poland Weighs Bringing Refugees in for Medical Treatment," Dec. 29, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/poland-weighs-bringing-refugees-in-for-medical-treatment/4184982.html>.

¹⁶⁷ European Migration Network, "EMN Focussed Study 2016: Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe – What Works? Top-line "Factsheet" (National Contribution) - Slovakia," Nov. 2016, p. 2, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/24a_slovak_resettlement_and_humanitarian_admission_en.pdf.

¹⁶⁸ Joan Frawley Desmond, *National Catholic Register*, "Private U.S.-Led Resettlement of Iraqi Christians Offers Model," Jan. 20, 2016, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/u.s.-led-resettlement-of-iraqi-christians-offers-model>.

¹⁶⁹ Joan Frawley Desmond, *National Catholic Register*, "Private U.S.-Led Resettlement of Iraqi Christians Offers Model," Jan. 20, 2016, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/u.s.-led-resettlement-of-iraqi-christians-offers-model>.

¹⁷⁰ European Migration Network, "EMN Focussed Study 2016: Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe – What Works? Top-line "Factsheet" (National Contribution) - Slovakia," Nov. 2016, p. 2, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/24a_slovak_resettlement_and_humanitarian_admission_en.pdf.

the Interior.¹⁷¹ The NGOs and church groups paid to transfer 149 Iraqi Christian IDPs to Slovakia, where they were quarantined for about two months in a reception center until formally obtaining asylum.¹⁷² These private actors committed to cover accommodation, living costs, and comprehensive immigration services for three years after arrival.¹⁷³ The Ministry of Interior maintains a monitoring and guidance role to ensure that the program's services are properly administered.¹⁷⁴

The program has not yet been extended or repeated, and by mid-2017 about half the Iraqi Christians who came through the program had reportedly returned home to Kurdistan despite the significant three-year period of accommodation, living expenses, and integration assistance provided.¹⁷⁵ Given its role in overseeing the program's implementation, Slovakia's Ministry of Interior could utilize this experience in the future to provide a pathway for a broader pool of refugees or internally displaced persons with an integration process informed by practical experience.

VI. Humanitarian Corridors

The trio of Humanitarian Corridors programs in Italy, France, and Belgium began as a pilot in 2015, when three major religious organizations agreed with the Italian government to organize and finance 1,000 humanitarian visas to Italy. Like the programs in Argentina, Switzerland, Poland, and Slovakia, they are hybrid private sponsorship-humanitarian visa programs. Recipients are given visas to come to the country, where they are then able to claim asylum. The private religious organizations and their constituents cover all costs.

The Corridors programs, however, are more formalized than many humanitarian visa programs. They exist in countries that also have traditional government-led resettlement programs and constitute a pathway alternate to that resettlement. All three programs simultaneously give significant consideration to potential beneficiaries' vulnerability and create a pathway for beneficiaries who might not be able to receive UNHCR recognition as refugees or qualify for resettlement as a family unit under the requirements for traditional resettlement. Although their level of formalization and institutionalization resemble that of a private sponsorship resettlement program, they retain a degree of flexibility that may make them more nimble and adaptable to changing on-the-ground needs of refugee populations.

After the initial success of the Italian Humanitarian Corridors program, the model has been extended in Italy and replicated in France and Belgium. The Corridors programs at present seem likely to be renewed and potentially expanded to other countries.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 2, 4.

¹⁷³ Ibid., pp. 38-40.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷⁵ Roman Cuprik, *The Slovak Spectator*, "Asylum Seekers Avoid Slovakia," July 11, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20579285/asylum-seekers-avoid-slovakia.html>.

Italy

In 2015, three religious organizations, working with IOM and UNHCR, designed a pilot Humanitarian Corridors program and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Italian government.¹⁷⁶ The program would create a safe and legal “corridor,” or means of traveling between a refugee’s country of first asylum and Italy, where they could request legal recognition as asylum-seekers.

The Italian government agreed to issue 1,000 humanitarian visas over a two-year term.¹⁷⁷ The religious organizations work alongside the government, but the Humanitarian Corridors program is funded entirely with private resources.¹⁷⁸ The pilot program’s success thus far has spawned an expansion in the Italian context, as well as pilots on the same model in France and Belgium, detailed below.

1) *Selecting Sponsors*

Three religious organizations—the Community of Sant’Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches, and the Waldesian Church—created the program and signed an MOU with the Italian government. The organizations bear all financial responsibility for the Humanitarian Corridors program, but they draw on their constituents and local networks for both financial and logistical resources in providing for the program’s beneficiaries.

2) *Selecting Refugees*

The Italian government agreed to issue 1,000 humanitarian visas over a two-year term of the pilot. Syrians, Palestinians who had been living in Syria, and Iraqi refugees currently living in Lebanon were eligible. Later the program expanded so that refugees living in Morocco and then Ethiopia were eligible.¹⁷⁹ The sponsoring religious organizations work in partnership with local actors and UNHCR in countries of first asylum to identify potential beneficiaries, who

¹⁷⁶ Michael Collyer, Maria Mancinelli, and Fabio Petito, *University of Sussex*, “Policy Briefing: Humanitarian Corridors: Safe and Legal Pathways to Europe,” Autumn 2017, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=3927-hc-policy-briefing-july2017-web.pdf&site=11>.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

are selected according to UNHCR vulnerability criteria¹⁸⁰—such as individuals with serious disabilities or health problems, or single mothers with young children.¹⁸¹

However, beneficiaries need not be eligible for or have received official recognition of their refugee status by UNHCR, as the program is designed to also consider persons with extreme vulnerability at risk of trafficking even if they do not fall strictly within the Geneva Convention’s definition.¹⁸²

For refugees coming from Lebanon, after multiple interviews by the sponsoring organization, both the Italian embassy in Lebanon and Lebanese security officials run security checks with biometric identification. The list of candidates who pass these initial stages is screened by Italy’s Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, which will issue a visa or a laissez-passer document for those without passports to travel.¹⁸³ When their flight arrives in Rome, beneficiaries are met at the airport by volunteers who support them as they claim asylum. They receive a formal decision about their asylum claim within six months; the process is accelerated because of the screening that occurred pre-departure. After processing, beneficiaries are given a renewable five-year permit of stay.¹⁸⁴

3) Scope of Sponsors’ Obligations

The ecumenical groups are responsible for financial and material needs of beneficiaries—visa fees, travel to Italy, medical exams, housing and household expenses, food, healthcare, Italian language courses, legal assistance—as well as for social support, intercultural mediation, job search assistance, and integration into the education system.¹⁸⁵ The

¹⁸⁰ Legal and/or Physical Protection Needs, Survivors of Torture and/or Violence, Medical Needs, Women and Girls at Risk, Family Reunification, Children and Adolescents at Risk Lack of Foreseeable Alternative Durable Solutions. UNHCR, “Principles of Resettlement: Resettlement Criteria,” p. 3, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/resettlement/558c015e9/resettlement-criteria.html>.

¹⁸¹ Michael Collyer, Maria Mancinelli, and Fabio Petito, *University of Sussex*, “Policy Briefing: Humanitarian Corridors: Safe and Legal Pathways to Europe,” Autumn 2017, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=3927-hc-policy-briefing-july2017-web.pdf&site=11>; Megan Williams, *CBC*, “Italy’s Humanitarian Corridor for Migrants Provides Safe Alternative to Smugglers’ Route,” June 17, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/migrants-refugees-sicily-1.3636456>.

¹⁸² European Migration Network, “Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works? Common Template of EMN Focussed Study 2016 - Italy,” p. 36, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-15a_italy_resettlement_study_national_report.pdf.

¹⁸³ Michael Collyer, Maria Mancinelli, and Fabio Petito, *University of Sussex*, “Policy Briefing: Humanitarian Corridors: Safe and Legal Pathways to Europe,” Autumn 2017, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=3927-hc-policy-briefing-july2017-web.pdf&site=11>.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ European Resettlement Network+, Webinar Powerpoint, “Humanitarian Corridors Programme: Accessing Protection in Safety and Dignity,” 23 Feb. 2017, http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.ttp.eu/files/Humanitarian%20Corridors%20Italy_Giulia%20Gori_FCEI_F

sponsoring organizations are assisted in the latter activities by broad volunteer networks across the country. Beneficiaries are placed upon arrival in local communities, where individuals, churches, and associations host them and support their integration.¹⁸⁶ A flexible framework allows each of the three sponsoring organizations to configure its reception and integration process.¹⁸⁷

This decentralization and variation can make expansion of the program more difficult. In particular, there are no formal guidelines on the sponsor's commitments and responsibilities—including how long the sponsor's financial and/or social assistance should last after a beneficiary's arrival.¹⁸⁸

France

In early 2017, France established a Humanitarian Corridors agreement similar to Italy's, thus creating the first replication of the Italian pilot.¹⁸⁹ This program exists in addition to France's informal humanitarian visa pathway, described above. Five faith-based organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, committing to privately sponsor 500 individuals who had fled either Syria or Iraq and currently live in Lebanon.¹⁹⁰

[eb%202017.pdf](#); European Migration Network, "Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes in Europe - What Works? Common Template of EMN Focussed Study 2016 - Italy," p. 39, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/emn-studies-15a_italy_resettlement_study_national_report.pdf.

¹⁸⁶ EMN Focussed Study – Italy, p. 38; Michael Collyer, Maria Mancinelli, Fabio Petito, University of Sussex, "Policy Briefing: Humanitarian Corridors: Safe and Legal Pathways to Europe," Autumn 2017, <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=3927-hc-policy-briefing-july2017-web.pdf&site=11>.

¹⁸⁷ European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 22, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ Megan Williams, *CBC*, "Italy's Humanitarian Corridor for Migrants Provides Safe Alternative to Smugglers' Route," June 17, 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/migrants-refugees-sicily-1.3636456>; European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 19-20, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ Fédération Entraide Protestante, Press Release, "Mise en place des "couloirs humanitaires" en France : un projet oecuménique et citoyen innovant pour l'Europe pour un accueil des réfugiés les plus vulnérables," March 2017, http://www.fep.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/DP_Couloirs-humanitaires-France.pdf; Andrea Riccardo, *Sant'Egidio*, "Humanitarian Corridors for Refugees in France are Now Open, The Agreement was Signed at the Elysée," March 14, 2017, <https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30284/langID/fr/itemID/20256/Des-couloirs-humanitaires-pour-les-r%C3%A9fugi%C3%A9s-en-France-%C3%A0-partir-d'aujourd'hui--l'accord-sign%C3%A9-ce-matin-%C3%A0-l'Élys%C3%A9e.html>.

¹⁹⁰ European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 21-22, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>; Fédération Entraide Protestante, "Les couloirs humanitaires,"

Arrivals began in July 2017 with several families, who were settled with hosts in five small municipalities.¹⁹¹

1) Selecting Sponsors

The sponsoring organizations include the Community of Sant'Egidio, a key party to the Italian program, as well as two Protestant organizations, the Bishops' Conference of France, and the French branch of Caritas.¹⁹²

2) Selecting Refugees

The program is designed to benefit refugees who had fled from Syria—including Palestinians living in Syria prior to conflict—and from Iraq to Lebanon. Sponsoring organizations are responsible for identification and selection, working with local referral networks in Lebanon to identify and interview potential candidates. They then submit their list, along with a completed visa application for each candidate, to the French Embassy in Beirut, which works with the Ministry of Interior to conduct security screening. The Embassy and Ministry make a decision within two months and if a candidate is approved, the Lebanese government issues an exit permit. Formal recognition of refugee status by UNHCR is not an eligibility requirement so long as a candidate meets criteria of significant vulnerability.¹⁹³

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

The sponsoring organizations pay for flight costs, provided at a 50% discount by Air France, from Lebanon to France.¹⁹⁴ Upon arrival, the refugees are given a long-stay permit¹⁹⁵ and

<http://www.fep.asso.fr/vie-federative/vie-de-la-federation/la-plateforme-protestante-pour-laccueil-de-refugies/les-couloirs-humanitaires/>.

¹⁹¹ European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 21, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>; Claire Higgins, The Lowy Institute, *The Interpreter*, "Humanitarian Corridors: Safe Passage but Only for a Few," Aug. 4, 2017, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/humanitarian-corridors-safe-passage-only-for-few>.

¹⁹² European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 21, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>; Fédération Entraide Protestante, "Les couloirs humanitaires," <http://www.fep.asso.fr/vie-federative/vie-de-la-federation/la-plateforme-protestante-pour-laccueil-de-refugies/les-couloirs-humanitaires/>.

¹⁹³ European Resettlement Network+, "Private Sponsorship in Europe: Expanding Complementary Pathways for Refugee Resettlement," Sept. 2017, p. 22-23, <https://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/scoping-paper-icmc-europe-2017.pdf>.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

must register within 15 days after arrival to claim asylum. They do not have permission to work until they are granted asylum status, a decision which is made within three months.¹⁹⁶

Funding from the five sponsoring organizations is supplemented by support from churches, local networks, groups of private citizens, and local authorities—grouped in small teams and with support from social workers—to cover accommodation, economic support for resettlement, and social support for integration.¹⁹⁷ The sponsoring organizations match beneficiaries with volunteer hosts. These hosts, along with the beneficiaries, sign a contract outlining the condition, length, and responsibilities of the stay with regards to accommodation, economic support, and social support. Requirements are unspecified in the MOU, so these contracts vary at the discretion of the sponsoring organizations and hosts.¹⁹⁸

Belgium

The most recent Humanitarian Corridor program was established in Belgium in November 2017 through a statement of intent signed by the Belgian Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration and representatives of officially-recognized religions.¹⁹⁹ The 150 Syrian refugees who come through the Humanitarian Corridor will be in addition to the 1,150 refugees Belgium committed to resettle through its traditional government resettlement program this year.²⁰⁰ The first two families arrived at the end of 2017, an additional seven families arrived in late March 2018, and ten more families arrived in early June 2018.²⁰¹ As of June 2018, a total of 72 Syrian refugees had been welcomed to Belgium through the Humanitarian Corridor.²⁰²

1) Selecting Sponsors

Sponsors are organizations and religious communities of government-recognized religions. The majority are Catholic dioceses operating in collaboration with the Belgian branch of Caritas

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹⁹ Oscar Schneider, *The Brussels Times*, “150 Syrian Asylum Seekers Due to Be Welcomed in Belgium by Religious Communities,” Nov. 22, 2017, <http://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/9618/150-syrian-asylum-seekers-welcomed-in-belgium-by-religious-communities>.

²⁰⁰ Christian Laporte, *LaLibre.be*, “Les cultes organisent un couloir humanitaire pour accueillir 150 réfugiés syriens en Belgique,” Nov. 21, 2017, <https://emnbelgium.be/news/humanitarian-corridor-welcome-150-asylum-seekers-syria>.

²⁰¹ Radio Télévision Belge Francophone, *RTBF.be*, “Sept nouvelles familles syriennes sont arrivées en Belgique via le “couloir humanitaire,” March 26, 2018, https://www.rtb.be/info/belgique/detail_sept-nouvelles-familles-syriennes-sont-arrivees-en-belgique-via-le-couloir-humanitaire?id=9876881.

²⁰² Sant’Egidio, “Humanitarian Corridors in Belgium: Europe That Welcomes,” June 8, 2018, <https://www.santegidio.org/pageID/30284/langID/en/itemID/26000/Humanitarian-corridors-in-Belgium-Europe-that-welcomes.html>.

International, but other Christian denominations as well as Jewish and Muslim communities are to have a role in the program.²⁰³

2) Selecting Refugees

The program is open to 150 Syrian refugees, primarily individuals who are elderly, have young children, or who have specialist medical needs. They will undergo initial screening in Turkey and Lebanon before traveling on humanitarian visas to Belgium, where they then claim asylum in-country.²⁰⁴

3) Scope of Sponsors' Obligations

Instead of Fedasil, the government agency normally responsible for the reception of asylum-seekers, the Humanitarian Corridor arrivals will be accommodated by the sponsoring religious communities. The sponsors are solely responsible for financing the selected refugees' travel, reception, and a one-year integration support program.²⁰⁵

VII. A Note on Public-Private Co-Sponsorship in the United States

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) has always been, to some degree, a public-private partnership: nine private resettlement agencies and hundreds of their local affiliate organizations partner with the federal government to resettle and integrate refugees. A combination of resettlement agencies' private fundraising and congressionally-allocated federal funding covers resettlement costs.

In the late 1980s, then-President Ronald Reagan created the Private Sector Initiative (PSI) and established a special quota for the admission of refugees that would be supported by private sector funding, in addition to refugees supported by government funds. While 16,000 refugees were admitted through the PSI in five years, the program was discontinued in 1996 due to the steep and variable financial requirements for sponsors—in particular, around the health care costs of refugees—and a complex process for approving sponsors.²⁰⁶

With significant coverage of the Canadian private sponsorship program in U.S. media over the past few years, the question of private sponsorship in USRAP has resurfaced. A private

²⁰³ Christian Laporte, *LaLibre.be*, "Les cultes organisent un couloir humanitaire pour accueillir 150 réfugiés syriens en Belgique," Nov. 21, 2017, <https://emnbelgium.be/news/humanitarian-corridor-welcome-150-asylum-seekers-syria>.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ International Refugee Assistance Project and Human Rights First, "Private Sponsorship of Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Guiding Principles and Recommendations," Oct. 2016, https://www.refugeerights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Private-Sponsorship-of-Refugees-in-the-United-States_White-Paper.pdf.

sponsorship program with additionality is unlikely in the current political environment, but has been discussed as a means of supplementing federal funding for refugee integration. “Co-sponsorship programs” in which private groups partner with local agency affiliate offices to financially and logistically help resettle a refugee family already scheduled to arrive via USRAP continue on an ad hoc basis.²⁰⁷

Conclusion

Though often described solely as an alternative and complementary pathway, private sponsorship is better understood as the utilization of private sector resources to enable either resettlement or the alternative and complementary pathway of humanitarian visas. Sponsorship functions as resettlement in the Canadian model and in similar “traditional” private sponsorship programs; it operates as an alternative and complementary pathway in hybrid private sponsorship-humanitarian visa programs and in their more formalized sister model of Humanitarian Corridors.

As the programs surveyed above indicate, private sponsorship’s parameters can vary to best suit the interests of state and sponsor and to best target the desired beneficiary pool.

The distinction between resettlement and ACP is important to understand the different ways in which the private sector can engage in creating opportunities for refugees to reach a safe country. The three categories analyzed also demonstrate how shorter-term, smaller-scale, and/or more informal pilots—often utilizing humanitarian visas as an alternative and complementary pathway—can allow states to experiment with private sector engagement and develop experience foundational to either a resettlement-style private sponsorship program or a renewed and more formalized humanitarian visa program. Both of these potential outcomes may increase the number of slots available for refugees in safe countries and/or the resources available to help them upon arrival.

A few of the short-term programs have concluded, but in most cases the concept of private sponsorship is spreading. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is working to export and adapt the Canadian model to several other countries, including Argentina and the United Arab Emirates as well as Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.²⁰⁸ The success of the Italian Humanitarian Corridors program has spawned very similar hybrid private sponsorship-humanitarian visa programs in France and Belgium. In both cases, the models have potential for further expansion as countries realize the potential benefits of sponsorship.

²⁰⁷ Integrated Refugee & Immigration Services, “Community Co-Sponsorship,” <http://www.irisct.org/community-co-sponsorship/> (last accessed 27 May 2018).

²⁰⁸ Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, Press Release, “Five Countries Working on New Refugee Sponsorship Programs; Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) Launches Guidebook to Share Best Practices,” Sept. 18, 2017, <http://www.refugeesponsorship.org/uploads/59bff91a4ec65.pdf>.

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