



# CHAPTER 1.3

## Laying the Foundations for Integration: Planning Goals



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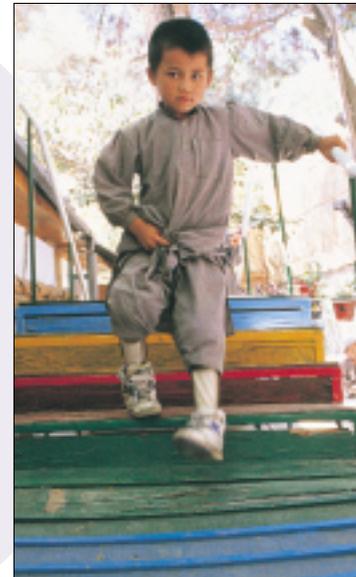
## Laying the Foundations for Integration: Planning Goals



GOALS

### **The nature of the refugee and integration experiences: Implications for planning**

There is considerable variation in conditions in refugee source countries and countries of refuge and in the experiences of both individuals and groups of refugees. Nevertheless, research and the experience of refugees and those working with them suggest that there are a number of elements often present in refugees' countries-of-origin. These elements, documented in the first column of Figure One (overleaf) give rise to common experiences responsible for producing refugee flows (see column two). Many of these experiences will also have been a feature of the lives of refugees in countries of refuge. While the personal and psychological consequences of these experiences will clearly differ for individual refugees, a number of common patterns can be discerned (see columns three and four).



This understanding, explored in greater detail below, provides a broad framework for anticipating the conditions refugees are likely to have been exposed to prior to their arrival in resettlement countries, and the implications of these for planning and providing integration support. It provides the basis for developing specific goals for planning refugee integration in countries of resettlement (see column five).

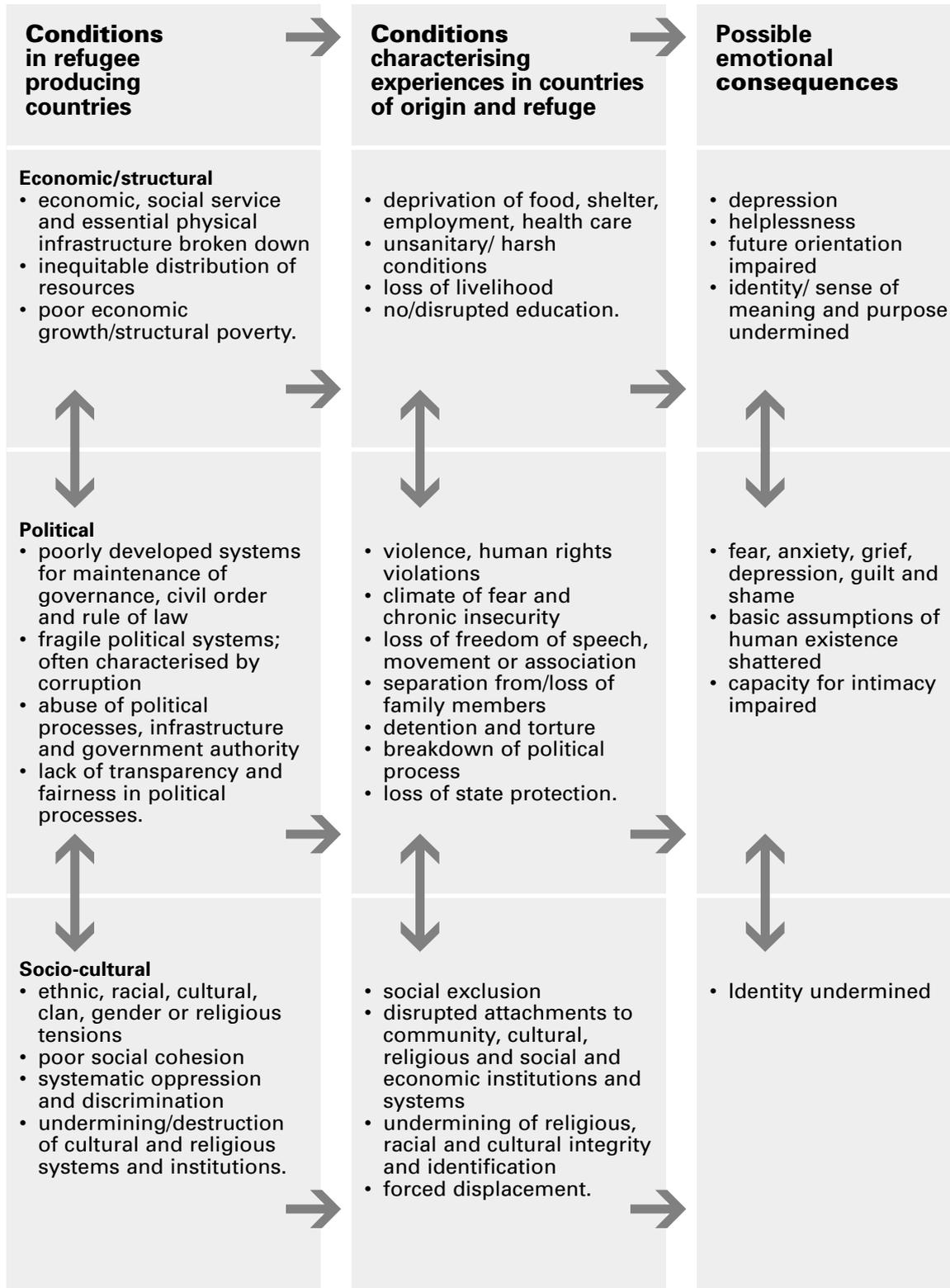
### **Conditions and experiences in refugees' countries-of-origin and of initial refuge and their consequences for resettled refugees**

#### Economic and material conditions

Loss of livelihood and shelter and exposure to harsh and unsanitary conditions are an almost inevitable consequence of forced displacement. Many people will have endured a long and hazardous escape from their countries-of-origin, during which they lacked access to food and water and faced threats to their personal safety.



➔ **Figure One:**  
**A framework for planning refugee integration programs**



### Possible personal and social consequences

- social and economic dependency
- loss of control
- poor health
- education/employment skills impaired.



- lack/loss of family support
- changed family relationships
- loss of trust
- personal boundaries invaded
- lack of privacy
- impaired attachments/relationships.



- loss of a sense of place and belonging
- cultural, racial or religious integrity undermined
- lack/loss of social and community support and connections.

### Goals for integration in countries of resettlement

**ONE** To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society.  
**TWO** To promote the capacity to rebuild a positive future in the receiving society.



**THREE** To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within families.  
**FOUR** To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support  
**FIVE** To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and the rule of law.



**SIX** To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity  
**SEVEN** To counter racism, discrimination and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities.  
**EIGHT** To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership.

**NINE** To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experience.



GOALS



**The gravity of problems reached the point where we did not have any alternative but to flee the country. Our voyage lasted seven days and seven nights. We reached the point that we had only one egg to eat every day.**

Resettled refugee



For most refugees, however, forced displacement and flight are likely to have been preceded by a prolonged period of deprivation of the basic resources required both for human existence and to build a positive future. In many countries, education and health systems as well as essential physical infrastructure such as housing, water supply and sanitation are poorly developed or have broken down or been destroyed in the context of conflict (see Table Four).

These conditions have a particular impact on women and girls with gender acting as an additional barrier to accessing resources in many refugee source countries.

In their countries of refuge, many refugees will have lived 'hand-to-mouth' in the general community or in a refugee camp. They may have been dependent on government and non-government agencies for basic necessities, have had limited or no access to education and faced intense monotony and boredom.

#### Emotional and personal impact

As a result of these exposures, resettled refugees may be in poor health on arrival in a resettlement country. Many will have achieved high levels of education and professional or vocational



**Table Four: Human development in selected refugee countries-of-origin and countries receiving refugees and asylum seekers**

Refugee countries-of-origin <sup>a</sup>	Human Development Index Ranking <sup>b</sup>	Refugee receiving countries with developing economies <sup>c</sup>	Ranking	Countries with high levels of human development <sup>d</sup>	Ranking
Burundi	171	Pakistan	138	Norway	1
Sudan	139	Iran	98	Sweden	2
Angola	161	Tanzania	151	Canada	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	155	Democratic Republic of Congo	155	Belgium	4
Vietnam	109	Sudan	139	Australia	5

(a) Figures presented for the top five refugee countries-of-origin for which Human Development Index (HDI) data available. (b) The HDI, developed by the United Nations Human Development Program, measures the average achievements of a country on three basic dimensions of human development – a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. Indices have been developed for 173 countries with a figure of 1 indicating high levels of human development. (c) Figures presented for the five main countries receiving refugee and asylum seekers in 2001 for which HDI data is available. (d) Figures presented as a basis for comparison. Source: United Nations Human Development Program, *Human Development Report 2002 – Deepening democracy in a fragmented world*, Oxford University Press, New York 2002.

experience in their countries-of-origin. However, disruption to employment may have had an effect on their capacity to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills and to progress in their chosen field. Those who have had limited or disrupted education may have low levels of educational attainment or lack literacy and numeracy skills.

These experiences have an emotional impact. Loss of control over the very basic resources required for survival can create feelings of fear, helplessness and dependency. Without access to these resources, people have limited capacity to maintain a sense of a meaning and purpose in their day-to-day lives or to plan for or perceive of a positive future for themselves and their families. Loss of the opportunity to work, or to work in one's chosen field, carries with it a loss of social status and the very means by which we define ourselves and shape our identity. This is true whether work is in the public sphere or, as is the case for many women, in the home.

### Political conditions and experiences

Many refugees originate from countries where systems for maintaining governance, civil order and the rule of law are poorly developed, compromised or have completely broken down<sup>1</sup>. Prior to fleeing their countries-of-origin, many will have been exposed to a prolonged climate of violence and human rights violations, and have been subject or witness to events such as:

- killings, assaults and rape, sometimes on a massive scale, including family members and friends
- torture
- disappearances
- summary executions
- restrictions on freedom of speech and movement
- imprisonment
- enforced separation from families and communities
- destruction of their homes
- forced displacement
- enforced conscription.

It is estimated that around one in three of the world's refugees has had at least one experience of torture<sup>2</sup>. Studies of refugees offered permanent resettlement indicate that one in four has been subject to torture or severe human rights violations, with almost seven in ten being subject to other traumatic events such as prolonged political repression and the loss of family members in violent circumstances<sup>3</sup>.



**In a refugee camp you don't have a life. You're empty.**

Resettled refugee



**As my parents are illiterate, I don't know when I was born. I myself am 'almost 30' they keep telling me. One thing I know is that I hadn't started school when we fled in 1979.**

Resettled refugee

**The women sat in their tents all the time and hardly ever went out. There was nothing for them to do out there, and also it was dangerous to go out...when they washed, a tent was set up within the tent using pieces of cloth.**

Resettled refugee

**I can't give my children love because I am always thinking about my brother left behind in the camp.**

Resettled refugee



GOALS



**In the discussions, refugee women emphasised that in all cultures, rape is a taboo that silences women. In some cultures, rape survivors are forced to marry the man who raped them or face rejection.**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
*Respect Our Rights: Partnership for Equality — UNHCR Report on the Dialogue with Refugee Women*, Geneva, June 2001



In countries of asylum, refugees may be vulnerable to further violence or abuse of their human rights. They may face the hostility of local communities. Some spend a prolonged period in a refugee camp, where they may experience violence and lack personal safety.

### Emotional and personal impact

Exposure to extreme and indiscriminate human cruelty, such as mass rapes and the killing of children, can serve to undermine those assumptions that are fundamental to our human existence. In the face of overwhelming destruction and death, people may also struggle to maintain a view of the future and question the meaning and purpose of life.

Events such as rape, torture and imprisonment which involve violation of personal boundaries may lead to intense feelings of guilt, shame and a loss of dignity. This is graphically illustrated in the silence often maintained by refugee women victims of rape<sup>4</sup>.

In a climate of violence and human rights abuse, trust in others is frequently undermined. In many regimes, violence is state-sanctioned, perpetrated or supervised by officials who are in theory responsible for maintaining peace, human rights and human dignity (e.g. doctors, lawyers, law enforcement personnel). As a consequence, refugees may distrust and fear others, in particular those in positions of power and authority.

Violence and human rights abuse not only have a profound effect on those directly exposed to them, but also generate a climate of fear and chronic insecurity in the wider community.

Some refugees will have lost or become separated from family members, often in violent circumstances. In some persecutory regimes purposeful strategies are adopted to isolate people from family support (for example, through harassment or imprisonment of family members). These losses may lead to intense and prolonged grief<sup>5</sup> and difficulties in forming future relationships and attachments (a particular concern for child refugees)<sup>6</sup>.

People forced to leave family members and friends behind in unsafe or difficult conditions in their countries-of-origin or asylum may also feel a profound sense of guilt. For others, guilt may result from a perception that they should have done more to prevent the events to which they or family and friends were exposed<sup>7</sup>.

Refugees separated from family members also lose the support these relationships otherwise provide, support critical to both physical and mental well-being and social stability<sup>8</sup>. Those families who have lost a breadwinner, unaccompanied minors and women separated from male relatives may be particularly vulnerable to deprivation and violence<sup>9</sup>.

While many families survive intact, they may be fundamentally changed by their exposure to violence and human rights abuses, with the capacity to parent and maintain intimate relationships often impaired<sup>10</sup>.

### Socio-cultural conditions and experiences

In the past, refugee flows were commonly the consequence of inter-country conflict. Many contemporary crises, however, are driven by internal conflicts which have their origins in deep seated religious, ethnic, political, racial or clan based tensions. This pattern has a powerful influence on the nature and consequences of the refugee experience.

Prior to fleeing their countries-of-origin, many refugees will have been exposed to a prolonged climate in which their religious, racial, political or cultural integrity was systematically undermined or destroyed. They may have faced:

- prohibitions on their religious or cultural practices;
- forced adoption of practices of the dominant culture;
- social exclusion on grounds of their religion, race, culture, ethnicity or political associations;
- discrimination in access to important resources such as housing, employment and education;
- the destruction of their religious and cultural symbols and icons (e.g. churches, mosques);
- racially, culturally or ethnically motivated violence;
- forced displacement from their homes and communities.

Sometimes these conditions persist in countries of asylum, particularly when refugees are unwelcome minorities in the dominant culture of the host country. Viewed as competitors for scarce resources, asylum seekers may be ready targets for racially or ethnically based violence.

In many countries they are again excluded from the wider community, often denied access to employment and education or detained or accommodated in remote locations in refugee camps.



**As a child she watched as her younger sister and father were brutally murdered. Her mother and extended family escaped to another country in Africa. Today...citizenship is a priority as a passport would allow her to visit her mother who she has just found after many years.**

Resettlement worker



GOALS



### Emotional and personal impact

Civil conflict of this nature has the effect of undermining social and community cohesion, by breaking down trusting and supportive relationships within communities. As a consequence, refugees may have endured a long period during which their access to the protective effects of social support and connections with their communities was compromised. They may also have internalised distrust and suspicion of others as fundamental to their survival.



**Life in the refugee camp is something that you can really only experience in order to adequately describe it.**

Resettled refugee



Many refugees will have been subject to social exclusion. In some regimes this may have taken the form of constraints on their access to education, employment or participation in public life. In others it may have been through practices such as imprisonment, the creation of ethnic or racial ‘ghettos’ or mass population displacement. As well as having implications for people’s sense of belonging, social exclusion compromises their capacity to access material and social resources, and if prolonged, to develop the skills required to participate in public and cultural life.

The undermining of religious, ethnic or racial integrity has a negative impact on one’s identity and sense of belonging and may lead to people feeling a sense of shame and humiliation about their heritage. This is a particular concern for young people for whom the refugee experience coincides with a critical stage of identity formation<sup>11</sup>. Since cultural and religious systems and beliefs play an important part in regulating roles, relationships and behaviours, reduced cultural and religious identification may also compromise family and broader community stability.

### The experience of integration

Resettlement in a safe country offers refugees the opportunity to rebuild a positive future. However, in the early resettlement period at least, there are some potential barriers to this process (Figure Two).

The early resettlement period involves enormous challenges, among them adapting to a different culture and way of life and mastering a host of practical tasks, from establishing a household and using public transport, to negotiating new and complex education, income support and health care systems. Many resettled refugees also need to learn a new language. These tasks may be overwhelming for many people, perpetuating feelings of anxiety and loss of control.

## Figure Two: The experience of integration

Potential sources of stress in the integration environment:	Possible personal and emotional consequences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ongoing danger in country-of-origin</li> <li>• continuing separation from family members</li> <li>• lack of understanding/hostility on the part of government officials</li> <li>• injustices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear and anxiety</li> <li>• loss of trust</li> <li>• grief</li> <li>• lack of family support</li> <li>• guilt</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minority status in a dominant culture</li> <li>• limited community support networks</li> <li>• prejudice and hostility on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion</li> <li>• limited access to cultural and religious institutions</li> <li>• poor social status</li> <li>• gender role and status adjustment</li> <li>• intergenerational adjustment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• loss of a sense of belonging</li> <li>• cultural, racial or religious integrity undermined</li> <li>• identity undermined</li> <li>• lack/loss of social support</li> <li>• family conflict and tension</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unemployment</li> <li>• underemployment</li> <li>• difficulties in accessing education and health care</li> <li>• insecure housing</li> <li>• new and unfamiliar environment</li> <li>• lack of proficiency in the language of the receiving society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear about the future and of not coping</li> <li>• altered capacity to plan the future</li> <li>• social and economic dependency</li> <li>• poor health</li> </ul>

Adjustment may be particularly difficult for resettled refugees originating from rural or pastoral communities in developing countries where they lived a traditional way of life and had limited exposure to modern technology and the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation.

Without support, resettled refugees may also have difficulties in accessing basic resources for survival and rebuilding, such as housing, health care and education. As well as having obvious consequences for immediate material well-being, limitations on access to these resources may affect people's sense of safety and control. Those originating from relatively affluent backgrounds in their countries-of-origin may face the additional difficulty of adjusting to a lower social status.

As minorities in the dominant culture of the receiving community, refugees face the challenge of developing a sense of belonging and identity. Lack of understanding, and in some cases active discrimination and hostility in the receiving country may work against this and serve to further undermine their sense of physical security and self esteem. This may be a particular challenge for resettled refugees with distinguishing cultural and religious practices or racial features.



GOALS



## The impact of the refugee and resettlement experiences on refugee families

THE REFUGEE and resettlement experiences have a significant impact on refugee families. These impacts, summarised below, are discussed in greater detail in Part Three of this Handbook.

- Refugee trauma and the practical demands of resettlement may affect relationships within families and the capacity to provide support, particularly to dependants such as elders, children and young people.
- Families may not be intact on arrival, a particular concern for families who have lost a breadwinner. Others may be reuniting after prolonged separation and it may take time for them to re-establish mutual understanding. Some refugees, such as children and single men and women, may arrive without customary family support.
- Tensions may arise within families as men and women come to terms with differences in gender roles and status between their country-of-origin and the receiving society, in particular women's greater social and economic power (see Chapter 3.2).
- There may be some adjustment involved for refugee parents in receiving societies in which there may be very different approaches to child welfare and discipline. Children and young people are also likely to be accorded a greater range of rights and freedoms in their new country and this may lead to intergenerational conflict.
- Children and young people tend to acquire the language of the receiving country, to learn about its systems and ways and to adopt its culture more readily and rapidly than adults. They may be called upon to translate, interpret and mediate with systems in the receiving society on behalf of their families. This has the potential fundamentally to alter power and dependency relationships between refugee children and young people and their parents and grandparents. Children and young people's more rapid adaptation to the culture of the receiving society may also be a factor in intergenerational conflict and tension.

The early resettlement period is also a time when people may have limited access to family support. While many refugees will have lost or become separated from family members, even in intact families, the stresses and adjustments involved in resettlement may compromise the availability and quality of support (see box).

Uncertainty about the welfare and safety of family members may be an ongoing source of anxiety and guilt for resettled refugees.

Cultural and language differences may make it difficult for resettled refugees to establish social connections and secure support within the receiving community. Feelings of shame and guilt can undermine the belief that they are worthy of help,

## The process of adapting to a new country

DESPITE diversity among refugees and the countries in which they settle, research suggests that the process of adapting to a new country is very similar for most individuals. Four stages can be discerned and are presented in a necessarily simplified form below. In practice, the process for individuals is not a linear one. Rather, most will move back and forward and there may be times when reactions lie somewhere between the stages.

Integration support will be most important in the confrontation and adjustment stages. These are not only stressful points in the resettlement process, but are stages at which intervention can help to ensure a positive outcome.

The time involved in adaptation will differ depending on the characteristics of individual resettled refugees, their past experiences and factors in the resettlement environment.

### **The Honeymoon stage**

This occurs prior to arrival, while en-route and immediately after arrival. Depending on their individual circumstances resettled refugees may have

extreme positive or negative reactions (e.g. euphoria, excitement, thankfulness or exhaustion and anxiety). They may cling to unrealistic ideas about the receiving society as a survival mechanism (ie to avoid facing challenges they are not yet ready to handle). Physical symptoms are common (e.g. sleep problems and reaction to climatic and dietary change; memory loss and poor concentration).

### **Confrontation**

Confrontation occurs as newcomers begin to interact with and attempt to come to terms with the receiving society (e.g. finding housing and employment). Many previously held assumptions about self and others may be shattered at this time and newcomers may be forced to re-evaluate their perceptions, values and identity. Common responses include frustration, dissatisfaction, embarrassment, fear, anger, guilt, nostalgia and irritability. It is not uncommon for newcomers to attribute complex issues to singular causes such as unemployment or separation from family members.

### **Adjustment**

Adjustment occurs as newcomers begin to face the daily reality of living in the receiving society. At this time they develop an increased awareness that established behavioural patterns and coping mechanisms do not work in their new situation. Feelings of failure and self doubt may result. Commonly, newcomers respond by developing new coping styles and behavioural patterns. However, others may react to these challenges with responses such as dependency on others, or escapism (e.g. addiction). Periodic withdrawal to gain strength and courage from self reflection are not uncommon during this stage.

### **Reconstruction**

In this final stage, newcomers build on their inner strength and begin to feel more comfortable in their new society. They gain a sense of control over their lives in their new situation and begin to feel attached to friends, activities and objects in their new country.



GOALS

Adapted with permission from C Murphy and D Zend, *Linking paths: A guide for orienting newcomers to Ontario*, 1994.



affecting their capacity to access both formal and informal sources of support. For refugees who experienced extreme hardship and trauma, feelings such as anxiety or mistrust may persist for some time after arrival. For some these problems will be sufficiently severe as to interfere with daily life<sup>12</sup>.

Resettled refugees may also have to learn new ways of coping and behaving. Coping strategies which served them well in a situation of dependency on a refugee camp or in a corrupt and oppressive political regime may be counter-productive in the receiving society.

Established refugee communities have an important role to play in supporting newcomers. However, resettled refugees may have limited connections with these communities or they may not be well established in the receiving society. As indicated above, conditions in countries-of-origin and refuge can have the effect of undermining cohesion and trusting and supportive relationships within communities. New refugee communities may themselves be in the process of developing effective leadership and support systems and this in turn may compromise their capacity to extend support to newcomers.



**Everything was new for me and I have experienced a lot of joyful happenings. I didn't confront any problems yet.**  
Resettled refugee



### **Goals for integration in countries of resettlement**

If resettled refugees are to have the best prospects for realising their potential, most will require some support in the period immediately following their arrival. This is important both to redress the personal, social and economic disadvantage they have faced and to deal with the intensive demands of adjusting to a new society.

Countries of resettlement also have a role in ensuring that refugees have access to the resources required for their longer term stability and adjustment. Among these are housing, employment and education. Countries can foster a social environment in which resettling refugees feel welcome and understood, in which they can be assured that their rights will be respected and in which they can develop social connections and contribute to civic life.

While providing integration support requires investment by receiving countries, it is effort well spent. Promoting optimal conditions for integration enables refugees to achieve independence and settle harmoniously and ensures that countries reap the benefits of the skills and attributes refugees bring with them.

## An integration analogy: Resettling in Canada

“Integration means for me to feel in a new country like at home. For me integration is like a triathlon race.

The first leg of the race is cycling. The best thing to do is to cycle in a group. It is the same with integration. In the beginning the most important thing is to learn language, learn and understand education, employment, economic and social systems of the new country. To a newcomer it means that he or she is part of new society, a member of a community or group with the opportunities and good perspectives.

Once language knowledge is at a comfortable level, education and employment barriers are solved, new friends are met, and the second leg of the race is beginning. It is the swimming leg. While swimming you hardly hear or see others, you concentrate on yourself. This period in integration is obviously very individual. Basics are already met and it is time to reflect and assess how far one has come and how far you could go. At this point the realisation has come that it is a completely new world that one is living in and with it many, many new fine tunings that have to be done...

So you swam your part well and there is not much to go. The last part of the race is the running part. But this is also the most difficult one. You feel a little tired and the finish line seems further away not closer. It is a period in integration when one thinks that he or she has already done so much. And the newcomer does not expect many more challenges. At least the feeling of real integration is there. But from time to time, a completely new word will come up, a holiday or custom that is still unknown, or a little administrative thing that everyone seems to know about.

So, the one who still runs is the one who is integrated.”

*Resettled refugee*

A set of integration goals have been developed with a view to putting into operation the principles developed and endorsed at the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*. The goals, outlined below and summarised in Figure One (see p. 16), describe the practical elements of an integration program and the basic resources that will be required to assist refugees in their resettlement, while ensuring that the process is a mutual one to which both refugees and receiving societies contribute and from which both benefit.

### Meeting basic needs

A secure environment with adequate access to income, accommodation and health care are among the basic rights of all people. As well as being fundamental to refugees' survival in a new country, these resources assist them to regain a sense of security, predictability and control.

Owing to the unplanned nature of their departure, most refugees will arrive in countries of resettlement with few personal effects and limited if any financial reserves. It is

### INTEGRATION GOAL

**ONE** To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society.



## LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR REFUGEE REBUILDING: PLANNING GOALS



important, therefore, that arrangements are made for the provision of immediate accommodation, and financial support.

Early access to health care will also be important to ensure that resettled refugees have the optimal physical and mental health required to deal with the challenges of resettlement.

### Communicating in the receiving country

The ability to communicate in the receiving country is a critical condition for achieving control and independence, gaining access to resources, participating in the social and economic institutions of the receiving country and establishing social connections.

It is therefore important that new refugee arrivals have access to interpreting and translating services and other forms of language assistance as well as opportunities to learn the language of the receiving country.

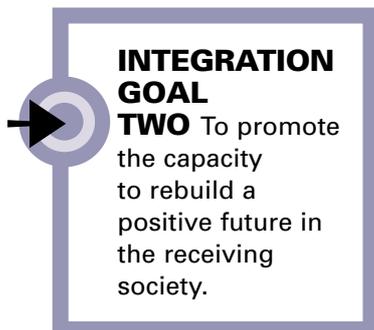
### Orientation to the systems of the receiving country

New arrivals' ability to establish a new life and to access resettlement resources will be critically dependent on understanding and being able to negotiate basic systems, programs and entitlements in the receiving country. Among these are procedures for banking, transportation, registering for employment, accessing health care and enrolling for school and language tuition.

An effective integration program, therefore, will incorporate means for informing new arrivals about and orienting them to basic systems of the receiving country and the benefits and programs available to them.

### Planning for the future

Long term housing, employment and education are essential for planning a positive future, for achieving economic stability and for establishing one's sense of place and identity. Accordingly, it is important that arrangements are made for new refugee arrivals to access these resources, either through specialised programs or support in accessing services and systems also available to nationals.



## Family reunification

As indicated above, many refugees experience grief, anxiety and guilt associated with having left close family members behind in countries-of-origin or asylum. Offering resettled refugees the opportunity to apply to have family members join them in the receiving country plays a powerful role in addressing these feelings<sup>13</sup>. Family support is also important for both mental health and well-being and longer term economic and social stability. In the early resettlement period it can serve as a buffer against the stresses which may be involved in the integration process. The principle and importance of family unity is enshrined in a number of international human rights instruments (see p. 83).

For this reason an essential element of an integration program will be provision for resettled refugees to have family members join them in the receiving country. Most countries also promote family unity by enabling resettled refugees to settle in communities where they already have relatives living.

## Restoring supportive relationships within families

The refugee and resettlement experiences involve numerous adjustments for families (see box, p. 24) and may have a significant impact on the availability and quality of family support. Most countries of resettlement aim to provide integration programs in ways which take account of this impact both on individual family members and on the family as a unit.

## Systems of support

Settling in a new country can be difficult and complex, particularly for those in poor physical and mental health. Newly arrived refugees are unlikely to have connections with people able to support them with these tasks. Guilt and the erosion of trust, dignity and self esteem which may result from traumatic refugee experiences can undermine refugees' capacity to access formal and informal support networks and services.

For these reasons, it is important that steps are taken to connect new refugee arrivals with individuals who are able to offer individualised support in the early post arrival period. In

### INTEGRATION GOAL THREE

To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within families.


 GOALS

### INTEGRATION GOAL FOUR

To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support.



the context of these relationships new arrivals can be offered practical assistance, information and help to understand and negotiate their new culture and society. The opportunity to form a trusting relationship can also help people to re-establish their sense of dignity and self-respect and their trust in others. Lessons learned through these key relationships can be transferred to the refugee's experience with others in the receiving society.

Most existing integration programs have mechanisms for assessing the needs of new arrivals and ensuring that they receive an appropriate level of individualised support in the early resettlement period. This may be provided by professionals in government or non-government agencies, volunteers and community groups or through refugee sponsorship programs or by a combination of these.

Also important are strategies to enhance the capacity of key professionals (such as doctors and teachers) to identify and support new refugee arrivals.

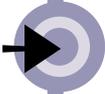
### Restoring faith in government

Many resettled refugees come from countries where governments failed to protect their rights or where violence and human rights abuses were perpetrated by the state.

Countries of resettlement can help to restore refugees' confidence in government by providing integration programs in ways which demonstrate respect for freedom, human rights and individual dignity. Also important in this regard will be measures to ensure that resettled refugees have equitable access to government services and programs available to the wider community.

Resettled refugees will have day-to-day contact with a range of personnel, from law enforcement officers to government officials responsible for administering income support payments, employment schemes, family reunion programs and the like.

For refugees who experienced state-sanctioned violence and human rights abuses in their countries-of-origin, interactions with people in positions of authority can be stressful. It is important that professional development and awareness raising programs are offered to relevant officials to enhance their understanding of and sensitivity to the nature and consequences of the refugee experience.



**INTEGRATION  
GOAL  
FIVE**  
To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and the rule of law.

## Reinforcing human rights and the rule of law

A broad commitment of resettlement countries to the protection and promotion of human rights at the domestic and international levels can help to demonstrate to resettled refugees their new country's abhorrence of human rights abuses and to reassure them that their rights will be observed in their new homeland.

## Valuing diversity

There is increasing recognition among countries currently offering refugee resettlement that integration is more likely to be successful in an environment in which new arrivals are able to maintain their cultural, racial, religious or ethnic integrity while at the same time being encouraged to participate in, and access the resources of, the receiving society. This is also understood to have benefits for receiving societies, since they are able to benefit from the unique skills and attributes of resettled refugees.

In this context, integration becomes a 'two-way street' with the receiving society both learning from and adapting to the needs of newcomers and resettled refugees learning from and adapting to the receiving society.

Most countries take steps to ensure that integration programs (such as language training and orientation) are delivered in ways which value and respect refugees' culture and customs. Many also aim to foster a climate in which diversity is valued and to support the development of strong ethno-cultural communities.

Promoting a climate in which diversity is valued is particularly important for refugee arrivals, many of whom will have been exposed to discrimination and hostility in their countries-of-origin and asylum. As well as demonstrating that they are welcome in the receiving country, the promotion of diversity enhances opportunities for people to reconnect with cultural and religious communities, practices and institutions and to re-establish or maintain their identity.

At the same time it is important that refugees are able to participate in the civic, economic and social institutions of the receiving country and to foster social connections within it. For this reason, refugees will also require opportunities to learn about laws, customs, role expectations and communication patterns in the receiving country.



GOALS

### INTEGRATION GOAL SIX

To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity.



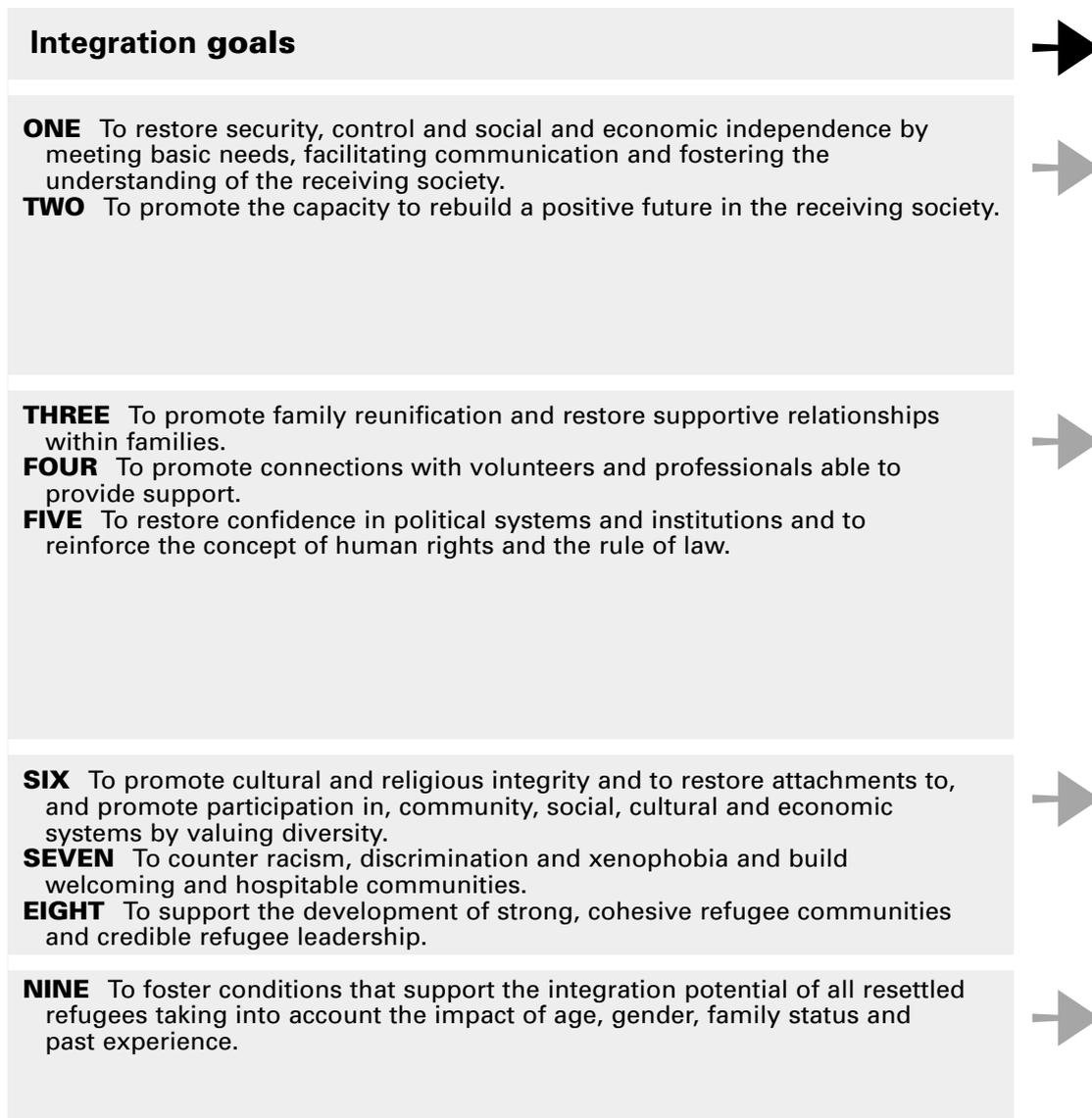
**To me integration means bringing one's personality, skills, knowledge and culture into a new society and also receiving all the positive values from the same society.**

Resettled refugee





## → Figure Three: Implementing the goals: Key planning activities



## Planning activities

 For further  
information

• Immediate accommodation	Chapter 2.2
• Orientation to systems and resources	2.7
• Assessment and early settlement support	2.3
• Income support	2.4
• Support to access employment, education and training	2.9
• Long term housing	2.8
• Household establishment resources	2.4
• Language assistance (e.g. interpreting and translating services, bilingual workers)	2.5
• Target language instruction	2.6
• Family reunion	2.3
• Placement practices promoting family unity	2.3, 2.1
• Volunteer and community support networks	2.3, 2.11
• Services for survivors of trauma and torture	3.1
• Health assessment and care	2.2, 2.10
• Strategies to enhance the capacity of professionals in the wider society to provide support to resettled refugees	2.3, 2.11, 3.1
• Legislative initiatives to promote equal opportunity and prevent discrimination	2.11
• Being signatory to key instruments to protect and promote human rights	2.11
• Sensitisation of key governmental systems and personnel	2.11
• Permanent residency and citizenship provisions	2.11
• Strategies to promote cultural diversity and counter racism and xenophobia	2.11
• Media liaison	2.11
• Capacity building in ethno-cultural and wider communities	2.3, 2.11
• Cultural orientation	2.7
• Processes and strategies to respond to the particular needs of new arrivals with refugee-related trauma, men and women, elders, and children and young people, especially separated minors.	Part Three



GOALS



## Countering discrimination, racism and xenophobia

Refugee communities may be particularly vulnerable to racism and xenophobia in countries of resettlement<sup>4</sup>. This can compromise their safety and contribute to heightened anxiety. In some countries, negative or inaccurate portrayal of refugees and asylum issues in the media may fuel anti-refugee sentiment and affect the extent to which resettled refugees feel welcome. Refugees may also face discrimination in their access to important social and economic resources such as housing, employment and education.

Countries with established integration programs have sought to counter this through a range of strategies including advocacy programs, legislation and community education.

## Creating welcoming and hospitable communities

The environment refugees encounter in the neighbourhoods, workplaces, social venues and classrooms of the receiving society will have a significant bearing on their capacity to rebuild their lives.

A welcoming environment not only helps refugees to restore their faith in others, but will enable them to develop friendships and build informal networks. These are important both for day-to-day support and to enhance their access to other resources such as employment, and recreation and to provide opportunities for participation in public life.

Also important will be measures to ensure that resettled refugees are granted permanent residence in the receiving country and the opportunity to become citizens as soon as possible. Legal residence and the right to citizenship are important expressions of the resettlement government's willingness to welcome refugees to full participation in, and the protection of, the receiving society.

Due to loss of trust and cultural and language differences refugees may experience some difficulties in interacting with, and developing connections in, the community. In turn, this may be exacerbated by a lack of understanding in the wider community.

This suggests the importance of providing information and education programs to receiving communities to enhance their understanding of the refugee experience and their capacity to extend friendship and support to new arrivals.

Strategies to counter racism and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities are also in the interests of receiving societies, ensuring that they are well placed to benefit from the skills and attributes of resettled refugees, and that conflicts are avoided.

## Refugee communities

In countries with a history of culturally diverse migration and resettlement, refugee and ethnic communities have an important role in extending hospitality and support to new arrivals. In addition these communities provide a means for refugees to connect with cultural and religious institutions and practices. Established refugee communities can serve as bridges between new arrivals and the receiving country, interpreting the practices and values of the receiving society to new arrivals and promoting understanding of the needs of refugees in the wider community.

Strong refugee communities and effective refugee leadership may take some time to develop. However, they contribute to supporting integration as a 'two-way' street, providing a base from which resettled refugees can interact on a more equal footing with the receiving society.

In many countries, the contribution of refugee communities to supporting integration is fostered by government or private funding and other forms of support to strengthen their capacity.

## Planning for all

While resettled refugees share many experiences and issues in common, as is the case in the general population, particular groups of refugees face different concerns as a result of their age, gender, family status or past experiences. These are factors which need to be taken into account to support the integration potential of all resettled refugees, in particular, refugee children and young people, refugee elders and survivors of trauma and torture.

Gender role and status differences between countries-of-origin and resettlement may have a powerful impact. It is important that the particular challenges faced by refugee men and women are considered in the planning process.



GOALS

### INTEGRATION GOAL EIGHT

To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership.

### INTEGRATION GOAL NINE

To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experience.

