



CHAPTER 1.5

Establishing a New Integration Program

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This Chapter is concerned primarily with the processes and issues involved in planning the early phases of a new refugee resettlement program. It does not deal with specific program components, such as housing and employment. However, planning issues of concern in these areas in the establishment phase are foreshadowed, with further information provided in the individual Chapters of this Handbook.

Starting small and optimising the conditions for success

The first years of operation of a resettlement program will be critical to its success. In most countries, there will be varying levels of support for refugee resettlement at both community and governmental levels. As with all new initiatives some 'teething problems' are inevitable. However, if the program flounders in its early years, it may not develop the basis of government and community support required for its long term survival.

The experience of those countries which have recently established resettlement programs is that in the early years, it is best to optimise the conditions for success by starting with a small and relatively homogenous caseload, and by selecting communities for resettlement with maximum integration potential.

This approach is also in the interests of early refugee intakes, ensuring that they are offered the very best prospects for successful resettlement.

For the same reasons it is also important that resettlement programs be closely monitored in their early phases so that problems can be identified and addressed.





ESTABLISHING A NEW REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM



Laying sound foundations – a capacity building approach

Refugee resettlement will compete with other pressing issues for the attention of government officers. In those countries with limited prior involvement in refugee resettlement, there may also be few personnel with relevant expertise either at the governmental level or in non-governmental agencies.

Resettlement programs require coordination, co-operation and collaboration. For some countries, the task of establishing a refugee resettlement program may be the first time so many different government branches or ministries have been called upon to implement an initiative in a co-operative fashion. Similarly, there may have been limited prior non-government involvement in government program delivery and hence few opportunities for government and non-government personnel to gain a mutual understanding.

For these reasons it is important that effort be invested at an early stage to ensure that sound coordinating infrastructures and processes are established; that co-operative relationships

▶ The importance of early selection and placement planning

WHILE THIS Handbook is concerned primarily with the process of resettling refugees after they have been selected for resettlement, the experience of emerging countries of resettlement is that the size and composition of a program are critical in the establishment phase.

- Depending on the size of the resettlement program, partner with the UNHCR to identify a particular refugee caseload to target for the first year or two. Consistent with UNHCR policy, this should be based on unmet resettlement needs.

A relatively linguistically and culturally homogeneous caseload will allow the new receiving country to focus on the development of the program with a limited number of variables. Clearly, this approach would not limit the possibility of resettling other refugee groups in the future.

- Careful consideration is needed of the extent to which there is the capacity to respond to resettled refugees with complex needs such as particular medical conditions.
- Placement strategies

within the resettlement country should consider the social and economic backgrounds of resettled refugees and the receiving community. Resettlement may be more difficult for refugees where there are marked differences in the degree of industrialisation and urbanisation between their countries-of-origin and resettlement.

- A significant factor for consideration will be whether resettled refugees can be supported by existing services and programs or whether there will be a need to establish new services.

are fostered between players and that relevant personnel have opportunities to develop their expertise in integration program development and implementation.

Similar effort will be needed at the local level to select and prepare communities for the placement of resettled refugees as these communities may have little prior experience of refugee resettlement.

Critical to the success of these efforts will be opportunities to bring people together to build relationships and identify and address issues.

These tasks require an investment of time, resources and expertise. In some new resettlement countries such as Brazil, Burkina Faso and Benin the assistance of expatriate personnel who have worked in established resettlement countries has helped to facilitate the setting up of their own resettlement programs. Typically these officers have worked with new programs in their first two years.

Funding for such personnel will usually need to be secured through intergovernmental, private or charitable organisations operating at the domestic or international levels. Countries with established resettlement programs might also be asked to second an integration expert to an emerging resettlement country.

While the role of these experts varies, typically it has included assisting countries with overall planning; fostering collaborative relationships among key players; professional development; and the selection and early development of specific resettlement communities.



Securing the resources for refugee resettlement

REFUGEE resettlement requires resources which may not be readily available through existing government programs provided to nationals in developing countries (e.g. income support payments,

housing). Emerging resettlement countries will need to develop a plan to ensure that these can be provided. In the formative years of a program consideration might be given to securing funding or

in-kind assistance through sources at the domestic or international levels (e.g. inter-governmental or religious organisations or private foundations).



What steps are involved in establishing a new resettlement program?

While the steps in establishing an integration program will depend on the particular characteristics of the receiving country concerned, those typically involved are outlined in Table Five below.

Table Five: Steps involved in planning and establishing a new resettlement program

Planning steps	Considerations
Securing the formal commitment of government to refugee resettlement through legislation or other relevant instrument	This instrument is important since it will form the basis for engaging the co-operation of the range of government ministries typically involved in integration. As an expression of the country's commitment to integration, it is also a tool for communication with receiving communities and the media. This instrument should also allow for expeditious naturalisation of those offered resettlement as a fundamental aspect of integration.
Establishing a formal arrangement with the UNHCR as an implementing partner	Co-operation with the UNHCR will be important for the identification of individuals or groups in need of resettlement.
Identifying a government ministry with lead agency responsibility for resettlement	This ministry usually plays a primary role in overall planning, implementation, funding and monitoring.
Identifying other relevant government ministries	Typically this includes those ministries responsible for migration matters (e.g. visa, citizenship), health, housing, education and employment.
Identifying personnel with delegated authority for resettlement within relevant government ministries	This is particularly important in the establishment phases when many decisions need to be made often within very short time frames. The experience of emerging resettlement programs is that some effort is required to ensure that senior officers have the confidence to delegate this authority to officers working at an operational level. Engaging senior officers in the early planning phases and developing the expertise of operational officers can foster this.
Identifying non-government partners at the national and local levels	The advantages of involving NGOs in integration discussed elsewhere in this Handbook, (see p. 43) are particularly pertinent in the formative program years. Not all emerging countries will have local NGOs able to support refugee resettlement. However, where this is the case, NGOs bring to the planning process a detailed knowledge of aspects of their local communities which may not be immediately apparent to government. They are well placed to identify problems.

Planning steps	Considerations
Identifying non-government partners at the national and local levels (continued)	Most emerging resettlement countries have engaged NGOs in key planning forums at the earliest possible stage and at both the national and local levels. In some countries, NGOs have been given lead agency status at the local level.
Establishing a coordinating body involving key government and NGO partners	This should comprise representatives of relevant ministries and non-government organisations to oversee planning and implementation. In most countries, parallel structures are similarly established at the local level once specific resettlement communities have been selected.
An agreement outlining in broad terms the roles and responsibilities of government and non-government partners	<p>The purpose of this agreement is to outline which ministry or non-government agency is responsible for each of the elements of an integration program (see Table Six below). While this document should be developed early in a program, it is also important that there is some flexibility for revision and amendment to address any problems that emerge as the program evolves.</p> <p>Consideration will need to be given to some of the key planning questions outlined in Chapter 1.4. There will also need to be an assessment of the extent to which resettlement resources are already available through programs provided to nationals and in what areas additional or dedicated resources will be required. This is particularly the case with income support payments, housing and employment placement.</p> <p>In those countries in which the UNHCR or other external agency has undertaken to support the development of the integration program, they may also be signatories to this document.</p>
Selection of specific integration communities	Specific selection criteria are outlined in Chapter 2.1. The presence of established NGOs and the availability of housing and employment will be particularly important at this stage. The latter are critical for successful resettlement, and present challenges for new countries of resettlement, especially those with developing economies (see Chapters 2.8 and 2.9).





➔ **Table Six: The essential elements of an integration program**

Integration Program Component (see Handbook Part Two)	Essential elements	Priority planning activities Consider:
Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advance selection and development of placement communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific selection criteria outlined in Chapter 2.1, giving priority to employment, housing and established NGOs; • advance preparation of communities with limited prior experience of culturally diverse migration.
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for meeting resettled refugees on arrival; • initial accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging local NGOs.
Assessment and early social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems and resources for assessing the need for and providing early settlement support; • family reunion provisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging local NGOs and other constituencies (e.g. faith-based communities, human rights groups).
Income support and establishment resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial assistance to meet household establishment costs and income support prior to paid employment being secured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining expectations of economic self-sufficiency; • securing funding from external sources in the establishment phases if required; • long term planning to meet costs within state resources.
Language assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpreters, translators, bilingual workers and volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the early phases of the program, making selection decisions which maximise language compatibility between refugees and languages spoken in the receiving country; • assessing local resources (government and community).
Language training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language instruction for children and adults; • education for school-aged children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a long term plan for the development of language training programs; • early contact with educational authorities to ensure appropriate arrangements are made for school-aged children and young people.

Integration Program Component (see Handbook Part Two)	Essential elements	Priority planning activities Consider:
Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pre-arrival orientation and preparation of written material; post arrival orientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pre-arrival orientation to inform candidates for resettlement about the receiving country and its resettlement program and ensure that they understand that they are being offered permanent resettlement (see p. 148 for further information on the importance of these processes in emerging countries).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> longer term housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> early contact with public housing authorities and the private sector, to ensure the availability of housing in advance of refugee arrivals to avoid prolonged periods in reception accommodation.
Employment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> employment placement assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategies for promoting early employment as these will be important in countries with limited capacity to offer income support.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> health care on arrival and arrangements for ongoing care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identification of local health-care providers with appropriate expertise.
Hospitable and welcoming communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision for issuing entry visas, travel and identity documents and permanent residence status for those offered resettlement; a media strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparing materials and protocols for responding to the media in advance of first arrivals.



What are the essential elements of an integration program?

As resettlement programs develop, they may attract additional resources to build the infrastructure required to optimise integration potential. However, those elements that are critical to the success of a new program are identified in Table Six. Issues requiring particular consideration in the planning stages are highlighted, with more detail in relevant Chapters of this Handbook.





INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

An exchange between Canada and Chile

Throughout the year, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) holds conferences, providing among other things, the opportunity for those involved in refugee resettlement to exchange ideas and strategies with one another. The refugee office director at the Diocese of London, Ontario, an active participant in CCR, was aware through the Diocese's international links, that Vicaria de la Pastoral Social, a non-government organisation in Chile, was actively involved in the planning and development of that country's fledgling refugee resettlement program. In consultation with staff at Vicaria, he sought funding from a Canadian Catholic philanthropic trust which enabled a representative of the Vicaria to attend the CCR's fall 2001 meeting. As well as providing an opportunity for Canadian and Chilean integration personnel to learn from one another, this exchange has strengthened relationships and links between these two countries.

Learning from other refugee resettlement programs

Established resettlement programs have a wealth of experience which emerging resettlement countries can draw on. As noted above, these countries may be prepared to contribute this experience as part of their commitment to resettlement and global responsibility sharing.

Other emerging resettlement countries may also be able to offer valuable input, particularly if they have comparable social and economic conditions or have faced similar planning issues.

However each country is best placed to determine what will and what will not work in the local environment. To date countries of resettlement have shared their integration expertise and resources by offering:

- secondments of experienced personnel to serve as integration consultants or facilitators or to play monitoring or trouble-shooting roles;
- training and professional development initiatives;
- professional development resources on integration issues (e.g. instructional manuals);
- multilingual information for refugees;
- information on the cultural practices of particular refugee groups;
- site visits, study tours, conferences, personnel exchanges and other training opportunities;
- support to prepare grant submissions to private organisations and charitable organisations to augment resettlement resources.

INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

The Brazilian story

BRAZIL, THE BIGGEST of the South American countries, has a long and diverse immigration history, boasting the largest population of people of African ancestry outside Africa.

Long a destination for refugees fleeing conflict and persecution in other parts of its region, Brazil has a number of former refugees in positions of leadership in both the public and private sectors, many of whom have a deep personal commitment to the promotion of human rights. Steeped in Brazilian culture is a tradition of hospitality to others.

These factors have contributed to a strong interest in refugee resettlement in Brazil and were given practical expression in 1997 when the Brazilian parliament passed its first refugee law. This legislation defined criteria for selection of refugees for resettlement and outlined mechanisms for planning, selection and resettlement.

Implementation of the legislation commenced in 1998 with the formation of Comit  Nacional para os Refugiados (CONARE) the National Refugee Committee. An interdepartmental body lead by the Justice Ministry, CONARE engaged those ministries responsible for foreign relations, health, education, employment and law enforcement, along with an active non-government

agency, Caritas. The UNHCR serves on the committee in an advisory capacity.

The following year an agreement was struck between the Brazilian government and the UNHCR to establish a refugee resettlement program. Recognising the planning challenges ahead, this agreement defined a significant role for the UNHCR in working with the Brazilian government and its integration partners in the first years of the program. In November 2000 the UNHCR

seconded a regional resettlement expert to assist in planning and development. While recognising the value of this external technical assistance, both the UNHCR and the Brazilian integration partners have been aware of the need to make the Brazilian experience and Brazil's unique strengths the point of departure.

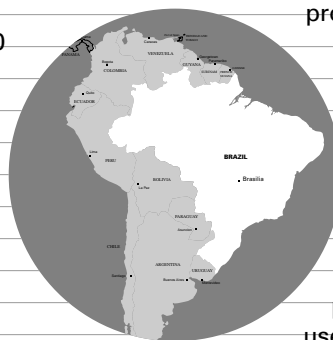
Although the Brazilian government is responsible for refugee selection and overall planning, coordination and monitoring of resettlement, it was agreed very early that integration would be more likely to be successful if programs were implemented in the local communities in

which refugees were to settle.

To ensure the very best conditions for success, it was decided to start the program in up to four communities with a target of between 25-30 refugees per site for the first arrivals. The pilot communities were selected on the basis of visits undertaken by representatives of CONARE and the UNHCR, taking into account factors such as size, the ethnic composition of local populations and economic opportunities. Site profiles identifying particular assets and opportunities in each of the communities were developed as a basis for subsequent planning and to use in developing pre-arrival orientation information for refugees.

The first group of refugees to be resettled were approved in the last quarter of 2001 and settled in Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil early in 2002. UNHCR continues to work with CONARE to develop other resettlement communities and identify the refugees to be resettled in each location. The NGOs working with CONARE and the UNHCR have begun organising 'Local Commissions for Reception

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INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

The Brazilian story (continued)

and Integration', comprising representatives of state and local governments, non-government organisations and community members at each of the sites.	are supplemented by other integration partners, in particular state and local governments, non-government agencies, the private sector and international organisations.	resettlement was jointly organised by CONARE and the UNHCR which brought together personnel from across state and national government ministries, non-government agencies and the community to discuss the implementation of the
Addressing resource challenges	Investment in the early stages	Brazilian program. There was also a high level of investment in technical training for personnel at both national and local levels, through programs provided in the communities, agencies and government ministries of Brazil as well as the participation of local personnel in international resettlement conferences and meetings.
With its developing economy, the Brazilian government has a limited capacity to meet both the up-front and longer term costs associated with refugee resettlement. The UNHCR currently provides funding for services in the reception phase (including orientation, temporary housing, employment training and placement services and income support) and sub-contracts local NGOs to provide these. The Brazilian government, meanwhile, assumes responsibility for longer term integration resources through state-funded programs, among them health care, education and other social services. Given economic conditions in Brazil, these programs are not well developed and in some cases already struggle to meet the needs of nationals. Accordingly, these resources	While there is strong will in Brazil to make organised refugee resettlement a success, there was very little prior experience of formal refugee resettlement, a particular issue for those in local communities and non-government agencies involved at an operational level. Few of the integration partners had worked together previously on such a large undertaking. Perhaps one of the most significant factors contributing to the success of the Brazilian program was the time and resources invested in building relationships and expertise. With the assistance of the UNHCR regional resettlement expert, particular emphasis was placed on engaging people through committees, collaborations and meetings. In 2001 a national conference on	At each stage of planning and development, there has been considerable tri-partite involvement (government, non-government agencies and the UNHCR) in an effort to develop a comprehensive program that addresses the entire resettlement pathway from selection to successful integration. The program has also drawn on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers settling in Brazil.