



## Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law

# COMPLEMENTARY REFUGEE PATHWAYS: PRIVATE AND COMMUNITY REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

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Last update: June 2020

Governments are generally responsible for managing refugee resettlement but in some countries, including Australia, ordinary citizens can sponsor people who need protection. The rules and goals of these programs vary, determining their success.

### **Community**

Community refugee sponsorship – also known to as private refugee sponsorship – refers to programs under which individuals, community, faith-based groups, families or businesses take the lead in the welcoming and integrating resettled refugees into a new country.

Community sponsorship programs can support existing government resettlement programs, or be an additional, complementary pathway to protection.

Community sponsorship is best known in the context of Canada, where citizens have facilitated the resettlement of over 327,000 refugees since 1978. As part of the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees, states committed to considering establishing or expanding community sponsorship programs to provide greater access to durable solutions for refugees. Since 2016, at least ten countries have launched or piloted community sponsorship programs, including Argentina, Ireland, Germany, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

### **Defining**

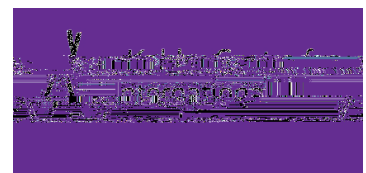
Yes. Refugee sponsorship has a long history in Australia dating back to the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS) that ran from 1978-1997. The CRSS was designed initially to support Australia's settlement of Indochinese refugees, but was expanded to help successfully resettle and integrate over 30,000 refugees from around the globe into the Australian community.

Australia's latest iteration of refugee sponsorship, the



18 and 50 years old, with adequate English language skills and either a job offer or skills that would enable them to find work quickly. Those willing to live in regional areas receive priority.

Sponsors cannot make applications directly; instead they must work with an **Approved Proposing Organisations** (APOs), which are generally experienced service providers appointed by the government. APOs work with sponsors and service providers to assist in the application process.



programs in [Canada](#), [New Zealand](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) reflect the importance of providing sponsored resettlement places additional to their governments' existing quotas. The engagement of the community and the private sector in the resettlement of refugees should not absolve the government of its responsibility to allocate budget and resources to the provision of protection to asylum seekers and refugees. If the CSP is expanded as it currently operates, it would likely lead to a net reduction of government support to refugees. This fundamentally undermines the role that private and community sponsorship programs should play in increasing a country's overall protection capacity.

The CSP can [also be criticised](#) for its focus on integration rather than protection. Given the current Department of Home Affairs criteria (age, English and job skills noted above), it could be argued that the CSP effectively distorts Australia's resettlement program, which has traditionally been focused on protection of the most vulnerable refugees and humanitarian entrants. The Australian Government is currently [undertaking a review](#) of the CSP.

