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INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE RESEARCH: EVIDENCE FOR SMART POLICY

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BACKGROUND

The Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs Refugee Research Project was prompted by discussions among institutional partners in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe. With the number of displaced people growing exponentially throughout the world due to failed or failing states, civil war, or other devastating conditions reaching over 68 million in 2017, rigorous research to inform policy decisions is a necessity. Institutional partners from the United States, Germany and Belgium decided to undertake a research platform that would address refugee integration into local communities, based on the combined areas of expertise of international partners, and allowing for methodological pluralism. Case studies in integration were undertaken in the European Union, the United States, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Mali, and Sri Lanka; where appropriate, the findings highlight global commonalities of processes of integration, and local population reception. This research team recognizes that while most countries in which case studies were undertaken make a genuine effort to invest in and provide mechanisms of integration for the refugees, there are limits to how many resources any country can invest in refugee integration, particularly considering the sky-rocketing numbers of displaced people around the world. That is precisely why projects like this are necessary to lift up experiences of integration, give credit where it is due to a country's efforts, and emphasize the urgent need for adequate research to inform policy, so decisions are made based on facts and evidence, not hearsay or anecdotal evidence.

This brief is organized into six sections: I. Methodologies, II. Data Sources, III. Findings, IV. Policy Recommendations, V. Institutional Partners, and VI. Participating Institutions and People. Findings are organized in three sub-sections: 1. Triggers and Journey, 2. Arrival, (Temporary) Stay and Processing, and 3. Integration. Policy recommendations are organized on the basis of the agency they target including, government, non-governmental institutions, the media, and donor organizations.

I. METHODOLOGIES

- Comparative examination of institutional processes and mechanisms of integration within government agencies and non-governmental institutions involved in refugee integration by means of document analysis.
- Surveys of resettlement professionals and agencies involved in all stages of the application, transition, resettlement and integration processes.
- Surveys of donor agency staff.
- Refugee narrative collection through art, story-telling, oral history and workshops.
- Art and literacy-based methodologies.
- Individual interviews with Iraqi refugees resettled in the United States about their experiences and perceptions of resettlement, membership, and participation in U.S. society.
- Interviews of Syrian refugees in Jordan.
- Surveys and interviews with asylum seekers in Germany.
- Social media text analysis of population reactions to refugees being settled in their communities (Roanoke, Virginia).
- Case analysis of refugee capacity for agency using Fraser's scale of justice democratization scale as a framework to evaluate the international refugee regime.
- A synthetic population model that integrates data from multiple sources to create an agent-based representation that can be used for simulation studies of refugee flow response.

II. DATA SOURCES

- Official documents related to the legal framework for refugee resettlement.
- Official documents governing the institutional framework for refugee resettlement.
- United Nations and UNHCR documents.
- Dublin Convention documents.
- Non-governmental organization documents.
- U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement Resource Library.
- Salaam: Exploring Muslim Cultures project; other local inter-cultural events in Southwest Virginia organized by the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership, designed to encourage learning from one another.
- Original interview data from recently resettled Iraqi families in the United States.
- Media news articles and social media responses.
- Donor agency data.

III. FINDINGS

1. Triggers and Journey

A trigger is the point at which an individual's drive to achieve something, in this case leave his/her country to journey to a perceived safe location, is greater than the fear of the risks involved in fulfilling it. *For refugees, the trigger tends to be violence, such as civil war that threatens the survival of individuals and communities.*

*The journey refugees decide to take tends to be fraught with natural obstacles such as difficult terrain, or seas to cross. While a majority of refugees tend to cross one international border into a neighboring country and do not generally rely on smugglers, those who engage on a longer journey (for instance, Syrian refugees trying to reach Europe) can also encounter conflict with individuals along the way such as smugglers, highwaymen or other refugees. The data gathered for this project documented significant morbidity and mortality rates during the refugee journeys investigated, primarily between Syria and the European Union.*¹

2. Arrival, (Temporary) Stay and Processing

Upon arrival, countries around the globe differ in how they manage refugee processing and/or resettlement. *Official camps are no longer the norm for many refugees; and "stay" means a lengthy stay in a neighboring country which, while it is technically temporary, it often goes on for decades (e.g., Somalis in Kenya, Afghans in Pakistan, Burmese in Thailand and Bangladesh).* During their stay waiting for a resolution of their refugee claim, secondary movements of the refugee population also occur.

In Africa, refugees who fall under government or NGO supervision tend to be placed in what are intended to be temporary facilities, or camps. In Europe, the Dublin regulations state that the country of first irregular entry should process asylum seekers, and allocate them to other

¹ There is a body of scholarship arguing that the distinction between refugees and 'migrants' is more fluid than previously believed, with voluntary (migrant) versus forced migration (refugee) being closer in practical terms than was previously researched. See Hathaway, J. (2007). Forced Migration Studies: Could We Agree Just to 'Date'? *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(3), 349-369; DeWind, J. (2007). Response to Hathaway. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 20(3), 381-385; Erdal, M. B. (2018). Forced to Leave? The Discursive and Analytical Significance of Describing Migration as Forced and Voluntary. *Journal of Ethics and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 981-998; and Carling, J. (2017). Refugee Advocacy and the Meaning of 'Migrants'. *PRIO Policy Brief 2/2017*. Also:

PRIO. <https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=326&type=publicationfile>. For this project, we follow UNHCR definition clarified as 'refugees are people fleeing armed conflict or persecution in their home countries.' In <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

agencies or countries. Dublin has gone through several iterations, but the large number of refugees in 2015 overwhelmed the capacity of Italy and Greece to manage the influx and by many accounts, the Dublin agreement collapsed. (As of this writing, processes of reception and resettlement in the EU are under further transformation.) In Japan, there are different paths of obtaining refuge, and the differences in programs affect what types of support are offered and how they are offered, which in turn affects refugee social integration. In Lebanon, the country with the largest number of refugees relative to its per capita population, some refugees find housing with friends and relatives. Others live in makeshift, informal and unofficial settlements, abandoned buildings and repurposed storefronts. In the United States, an asylum system permits persons already on U.S. soil to apply for asylum status and remain in the U.S. while their application is pending. People outside the United States seeking refuge and resettlement apply and await a decision in another country. Both refugees and asylees must meet the same definition of a refugee; the distinction is whether one applies from overseas or from within the U.S. Other countries have similar systems although they may use different names for it (Australia refers to off-shore and on-shore asylum claimants, for instance).

Once approved for entry with a legal status, *a refugee must navigate multiple agencies to secure services, and it is not always clear who has the power to respond to particular needs and requests because of the vast amount of inter-agency coordination and potential for miscommunication.*

For governments and agencies working with refugees, *large population influxes arriving all at once create processing and institutional challenges, irrespective of the country of arrival.* In Africa, the anti-colonial convulsions that began in the 1950s continue to this day. Large influxes of refugees put pressure on relief workers. In Kenya, for example, by 1978 an average refugee counselor's caseload reached 900, when 60 was regarded as manageable. Lessons from the 2015 crisis in Germany indicate that government agencies tasked with border control and processing of asylum seekers were overwhelmed with applications. Unstructured identity checks, high numbers of unrecognized or unrecorded refugees, limited transparency concerning core data across agencies, lack of personnel and a strong increase in language training needs not covered by existing resources created a difficult situation for the refugees, and for the agencies trying to accommodate them. Trains full of refugees arriving at Munich (Germany) Central Station in 2015, and the spontaneously large numbers of volunteers trying to help created an unmanageable situation. The European migration 'crisis' of 2015, and *refugee emergencies more generally, are critically difficult events for the refugees themselves, a fact not often understood or publicized accordingly. The situation within the EU in 2015-2017 created a crisis of communication among the various agencies tasked with the influx of refugees.*

Some agencies working with refugees to identify their needs, to better help them with resettlement, employment, training or health needs, experienced modest success in providing such aid, but challenges remain. For instance, evidence from the late 1970s in Kenya suggests that three factors tend to undermine the relationship between support agencies and refugees. First, some agency bureaucrats viewed refugees as suffering from a dependency complex. Some officials regarded the monthly 'free money' allocated to refugees to survive as corrupting

instead of helping recipients. This perspective undermined the relationship of trust between agency counselors and refugees in Kenya. Second, within support agencies, there is often a tension between staff directly working with refugees and the bureaucratic structure of the agency itself. Third, understaffing and mismanagement can lead to corruption and a collapse in service provision. These lessons are specific to the Kenya case study, but they are useful reminders of potential challenges that agencies working with refugees may run into.

Refugees routinely come into contact and conflict with representatives of the migration management regime at encampments, via encounters with border patrol officers, by means of surveillance technologies, and as a consequence of restrictive policies governing their reception (such as those outlined in the Dublin regulations). They also encounter public fear of chaos and social disruption that might result from their presence; a turn sometimes prompted by anti-refugee political rhetoric. Iraqi refugees resettled in the United States report high levels of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab attitudes among U.S. citizens, a finding that appears in European countries as well.

Some refugees arrive in a resettlement country not only with physical and mental health issues, but also with a lack of knowledge of the culture and language of their new host nation. This is a highly understandable state of affairs and refugees are not to blame for their lack of knowledge. Recognizing that our findings reflect a Westernized value system of knowledge and analytical categories, multifaceted levels of illiteracy were recorded in a study of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Health illiteracy, defined as parents not knowing their children's birthdays, height or weight was recorded. Economic illiteracy, defined as refugees not knowing where humanitarian aid or funding for their relief came from was also recorded. Refugees believed that wealthier countries would have enough funds to take care of their health and their children's education, a perception found among refugees in other countries as well. The inability to read or write among many refugees, parents and children, indicates that teaching the language of a host country through a typical school-driven curriculum might not be the best practice. Two German NGOs who served as resources for this project recognized the need for change in their delivery of language training services. Depression and anxiety, a desire to go back to their home land, a sense of inadequacy and social isolation were widespread among Syrian refugee children in Jordan.

Resources allocated to refugees to help them through the arrival and processing phase, or during the initial process of integration when they acclimate themselves to their new country are generally meager. In this respect, the situation in Kenya in 1970 is similar to the situation of refugees allocated to new EU member countries in 2017. In 1970, the monthly allowance afforded refugees was 100 shillings, when rent and food cost 350-400 shillings a month. In 2017 in the Baltic countries, the monthly allowance provided refugees was between 130 and 140 euros, when rent alone cost 300 to 400 euros. These resources are clearly inadequate for subsistence. *"The allowance only helps you starve less"* said a refugee in Kenya in mid-70s. *"We left Syria afraid we would die from the bombs; here, we are afraid we will die of hunger,"* said a

refugee in Estonia in 2017. Insufficient resources allocated to refugees have persisted across continents and time frames.

Complicating the processing dilemma is the fact that *refugees have historically been seen and treated as passive recipients of humanitarian aid, they have not been viewed as resources who could participate actively in the process of defining how their lives will be shaped, or how they can contribute to the specific communities in which they are placed once granted the status of refugees.* They are expected to accept their new status without challenging policies or assumptions made about them by the governments granting them protection. A case study in Sri Lanka found that active involvement by civil society agencies (Deshodaya) helped 'democratize' the process of refugee reception by involving displaced people in the creation and implementation of new notions of protection that took into consideration their spiritual, cultural, social, economic and political realities. A Kenya case study also pointed to situations when refugees took their future into their own hands by organizing themselves to avoid the refugee support agencies that treated them 'like children.' In recognition of such situations, Member States of the United Nations adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, laying the groundwork for a more comprehensive and predictable response to global crises that lead to large influxes of refugees. *The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework deriving from the New York Declaration calls on states to include refugees in their communities from the very beginning, making them active participants in their futures.*²

3. Integration

UNHCR considers a refugee 'integrated' if he or she 1. enjoys human rights on par with the citizens of the country in which he or she is resettled, 2. is self-reliant, able to provide for the family, and 3. participates in a social community without fear of persecution or discrimination.

For resettled refugees with legal rights and a path to citizenship, there are often challenges to the full exercise of membership in societies of refuge, even when legal membership is available. Obstacles include limits to membership, anti-refugee public and political attitudes, and barriers to belonging and participation. Integration of refugees into host communities is governed by the local population's complex reactions to refugees entering their communities, which may vary from welcoming, to anger and fear. Resettlement agencies and churches have stepped in to help with the social connectivity of refugees in the EU and in the United States.

Refugee resettlement in the United States, accomplished through cooperative agreements between the Department of State and nine national resettlement agencies, has followed a policy of concentration, which initially placed refugees in 190 resettlement communities. While each site offers a federally-supported, compulsory set of basic services to arriving refugees,

² See Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, at <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html>.

community variability in terms of accessibility and quality of post-resettlement support services has the potential to influence outcomes for resettled individuals. There is substantial variation in the length, breadth, and quality of support services available in resettlement host communities. *Agencies working with refugees rate stable employment, adequate housing, and adequate wages as the top three factors contributing to successful refugee integration. Educational attainment, engagement in the host community, and ensuring connections among newer refugees and more established immigrants are also ranked high on the list of successful integration factors.* A similar finding regarding educational attainment appears in the case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Discontinued education among both adults and children of refugees is common in countries such as Jordan, where more than two thirds of Syrian refugee children are not enrolled in public schools for a variety of reasons. This situation creates a future cohort of uneducated people who will have trouble adjusting, finding a job or integrating.

In addition, the case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan finds that *in order to promote refugee integration, it is imperative to systematically examine the physical and mental health status of refugees* as they arrive in a resettlement country. Similarly, a visit to a Caritas agency in Germany working with refugees with mental health issues revealed that refugees are often reluctant to identify themselves as suffering from a mental health problem out of shame and a sense of inadequacy. This leads to misdiagnosis, and inadequate health support.

A case study of the path that asylum seekers follow to obtain a protected legal status was undertaken only for Japan. Findings indicate that the path influences outcomes and the ultimate protection and support asylum seekers receive. Visas for humanitarian reasons tend to be granted more often than refugee status, and the number of resettled refugees is small by comparison to the EU or the United States. Resettled refugees (from Indochina and Myanmar) and locally integrated refugees in principle are treated equally by the government of Japan, but people with special protective status are not. In reality, the respective statuses affect these three groups' access to social networks and their ability to integrate. Civil society organizations have a critical role in helping with the acclimation of refugees recognized in-country. People seeking refuge who are granted visas on humanitarian grounds face the uncertainty of annual renewals of their visas and therefore their ability to forge human contacts and integrate long-term is further hampered.

In the European Union, resettlement and integration are governed by the Dublin Convention which has undergone several adjustments to reflect the situation on the ground under a large influx of refugees. Despite member states agreeing in principle that the entire EU should shoulder the responsibility for refugee resettlement based on country quotas, *refugee integration is affected by the national politics of select EU members, particularly newer EU members* (formerly behind the Iron Curtain). While legal and institutional mechanisms to accept quotas of refugees exist, *individual countries have invoked the agreement's national security threat clause to refuse to accept refugees (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic).* One new EU member adopted laws to govern the refugee resettlement regime, then rolled them back (Hungary). *Institutions to implement the legal framework exist, but their efficiency is hindered by*

inadequate resources, insufficiently trained staff, and institutional red tape. The result is a low rate of refugee resettlement in new EU member countries. With recent proposals for external centers to process asylum seekers outside the EU, the rate of resettlement and integration in Europe will likely continue to go down.

In the United States, a public-private partnership is in place between federal agencies and non-governmental organizations. Federal agencies provide funding from the beginning of the resettlement process. The State Department Reception and Placement Program provides initial funds for rent, furnishing, food and clothing; followed by the Health and Human Services department which provides longer-term cash, medical assistance and other social services. After this initial period of federal aid, many charitable institutions remain engaged with refugees, and private philanthropy to support services no longer covered by federal aid has been strong. Charitable organizations and volunteers help with a variety of integration needs, from teaching refugees about culture and language, to assisting them in finding jobs and placing their children in school. The Blacksburg Refugee Partnership is one case study of such grassroots support.

Grass-roots support agencies are also active in lobbying against policies that reduce the number of refugees allowed to enter the U.S., as is currently the case with the U.S. administration. Interestingly, philanthropic donations to support the work of refugee agencies are on the rise at a time when fewer refugees are being permitted to relocate to the U.S. Contributing to increased public awareness of the refugee crisis are media coverage, social media stories, and other forms of public education of the situation on the ground. A text analysis of social media public reactions to the resettlement of refugees in the Roanoke (Virginia) area indicates that *public responses to refugees are related to or influenced by the views elected officials hold about refugees.* More data collection and analysis is needed to identify if views expressed in social media correspond to political views pre-existing the refugee resettlement. *The debate in policy circles in the U.S. has included suggestions that refugees pose a 'burden' to society, an argument that is starting to spread to the EU as well. In the U.S. and select EU countries, there is an increasing debate about the security risk that refugees pose.*

A case study of Iraqi refugees resettled in the United States found that refugees do not feel fully part of American society. Muslim communities in particular feel like 'second class citizens' in the U.S., while the White House and GOP anti-Muslim political rhetoric has led some to state that "we are perceived as terrorists, not as human beings". Recent Presidential Executive Orders aimed at barring entry to citizens or refugees of specific countries with Muslim majorities are seen as a significant obstacle to building the trust necessary for integration in local communities. The opposition to these policies in the form of rallies supporting refugees from the banned countries led resettled refugees already in the U.S. to feel more solidarity from some American citizens, which also helps morale and integration on a human level. Other obstacles to integration that Iraqis identified were a. Long working hours in the U.S., which leaves little time or energy for community engagement with people other than immediate family; b. High taxes with no corresponding services, particularly in the health sector; c. Lack of knowledge of American political institutions and processes, including civic participation and lobbying to change laws.

Among the factors that encourage integration at a local level the following were identified: a. Community building, to include the local population in which refugees resettled; b. Level of diversity in American society, where refugees could exchange cultural and social practices with native-born Americans; c. Local institutional support from schools, police, city councils, etc. to incorporate diverse cultural and religious traditions and support refugee-led initiatives; d. Language proficiency prior to arrival in the resettlement country was found in this study to be a critical skill in being able to start the integration process.

Bridging cultures through music, arts, story-telling, and breaking bread together with the local population is found to be a powerful tool of integration, both in cases observed in the United States and in Germany. Sharing stories of the journey from a violent to a safe environment, of the process they have to go through to be vetted and approved for resettlement, of their home land and what they miss, their resettled land and what they do not understand, refugees are more able to share their feelings and identities on a human level. The process of integration involves a human and spiritual aspect beyond typical categories of integration that is not well understood by the public at large.

Even though this project has not used a comparative methodology, *common obstacles to integration appear to be access to the housing and labor market, language barriers, and social-cultural acclimation of refugees irrespective of country or continent.* It also includes *rising anti-refugee sentiment* among publics across all new EU member countries, although some are more (violently) expressing their racial attitudes than others. Polls show a marked distrust of refugees arriving from Muslim cultures and the Middle East in general. Refugees who do not feel supported or welcomed leave the country to which they were assigned and look for greener pastures elsewhere, typically in Germany. This puts increasing pressure on some EU countries more than others, and is untenable.

A final note about methodologies to assess refugee integration policy: This project has embraced methodological pluralism in an effort to bring to the fore a diverse set of findings based on existing or new data and analysis. Some scholars believe that *a research-informed policy index or "rubric" should guide the policy development, implementation, and revision of policies impacting the resettlement of people seeking refuge.* A resource of this nature should take into account the informed perspectives of actors in organizations and agencies at every level of resettlement work in the long-chain of governance of refugees. At present, in many countries the policy-driven resettlement of refugees by various agencies and organizations appears to occur without a common rubric from which to develop, propose, implement, and evaluate relevant policies. Resettlement, reception, and integration policies may at the same time be regulated technically by national laws [statutes], and other guidance, as in the United States, yet still uninformed by a lack of engagement by policymakers with empirical, theoretical, and testimonial research. A policy rubric could bridge the gap between legal regulation and policy-informed resettlement practices. Lacking such rubric, forms of conflation and data imputation (conceptually and argumentatively) occur in which policymakers and practitioners arbitrarily substitute values, priorities, and proposed outcomes in place of criteria made

available through a shared policy index. Resettlement policies and practices should be grounded in informed criteria – values, priorities, intended outcomes – as assessed by resettlement practitioners and agents, and by refugees themselves as the case may be.

It should be recognized, however, that in some countries, like the United States, there is a longstanding system—rooted in law, regulation, and other guidance—for the resettlement and integration of refugees. The system does of course have weaknesses (many of which stem from insufficient federal funding, coupled with the challenges experienced by other low-income populations in the U.S. – affordable housing, health care, child care, etc.) and does face significant political challenge.

Large-scale population migration creates enormous challenges for the host nation’s infrastructure. Understanding these challenges and creating appropriate strategies for accommodation can be aided by methodologies that integrate data and modeling of those processes and their implications. Integrating data from multiple sources could create a ‘synthetic population’ model, an agent-based representation that could be used for simulation studies of interventions intended to improve public health, disaster response, and more.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations regarding the refugee journey and arrival, for all countries experiencing an influx of refugees

1. Refugees do not escape violence to enter safety; traveling from a situation of violent conflict that threatens their lives to a safe location is also a dangerous process. Refugees must be protected throughout their journey and not only upon arrival. Protection measures should be tailored to the vulnerabilities of refugees (elderly, disabled, minors, pregnant women, etc.).
2. Policy should take into account the specificities of various transit paths. These must include the geographies of each transit route, but they also should include steps to address the hazards that characterize certain transit countries, ranging from practices of human trafficking to the restrictions of mobility in place, which lead to refugee arrest and detainment.
3. Protection measures should be provided at the EU level through a collective, Europeanized effort. Policy needs to depart from arbitrage between border monitoring/control and Search and Rescue. This results in non-governmental organizations having to fill the “rescue gap” despite possessing fewer capabilities to do so than states, which often leads to an increase in the number of fatalities. European Union Search and Rescue efforts must be conducted in cooperation with non-governmental actors.

Recommendations to support agencies staff and resettlement agencies

Recognizing that some agencies already work on adjusting practices that need change in the direct refugee-agency staff relations, and that agency practices differ from one country to another, we offer the following:

1. Establish a strong relationship with the refugees. Given their precarious situation, refugees will not easily or immediately practice transparency and share their personal information. They are sometimes psychologically marked by violent conditions in their home country, disappointment in the established system of states, governments and agencies who, they feel let them down as citizens of their own country, and are prone to say what they think agency workers want to hear in order to secure a minimal level of support.
2. Encourage critical reflexivity among refugees, to embolden them to reimagine the current discourse on 'protection' and their own role in visualizing what protection means. Use the Deshodaya model in Sri Lanka, to engage large scale populations in a discussion about dominant frames of power and how to avoid being passive recipients of power discourses.
3. Identify factors that may place refugees at risk in the integration process, such as illiteracy, and ensure supports that permit refugees to overcome those factors. Consider that typical language delivery classes may not be appropriate for all refugees, and adjust mode of delivery to fit the specific refugee condition.
4. Bureaucratic transparency is essential to maintain trust and good working relationships between relief agency staff and refugees. Decisions made at high bureaucratic levels that do not take into account feedback from lower level agency workers who work directly with refugees are counterproductive.
5. For communities that have embraced their roles as host sites for newly arriving refugees, assess key agency resources in support of resettlement. Gaps in housing, community policing, dental care, and mental health care stand out as areas for investment and capacity building by communities that want to increase success rates for refugees.
6. Build solidarity with the cause of refugees in countries where anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment and rhetoric are strong. Rallies, media engagement, and other forms of education and awareness raising help refugees see that they are not alone, and that not all the people in a specific country are anti-refugee.
7. Build coalitions of non-governmental agencies, government officials, and communities of faith, to promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue and understanding. Local integration is well served by such coalitions.
8. Organize and facilitate inter-cultural events that bring together local community residents and the incoming refugee population, to maximize interpersonal contact. Such events can help both communities bridge the knowledge gap on a human level.

Recommendations to (specific) governments

1. International power-brokers such as the EU, the U.S., Russia, the OSCE, the Organization of African States should adopt foreign policies that promote an end to conflict zones and frozen conflicts which are the source of increasing flows of refugees.
2. Political discourses defining refugees as a security threat should be reanalyzed and redefined. Several studies found little empirical proof of refugees as a security threat, although this is the dominant framing in several case studies under analysis.
3. Avoid adopting policies that further stress the refugee population, already stressed from their specific life circumstances. Rely on data and scholarly analysis to inform policies and de-politicize the policy-making process.
4. Deportation is a legitimate immigration enforcement mechanism for use with individuals who have no legal basis to remain in a country (such as a pending asylum claim). Deportation is not the same as *refoulement*, which is never allowed. Unfortunately, deportations are also massive socio-economic and socio-psychological disturbances for individuals and their families, and the broader society of which they are a part. They are thus diametrically opposed to development, and they do not prevent those deported from leaving again. Not least, traumatic memories of deportations may last for many years. Consequently, it is recommended that, when deportations are warranted, they be undertaken with utmost care and consideration for the human condition, to minimize further psychological scarring of refugees. Further, it is recommended that they be always combined with a sustainable and long term reintegration component which could allow individuals and their families to better cope economically with the unexpected return and contribute to diminishing stigmatization of deported individuals.
5. Funding training programs such as language, healthcare, education, and employment enhance the long-term ability of refugees to resettle and become productive members of society. Governmental and non-governmental agencies should work together to complement each other so resources are not wasted. Creative funding strategies include seeking international grants, and creating consortiums of agencies to enhance the range of services offered.
6. Create consistency across supports provided for refugees and similarly-protected foreign residents to make these equally available for all who seek refuge.
7. Working in the context of the national system of public administration and policy delivery, create a local "refugee support" office to help refugees access all types of public and private supports available. Make sure information is easily available.
8. Training refugees on how to recognize a health condition is highly desirable. Such education will help refugee populations understand when to seek treatment and avoid higher medical costs in the future.
9. In **Japan**, the government should increase and improve access to public supports for all categories of protected foreign-born persons and asylum seekers. Specially-designated

local support offices should ensure that all protected groups and asylum-seekers can use the public and nongovernmental services that are available. In addition, language-training should be a major priority and available for a longer period of time than currently offered for all protected groups. Asylum-seekers should also be given opportunities for language education.

10. The **government of the United States** should reject policies and rhetoric that target specific groups for opprobrium and “othering.”
11. Given the long-standing commitment that all the refugee resettlement agencies have, the **U.S. Federal government** should not reduce funding for resettlement programs.
12. Refugee resettlement agencies and refugees themselves should be part of the core conversations when forming federal policies around refugee resettlement. Given their expertise in dealing with affected communities internationally and also with the diaspora communities **in the U.S.**, refugee resettlement agencies should be given a greater say in how federal policies around regulating philanthropic donations are formed.
13. The **U.S. Federal government** should not adopt a critical stance towards resettlement agencies, as they play a crucial role in helping the U.S. manage a complex problem.
14. A thorough evaluation of resettlement policies and processes **in the United States** should be initiated to enhance assessment of: agency and community capacity and resource adequacy; placement decision criteria and process; accessibility and quality of community resources to include the local agency and the broader civic infrastructure; and, multi-dimensional conceptions of post-resettlement outcomes. Such an evaluation has the potential to identify areas for improvement and investment, redundancies and inefficiencies in process, and leverage points to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for resettled individuals. The evaluation should be completed by an independent evaluator with support from the **Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the U.S. Department of State**.
15. Funding and staffing the **U.S. resettlement program**: The decentralized, federal approach to refugee resettlement allows host communities to provide services and resources relevant to their context. However, the system is substantially underfunded and understaffed. Proactive investment by national and state entities in local civic infrastructure and capacity will create a more consistent and higher quality network of services to refugees. Targeted investment has the potential to reduce the rate of poor post-resettlement outcomes and the secondary effects those outcomes have on host communities.
16. The **EU** needs to enforce its own regulations regards refugee quotas; states who refuse to absorb refugees should pay the stipulated 250,000 euros per refugee to the state that accepts them; these policies exist, but have not been enforced to date.
17. **New EU members** countries need to educate their own publics about refugees. If refugees arrive in a country and the public reception is bad, refugees will either see on TV, hear from friends, or find on the internet that other countries are more welcoming, and they will leave again.

18. There are many integration success stories that demonstrate both refugee resilience and adaptability, and their value added to society. Governments should invest resources in sharing those narratives widely. Officials working in the agencies responsible for refugee integration need to make this a priority.
19. Adequate funding for refugee-related programs will remain a challenge and a priority. **New EU members** could learn from their Western counterparts about effective donor relations and how to seek charitable contributions to complement their integration programs. NGOs have a special opportunity in this area.
20. The **EU and its member states** should work towards a true harmonization of asylum and refugee policy, including a permanent distribution mechanism.
21. The **EU** should engage more in the mediation of international conflicts and peace negotiations (when desired by the conflict parties).
22. The **EU** should extend its emerging multi-nexus external migration policy approach and link migration, development, trade, security, climate change and other policies with each other in order to increase coherence and effectiveness of its policy.

Recommendations to the media

1. Provide stories that educate the public about: a. How refugees are received and treated in host countries throughout the world, both in cities and in camps; b. Who funds refugee services; c. What services refugees can and cannot expect once in a specific country, to avoid misplaced expectations by those seeking refuge.
2. NGOs in new EU member countries need to make a concerted effort to educate the public about refugees, particularly those from the Middle East. Internet and TV programs telling refugee personal stories will add to better understanding the condition of refugees, and what integration means. Success stories should be studied carefully, brought into policy discourse, at the national level, lifted up and celebrated.

Recommendations to donor agencies

1. Support academic research that produces evidence-based analysis to inform policy on refugee issues. In recent years, some grant-making agencies moved to discontinue grants for refugee projects unless they have a strong direct service component. While service to the refugee community is the ultimate goal, academic research may appear 'academic' in nature without necessarily serving the refugee community. Yet data-driven evidence and cutting edge methodological approaches are essential to offer fact-based analysis of the refugee condition. Synthetic data, social media analysis, or the creation of

a policy index that takes into consideration the insights of actors at all levels, including those in organizations situated “in between” policy-making entities (e.g. the United Nations) and refugees themselves, resettlement agencies, NGOs, camps, temporary and transitional facilities, or host communities are innovative and de-politicized methodologies to inform the public and the policy world about refugees. In the absence of rigorous research and data, anecdotal evidence, hearsay, or polarizing discourses can and will influence policy - and public opinion - in a way that is not consistent with events on the ground. This will amount to a clear disservice to the refugee community. Grant-making agencies have a special opportunity to support scholarship to inform refugee policy.

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