Introduction

Today, one in every 113 people around the world is a refugee, has applied to become a refugee or has fled to another part of the country to escape conflict or violence.¹

This is a humanitarian emergency on a global scale. The following guide explains the refugee crisis and provides guidance for philanthropists on making an impact at every stage of the refugee journey.

Refugees have fled in fear for their lives and cannot return home until it is safe—many never return home.

This philanthropy field guide was developed by Geneva Global in partnership with The Philanthropy Centre at J.P. Morgan.

WHO IS A REFUGEE?

Refugees are forced to flee their homes and seek protection in another country because of conflict or ethnic, tribal or religious violence. Today, people are on the move for many reasons, but there is an important distinction to be made about the decision to leave one’s home. Migrants choose to leave their homes in search of economic or educational opportunities, or because of a natural disaster. Refugees have fled in fear for their lives and cannot return home until it is safe—many never return home. Refugees are given specific legal status and are protected by international law and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

WHERE DO REFUGEES COME FROM?

As of 2016, there are over 65.6 million people who have been forced to leave their homes, the most since World War II. Of this total, more than 22.5 million are refugees. Just over 17 million are protected by UNHCR and are predominantly from Syria (5.5 million), Afghanistan (2.5 million) and South Sudan (1.4 million). Violent conflicts in Iraq and Syria are major drivers of the refugee crisis, as are recent uprisings in Yemen and South Sudan. Civil wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic—as well as ongoing instability in Myanmar, Somalia and Afghanistan—are also drivers. There are also 5.3 million Palestinian refugees, who are protected owing to their displacement stemming from the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

REFUGEES, INCLUDING PERSONS IN A REFUGEE-LIKE SITUATION | MID-2016

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The Refugee Journey

The Initial Flight:
The decision to leave is usually made quickly as conflict or violence escalates.

Many refugees flee with few possessions and without official travel documents like passports and visas. These journeys are oftentimes desperate and dangerous: For example, hundreds of thousands cross the Mediterranean Sea from Syria each year, and thousands die in the attempt.⁶

Since leaving a home country is risky, many refugees are single or married men hoping to establish a foothold in a neighboring country before sending for their families. However, it is not uncommon for entire families to flee together. Among the most vulnerable groups are unaccompanied children who have lost their families and make the journey on their own. In 2015 alone, 96,500 unaccompanied children applied for asylum in Europe.⁷

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⁷ UNICEF. Press release: Unaccompanied refugee and migrant children in urgent need of protection, warns UNICEF. May 6, 2016. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/media/media_91069.html
CROSSING THE BORDER INTO ANOTHER COUNTRY

As individuals cross the border, they are often met by response teams of United Nations (UN), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sometimes government workers who triage their needs and guide them to shelter. However, this is not always the case. Refugees fleeing by boat may arrive at entry points that are not prepared for their arrival. In this case, community members, local NGOs and religious groups may provide temporary housing and food. Refugees with more resources may bypass camps and instead head to cities to find work.

Refugee camps are protected areas set up using tents, empty dormitories or repurposed detention centers to provide shelter. However, in contrast to the traditional image of refugees living in camps, an estimated 60% of refugees live in urban environments.\(^8\) In urban areas in particular, logistics are complex, as refugees may move around or go “underground” if they are working illegally. Many are exploited, face discrimination or fear encounters with authorities. Organizations such as URBAN REFUGEES specialize in meeting the needs of refugees outside of camps.

While camps and other solutions are meant to be temporary, extended violence and conflict can mean that individuals stay in camps for the long term. For example, the Dadaab camps in Kenya were built in 1991 in response to conflict in Somalia. Without better solutions available, some refugees have lived there for more than 25 years.\(^9\)

\(^8\)UNHCR. Urban Refugees. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/urban-refugees.html

THE REFUGEE JOURNEY

FILING FOR ASYLUM

After refugees cross a border into a neighboring or nearby host country, one of their first steps is to file for legal asylum. A person becomes a refugee when their application for asylum is granted. Until that decision is made, these individuals are legally known as asylum-seekers. The majority of refugees stay in the neighboring country where they first arrive. However, some refugees—such as Syrians living in camps in Greece or one of the Middle East states—take secondary passages toward Europe. Increasingly restrictive border policies mean that individuals can become stranded in countries like Serbia and Bulgaria that are ill-equipped to respond to their needs. As borders tighten, some refugees seek clandestine routes in hopes of accessing better opportunities.

AFTER THE CAMP:
REPARTITION, RESETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

The next and often preferred step for most refugees is repatriation to their home countries once it is considered safe. In instances where their home countries are too dangerous, refugees may integrate into their host countries or be selected for resettlement in a third country.

Third-party resettlement considerations are complex, with priority given to women and girls at risk, survivors of violence or torture, those with special medical needs, children at risk, and separated family members. While refugee status is protected by international law, resettlement processes vary by country—further complicating international coordination. Less than 1% of refugees were resettled in 2015; the majority returned to their home countries.10

In contrast to the formal processes around resettlement, integration processes are largely informal. As long as an individual remains in a refugee camp recognized by UNHCR, he or she retains refugee status. Urban situations are less clear. In practice, host countries may prevent refugees from filing for a new legal status, working or otherwise formally integrating.


HOST VS. RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES

Host countries often must absorb thousands or millions of fleeing individuals simply because they have a border in common with a country experiencing conflict or violence. Host countries play a different role than “third-party” resettlement countries, which include Western European countries, the United States and Canada. Resettlement countries have selection criteria for which refugees they allow to enter.
IN THE NEWS: POLICIES LIMITING RESETTLEMENT

Shifting political priorities in the European Union, United States, Australia and Canada have had a strong impact on resettlement options. With the influx of refugees across the Mediterranean Sea and along inland routes through Eastern and Southern Europe, the European Union continues to struggle to establish a coordinated response for refugees.

The United States, Australia and Canada—leading countries for refugee resettlement outside of Europe—have experienced political shifts in different ways. Since 1975, the United States has welcomed over 3 million refugees. However, refugee resettlement in 2017 and beyond is in flux owing to a new political administration that has sought to suspend and reduce admissions. Refugee resettlement in Australia has decreased since 2012, with 6,002 individuals admitted in 2015. In contrast, Canada resettled 46,700 refugees in 2016, nearly double the number admitted in 2015.

The Gulf states of the Middle East have drawn international criticism for continuing to close their borders to resettlement—choosing instead to increase foreign assistance to their neighbors in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, who are bearing the burden.

Broadly speaking, Asian countries have resettled very few refugees in recent years, focusing instead on humanitarian assistance and funding support in conflict countries. Regionally, there has been no coordinated response to the decades-old crisis in Myanmar, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have been displaced due to ethnic and religious violence.

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LEADING THINKERS: RESETTLEMENT

Alexander Betts, Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on the politics and economics of refugee assistance. His TED Talk discusses why refugee resettlement is failing and focuses on economic solutions to solve it.

David Miliband, CEO of the International Rescue Committee. His 2016 opinion piece in the NY Daily News builds on Betts’s work in arguing that refugees should be seen as assets to the countries that shelter them.

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Opportunities for Impact

Philanthropy can make an impact at three different points during the refugee journey:

01  WHEN REFUGEES FIRST ARRIVE IN A HOST COUNTRY

02  WHEN THEY ARE SHELTERED IN CAMPS OR OTHER SITUATIONS

03  DURING RESETTLEMENT

The following information describes each point of action and considerations for philanthropic support.

Philanthropists interested in supporting refugee resettlement have opportunities to ensure that refugees have access to education, healthcare, employment, legal assistance and other services to rebuild their lives.
SUPPORTING REFUGEES IN CRISIS SITUATIONS AT THE BORDER

When they make it over the border, individuals are often suffering from psychological trauma and may be facing life-threatening medical crises, such as dehydration, malnutrition or hypothermia. UN agencies—such as the World Food Programme and UNICEF—NGOs and government partners provide food, water, clothing, blankets, emergency medical care, temporary shelter and other humanitarian aid. In addition to this most basic care, first responders may also provide legal processing to help individuals file for asylum.

For a philanthropist supporting the emergency response, timeliness is critical. Local and international partners must mobilize quickly to reduce loss of life. The success of emergency programs is measured by the stabilization of vulnerable arrivals and their access to protection and assistance.
SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES LIVING IN CAMPS AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Once the initial emergency has passed, refugees need access to education, healthcare, employment, legal support and other services and opportunities that are a part of everyday living. Below, we discuss areas where private philanthropy can help fill gaps and create a more robust network of services for refugees around the world.

HEALTHCARE TO CONTINUE THE PROCESS OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RECOVERY

Keeping millions of refugees healthy with proper nutrition and basic healthcare requires both coordination and specialized skills and services. Health services range from large-scale public health interventions to prevent outbreaks—such as vaccination campaigns—to primary care and mental health services for adults and children.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO KEEP CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Refugee children are five times more likely not to be in school than the global average. Many host countries—like Turkey, Lebanon and Greece—do not allow refugee children to enroll in the school system, for reasons ranging from discrimination to overwhelming numbers. NGOs provide academic programming ranging from camp-based schools to informal youth centers. Education is an area where private philanthropy can support the development of best practices and standards, service delivery and innovation.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TO GENERATE INCOME AND PRESERVE DIGNITY

The majority of refugees want to work, but encounter obstacles to their employment, such as uncertainty as to the duration of their displacement, lack of appropriate documentation and resistance from host countries. Philanthropists have the opportunity to empower refugees to build their own livelihoods—and, in some cases, to advocate on their behalf for fair treatment from host governments. Approaches include support for entrepreneurship, adult education with job preparation components, and advocacy for host countries to provide access to work permits and financial services. Interventions that aim to build economic opportunity are inherently higher risk than the delivery of tangible goods and services, but offer potentially lasting and transformative impact.

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Services for women and girls focus on health-related services and reducing gender-based violence. While some organizations focus solely on services for women and girls, for many this is a niche area of programming and therefore underfunded. Health services include menstrual hygiene, reproductive health services and maternal healthcare. Gender-based violence programming focuses on solutions ranging from alternative fuel sources (to reduce attacks on women walking long distances to collect firewood) to specialized legal aid and rape kits that a survivor can use to seek justice. Philanthropists can bring attention to the hardships facing refugee women and girls and demand programs that increase safety, improve health and empower women and girls living in refugee settings.

TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INCREASED SAFETY AND BETTER COMMUNICATION

Access to energy sources and technology is vital to camp life. Connectivity is not a luxury item for refugees, but a crucial survival tool. With access to technology, a woman going out to collect water can alert her community if she is in danger, or a child who has just arrived at a camp can reunite with family more efficiently. Dependable electricity makes it possible to work or study without the interruption of blackouts. There is a tremendous need within camps for technology solutions—ranging from solar-powered electrical systems to wireless connections. Corporate donors, social venture capitalists and skilled professionals, such as software developers and engineers, have skill sets that lend themselves to the types of innovation needed in refugee settings.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO FORMALLY APPLY FOR PROTECTIONS AND TO ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES

When refugees flee, they may leave behind their identification, academic certifications, financial paperwork, medical prescriptions, birth certificates, land titles and other crucial documentation. Philanthropists have the opportunity to improve timely, specialized legal services in an ever-changing environment of legal restrictions placed by host and resettlement countries. Legal assistance empowers refugees with the tools and information necessary to understand their rights and access to healthcare, education, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Legal services are often accompanied by translation and literacy support for refugees with little or no formal education.
CASH TRANSFERS TO EMPOWER REFUGEES TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES

Owing to the number of providers and their specializations, services are rarely coordinated. Refugees can spend their days visiting a variety of NGOs to meet their daily needs. Increasingly, direct cash transfers, which give cash to refugees instead of providing vouchers or other benefit packages, are being explored as a way to give refugees their own purchasing power for the goods and services they need most, including clothing and pharmacy products.

SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES IN THIRD-COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT OR REPATRIATION

SERVICES TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL RESETTLEMENT IN A NEW COUNTRY

Philanthropists interested in supporting refugee resettlement have opportunities to ensure that refugees have access to education, healthcare, employment, legal assistance and other services to rebuild their lives. The areas of need are similar to those in host country situations; however, the approaches are different.

A refugee arriving in a new country is met by a voluntary organization—such as the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, HIAS or Church World Service. Volunteers or NGO staff members take the arriving individual or family to their new home, which is followed by thorough cultural orientation, including basics such as how to operate household appliances and use public transportation. Refugees are immediately enrolled in language, literacy and job training programs to work toward self-sufficiency. Enrolling families in public services programs and ensuring children are enrolled in the public school system are critical steps. Support for refugees is intensive for the first 12–18 months following arrival—ensuring that individuals and families are on a path toward self-sufficiency with access to social support networks.

RESETTLED ACROSS THE GLOBE: EXPERIENCES OF ARRIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY

Learn about the culture shock that refugees experience in a video about Sudanese refugees who were resettled in the United States (4:58).

Strength in What Remains, by Tracy Kidder, the story of Deo, who, having survived civil war and genocide in Burundi, arrives in the United States with $200 and the clothes he wears.

The New Odyssey: The Story of Europe’s Refugee Crisis, by Patrick Kingsley, which shares firsthand accounts of refugees from Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan and other countries heading to Europe—and makes the case for more welcoming refugee policies.
Philanthropists can play a critical role in the lives of refugees who are resettling by filling gaps in services, addressing areas of underfunding and bringing innovation into the sector.

• Voluntary organizations are often critically underfunded, as the number of refugees resettled fluctuates annually, with the result that arriving refugees do not receive the high-touch support they need. Philanthropists can ensure that voluntary organizations are fully funded and able to serve all arrivals.

• Many refugees, particularly those from Syria and Iraq, are from the middle class with advanced education and skills, and they hope to pursue their original careers. Foreign credential evaluators help refugees transfer their credentials to their new countries, and some donors provide small grants to support the process.

• Cities are a popular resettlement location because of access to public transportation, social services and employment opportunities. However, the expense of urban living can result in housing insecurity. To ease the strain of finding a permanent home, organizations and funders have supported the building or refurbishing of homes for newly arriving families.

• Wraparound services fill the gap between government-funded safety nets and practical needs. Health case managers or community volunteers managed through NGOs often help coordinate healthcare—including mental health services—and transportation to office visits. Translation services are a key necessity as refugees learn new languages. Legal services are provided to help refugees apply for family reunification and navigate pathways to citizenship. Entrepreneurship, microfinance and financial literacy programs are additional services that philanthropists can support to help refugees build their own businesses.

SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES RETURNING TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES

UNHCR is one of the leading organizations that coordinates repatriation, ensuring that the choice to return is made freely. Working with government agencies and NGOs, UNHCR provides a range of services, including home country visits to see the conditions, legal aid and housing support (often in the form of restitution). While much of the repatriation process is handled through government channels, private philanthropy can support agencies like UNHCR or NGOs that provide long-term case management to support reintegration—including employment assistance and support groups.
Leading Private Funders

The global response to the refugee crisis relies on an international network of funders, including governments (independently and through the United Nations), private foundations and individual philanthropists.

The following private donors provide extensive funding for the response to the refugee crisis.
EUROPEAN PROGRAMME FOR INTEGRATION AND MIGRATION (EPIM)
epim.info
A joint initiative of 25 foundations, including the Aga Khan Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, EPIM fosters shared learning and supports the work of civil society organizations on migration and integration.

IKEA FOUNDATION
ikeafoundation.org
The Swedish furniture company collaborated with UNHCR to develop the Better Shelter—a secure alternative to tents or other makeshift shelters. Another example is the foundation’s Better Lives for Refugees project, which provided solar lanterns in the Azraq Camp in Jordan.

SAÏD FOUNDATION
saidfoundation.org/syria-programme
Since 2011, the foundation has focused on the Syrian crisis, providing emergency aid for refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and other host countries. The foundation’s support for this target population is holistic and includes emergency shelters, education and medical care.

TENT
tent.org
Founded by Hamdi Ulukaya, CEO of U.S.-based yogurt company Chobani, TENT’s mission is to improve the lives of displaced people, including refugees, around the world. Ulukaya is a vocal supporter of refugees and has pledged the majority of his fortune to help end the humanitarian crisis.

UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION
unfoundation.org
Created in 1998 by media mogul and philanthropist Ted Turner, the foundation supports UNHCR and is well known for its Nothing But Nets campaign, which provides bed nets to refugees who are at risk of malaria, among other groups.

UPS AND THE UPS FOUNDATION
sustainability.ups.com/committed-to-more/humanitarian-logistics/
UPS and the UPS Foundation contribute logistical expertise, funds and services to support UNHCR emergency response efforts. Leveraging its know-how and infrastructure, UPS also serves a critical role in providing the technological innovation to streamline the distribution, tracking and delivery of essential supplies to millions of refugees and displaced people.

Philanthropy Field Guides with resource links: jpmorgan.com/philanthropyfieldguides
Summary

There are several approaches to beginning a philanthropic engagement in the refugee sector. We recommend three steps for philanthropists to consider:

01 **ASSESS YOUR PHILANTHROPIC PORTFOLIO**

Philanthropists may consider adding refugees as a target population to their existing work in education, economic development or related areas. For example, a philanthropist interested in accelerated education programs might explore programmatic opportunities that include refugee children. Alternatively, some philanthropists may choose to build a philanthropic portfolio around refugees and support a broader scope of programming to meet their needs.

02 **DIVE DEEPER TO START REFINING INTERESTS**

A practical step to refining your interest is to dive deeper into one of the action items included in this guide, or explore the leading private funders in this sector to gain further insight into tried-and-true and new approaches in this field. Funders and their partners also provide country profiles that may highlight a conflict or community that is of particular interest.

03 **REFLECT ON WHICH POINT OF ACTION RESONATES MOST**

There are three points of action on the refugee journey where private philanthropy can provide critical support. Philanthropists may decide to focus on one stage of the journey, helping (1) those in the emergency crisis stage who need essential healthcare, food and shelter; (2) those who are in camps or urban settings and need ongoing services and programming; or (3) those who have taken the step to resettle in a new country. Alternatively, a philanthropist could focus support on a specific type of programming—such as for women and girls—and ensure that programming is accessible whether a woman is in a camp, urban setting or new home.
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