

Refugee Resettlement in New Zealand and Canada

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Introduction

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international agency that provides protection for refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), asylum seekers, and stateless persons. In 2004, the population of concern under UNHCR totalled about 19.2 million.¹ Of this number, refugees account for 48 percent, or 9.2 million.

The number of refugees in the world has dropped by 24 percent since 2001 with the help of UNHCR. One factor that has contributed to the decline of the refugee population is resettlement. Through the coordination of UNHCR and countries with resettlement programs, around 30,000 refugees were resettled in 2004. Together, Canada and New Zealand received about 11,200 of these refugees.

Who is a refugee?

Article 1 (2) of the United Nations' 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* modifies Article 1 A (2) of the 1951 *Convention* to define a refugee as a person who,

...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.²

3 Solutions...

The UNHCR, to its ability, attempts to find long-term solutions for a number of the world's refugees. There are three options that the agency tries to pursue. The first of these options is voluntary repatriation. This option is 'judged to be the most beneficial solution for refugees', but in many cases, this is not possible, as the dangers that are present in their countries of nationality may remain for very long periods of time.³ The second option is local integration in the country of asylum, but threats to their safety may exist there as well, and there may not be adequate assistance available for refugees in these countries. When neither of these options is available, the UNHCR works with the assistance of several governments around the world to resettle the refugees to a third country.

The first part of this report (Sections 1 to 4) covers how refugees are selected for resettlement. The second part (Sections 5 to 11) covers the integration of resettled refugees into the receiving societies. All issues are presented as observed in Canada and New Zealand.

Quota Programs

There are currently eighteen countries with established or developing resettlement programs coordinated with UNHCR. The group of countries with established programs include the following: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America. Countries with emerging programs are Benin, Brazil, Britain, Burkina Faso, Chile, Iceland, Ireland and Spain.⁴

Most of the established resettlement countries run on a quota program. At the beginning of the resettlement year, the Government of the country collaborates with its NGO partners and other agencies in the country that work with the resettled refugees to set a number of what they believe their caseload should be. This is also usually done in cooperation with UNHCR as it projects the need for resettlement in the following year.

Quotas in Canada and New Zealand

In Canada, the established quota for government-assisted refugees in 2004 was 7,500.⁵ The Canadian quota program operates along the calendar year. The quota is set each year by the Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in consultation with provincial governments, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Canadian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and UNHCR. When a target number is established, it is then divided and allocated among Canadian visa offices.

In New Zealand, the established quota for 2004-2005 was 750.⁶ The New Zealand program year is 1 July to 30 June. On the recommendation of the Minister of Immigration, the Cabinet sets the quota target each year, though it has remained at 750 for the past eight years.

Resettlement History

Since the end of World War II, Canada has resettled over 700,000 refugees.⁷ In recent years, the top source areas for refugees coming to Canada have been Central America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The quota program was not established in New Zealand until 1987, but they have been taking in refugees since 1944. Late that year, over 800 Polish refugees arrived from Europe on an American ship. Since 1976, New Zealand has resettled over 40,000 refugees.⁸ Recent source countries for quota refugees in New Zealand include Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Burma/ Myanmar.⁹

Comparing Canada and New Zealand

At first glance it may seem that New Zealand does not accept its share of refugees since their quota is set at 10 times less than Canada's. However, when comparing Canada's large population of over 30 million and New Zealand's small population of over 4 million, each country's quota has been set at about 0.02 percent of their total population. Canada though, with its larger economy and population base, is able to accept more asylum seekers than New Zealand.

Selection Process

The resettlement process begins when a case is submitted to UNHCR after all other possible solutions have been ruled out. Referrals can be made either internally by a UNHCR Field Office or externally by NGOs who work directly with refugees. Submissions can also be made by individual refugees. A Resettlement-Needs Assessment confirms if the refugee is in need of resettlement, and then the case is passed on to an appropriate resettlement country, which makes the final decision. Some countries, like Canada, have decentralised decision making processes, in which the referrals are made to the appropriate visa office. In other countries, like New Zealand, referrals are made to one centralised agency, such as the country's immigration department.

Most resettlement countries have requirements that coincide with UNHCR resettlement requirements, but others may have additional requirements. In addition to interviews, most countries require certain types of background checks prior to being accepted for resettlement. Many countries have separate categories of eligibility for refugees to allow some flexibility as to who may be accepted. Outside of these eligibility categories, many resettlement countries also accept asylum seekers who arrive at their borders. An asylum seeker either shows up at the border and claims refugee status, or less often, wants to claim refugee status from inside the country. These asylum seekers have to then go through a sometimes lengthy application process to be recognised as refugees.

Eligibility and Entry Requirements

Canada

To be resettled in Canada, a refugee must be referred by UNHCR or a private sponsor. They also must fall into one of three eligibility categories.

The first of the eligibility classes is the Convention Refugees Abroad Class. The Canadian definition of a Convention Refugee is identical to the UN definition of a refugee. The next two fall under the heading of 'Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad Classes'. The second class is the Country of Asylum Class. This includes people that do not fit the definition of a refugee, but have fled their countries of origin due to armed conflict, civil war, or human rights violations. The last of these eligibility classes is the Source Country Class. This includes those who have remained in their country of origin, but who would otherwise fit the definition of a refugee.

Of these three eligibility classes, only the first and third can receive government assistance to resettle in Canada. All three classes can be privately sponsored. Privately sponsored refugees are not part of the 7,500 quota refugee target; a separate target is allocated for these cases. Some special cases may be considered without being referred by UNHCR or a private sponsor.

In addition to meeting one of these three eligibility classes, refugees wishing to resettle in Canada have to prove their 'potential to become self-sufficient'¹⁰ within three to five years, depending on the degree of vulnerability of the person applying. This is proven by:

Factors such as education, presence of a support network (family or sponsor) in Canada, work experience and qualifications, ability to learn to speak English or French and other personal suitability factors such as resourcefulness...¹¹

Also, there are three requirements that must be met before a refugee can enter the country. The first is a medical examination. A person 'suffering from a medical condition which is likely to be a danger to public health or safety'¹² will not pass this examination. The other requirements are a criminal screening and a security screening. The following describes who will not pass this security screening:

...combatants who have participated in war crimes or crimes against humanity. Senior officials, including former or serving senior military officials, from certain regimes and individuals who belong to organisations that espouse violence...¹³

Asylum seekers also arrive in Canada in large numbers. In 2004, out of 25,750 asylum seekers who made claims in Canada, in addition to over 41,000 backlog cases, 16,005 were recognised as refugees and granted the right to resettle in Canada. About 19,000 were rejected and about 5,000 cases were closed. At the end of the year, there were still over 27,000 cases pending.¹⁴

Asylum seekers can make a claim at either a port of entry or from inside the country at a Canada Immigration Centre (CIC) office. If they meet certain requirements, their application is passed on to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) for a refugee protection hearing. If their claim is rejected, they have 30 days to leave the country, or 15 days to apply to have this decision reviewed by the Federal Court or apply for a Pre-removal Risk Assessment (PRRA). The PRRA criteria as to whether a person can stay in Canada for humanitarian and compassionate reasons includes: 'risk of persecution as defined in the *Geneva Convention*, danger of torture, and risk to life or risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.'¹⁵ If their claim is accepted, they can apply for permanent residency within 180 days.

New Zealand

Those applying to resettle in New Zealand will not be accepted if they have been involved in criminal activity or activity that would pose a security threat. Medical cases are accepted as long as appropriate treatment is available. Medical screenings, however, are not required for acceptance as they are in Canada.

There are two eligibility categories in New Zealand. The first is the quota category. These are referred by UNHCR to the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) for selection. The refugees who apply for resettlement in New Zealand must meet the definition of a refugee and 'fall within the regional and global priorities of the Government of New Zealand'.¹⁶

The second resettlement category includes Convention Refugees, or Asylum Seekers. Asylum seekers in New Zealand most often arrive at Auckland International Airport. These refugees must go through an application process to be granted refugee status and be able to settle in New Zealand. In addition to the quota set each year, the Government allows 200 to 500 people to be resettled as Convention Refugees. Currently, an average of around 1,500 people apply for refugee status each year, and only about 12.5 percent of those applications are approved.¹⁷

If they possess proper documentation upon arrival in New Zealand, asylum seekers must complete an official Application for Refugee Status. After an interview, the Refugee Status Branch of NZIS makes the decision to grant asylum or not. If this is denied, asylum seekers have the right to appeal to the Refugee Status Appeals Authority. This body usually makes the final decision, but this can sometimes be challenged in the High Court. If the application is accepted, they are granted refugee status and given most of the same assistance as other refugees in the country.

Those who enter the country without proper documentation are detained so that their identities can be confirmed and a security screening can be completed. If they pass the security screening, they are given 'conditional release', which means that while their Application for Refugee Status is being reviewed, they must live in a particular area and report to authorities at given times.

Private Sponsorship in Canada

In most countries, only the government is permitted to engage in the resettlement of refugees. However, in some larger countries, private sponsorship programs have been implemented, resulting in the resettlement of a significantly larger number of refugees than the government alone would be able to accept.

Since 1979, Canada has been allowing private sponsorship of refugees in addition to government assisted refugees. One hundred eighty-four thousand refugees have been able to resettle in Canada since the beginning of the program, including over half of 60,000 Indochinese refugees who were resettled in 1979 and 1980. Private sponsors must 'commit to providing the sponsored refugee with basic assistance in the form of accommodation, clothing, food, and settlement assistance normally for one year from the refugee's date of arrival in Canada', or in certain circumstances, up to 36 months.¹⁸

There are three types of groups that can sponsor refugees under this program. The first group, in which the majority of privately sponsored refugees are resettled, are Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH). These are organisations and groups who are pre-approved by signing an agreement with the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. The second group are any groups of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents who must be at least 18 years old and live in the community in which the refugee will be resettled. These groups sign an agreement with the government to personally provide the support needed for resettlement. The third

group are Community Sponsors, which are organisations or associations who sign an agreement to resettle a refugee in a community in which it has representatives.

Private sponsors may be able to resettle some refugees who would not meet eligibility requirements if it were not for the additional support these sponsors are able to provide. Sponsors may personally choose the refugee they wish to work with, provided they are approved by the government, or they can ask to be recommended a case by the government. In addition to the quota target for government assisted refugees, 3,000 to 4,000 refugees can be settled through this program each year.

Some cases can require even more support than private sponsors alone can provide. These cases can include large families, women at risk, refugees with medical conditions, or those who have been victims of trauma and torture. These cases require the collaboration of the government and private sponsors under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) program. In the JAS program, the government provides financial support while private sponsors assist with integration. Support is usually provided up to two years, but may be up to three in some cases.

Special Cases

Most resettlement countries allow a number of special cases in their quota each year, and some may accept them outside of the quota, depending on the nature of the case. Such special cases include disability or medical cases, women at risk, unaccompanied minors, and emergency cases. In most of these special cases, the nuclear and dependent family members of the applicant are included.

Medical Cases

Certain refugees may have health problems which pose a threat to their lives and proper treatment may not readily available in their country of asylum. If no other options prove to be available to these refugees, they can be resettled to a third country if UNHCR sees that their lives would benefit from such a move. When UNHCR is selecting refugees with special medical needs for resettlement, their priorities lie with those people whose medical needs are directly related to their situation.

When applying for resettlement in Canada, refugees with certain medical needs must make these needs immediately known. As it is the separate provincial governments that oversee healthcare, certain services may only be available in specific areas. This may make the application process longer in order to make sure that they can be resettled in an area that can address their needs. When processing the application for these medical cases, visa officers also take into consideration the family members accompanying the person with medical needs, or family that may already be residing in Canada, as the person may need extra care that could be unavailable if the refugee is travelling alone.

In New Zealand, 75 places out of the quota are allocated to refugees with medical needs. To be resettled under this category, treatment of the condition must be readily available in New Zealand and unavailable in the country of asylum. This special category 'provides for the resettlement of refugees with medical, physical or social disabilities which place them outside the normal criteria for acceptance by resettlement countries.'¹⁹

Emergency and Priority Protection Cases

There are some circumstances that can allow the application process to be sped up for the safety of refugees. These are cases in which refugees may be facing the following situations:

...an immediate life-threatening situation, imminent refoulement, deportation or local security threat including arbitrary arrest, detention or imprisonment, which may result in a violation of their human rights...²⁰

In Canada, the Urgent Protection Program (UPP) has been set up for such cases. To be resettled under this program, the applicant must meet all of the qualifications for resettlement, excluding the requirement 'to demonstrate an ability to successfully establish in Canada.'²¹ When a visa office is contacted by UNHCR about an Urgent Protection case, a response can usually be delivered within 24 hours as to whether or not the office can handle the case. When a case is accepted by an office, every effort is made to have the refugee travelling to Canada within at least 5 days.

Refugees resettled under this program, just like other resettlement cases, are granted permanent resident status when arriving in Canada. But, if a refugee must depart their country of asylum before all of their background checks are completed, he or she is issued a Temporary Resident Permit. When the background checks have been completed, the refugee may then apply for permanent residency.

In addition to UNHCR recommendations of a case for Urgent Protection, a visa officer reviewing an application may determine a refugee to be vulnerable in his or her current situation. These cases are processed similar to Urgent Protection cases, and are processed before any other cases referred to that particular visa office.

UNHCR also refers Priority Protection and emergency cases to New Zealand. Priority Protection cases make up the bulk of the New Zealand quota program, while emergency cases are limited to about 50 each year.

Emergency cases, like in Canada, are processed before all other resettlement cases. These cases do not have to meet the regional priorities set by NZIS, and unlike all other resettlement cases in New Zealand, these do not require an interview as part of the application process. Upon referral by UNHCR, NZIS tries to issue a decision and commence resettlement within five days.

Women at Risk

Most resettlement countries include women at risk under their general resettlement programs. Canada and New Zealand, as well as Australia, have created special programs for resettling women at risk. The UNHCR definition for refugees in this category includes:

...women and girls who have protection problems particular to their gender...including expulsion, *refoulement* and other security threats, sexual violence, physical abuse, intimidation, torture, particular economic hardship or marginalization, lack of integration prospects, community hostility, and different forms of exploitation. Such problems and threats...may render some refugee women or girls particularly vulnerable.²²

Due to their vulnerability, women under this category are 'likely to have experienced a high degree of refugee-related trauma and may lack personal integration resources

such as literacy, education and prior formal work experience', which means that they may need special assistance in their resettlement communities.²³

The Canadian Women at Risk program (AWR) was created in February 1988, and has since resettled over 2,250 women and children under this category. To enter through the AWR program, requirements include that women must: 'be outside of Canada', be eligible under one of the three classes of resettlement, and 'be in a dangerous situation without family protection or the protection of local authorities.'²⁴ The requirement to demonstrate the ability to establish successfully may be lowered or waived, depending on vulnerability. If special assistance is required to successfully establish, refugees under this program may come under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship program (JAS).

New Zealand recognizes that sometimes, women at risk may be 'outside the normal criteria for acceptance by resettlement countries',²⁵ so depending on their situation, they may be accepted for resettlement without meeting the definition of a refugee. The quota program in New Zealand allocates 75 of the 750 places specifically for women at risk.

Unaccompanied Minors

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which applies to anyone under 18 years of age, recognizes that children and minors need, and are entitled to, special attention. An unaccompanied minor is one who has been separated from both of his or her parents and any adult family members. A separated minor is one who has been separated from both parents, but may still be in the care of an adult relative. When determining the resettlement needs of unaccompanied minors, it is stressed by UNHCR that the minor's best interest be prioritized. Some countries, however, do not allow the resettlement of unaccompanied minors unless a parent or other relative has already settled in the country.

Canada is one of the current resettlement countries that do not accept unaccompanied minors for resettlement unless they are joining family members there. If the minor does have family in Canada, they may be accepted under the family reunification program (if they apply within a year of their family's arrival in Canada), they may be privately sponsored, or they may be eligible to apply for resettlement on their own if they meet the definition of a refugee.

New Zealand does have a history of taking in unaccompanied minors, especially in emergency situations. In the country's first experience with resettlement, the 800 Polish refugees who arrived in 1944, over 700 of them were children. In 2001, a group which came to be known as the 'Tampa boys' were accepted for resettlement. That year, 433 asylum seekers were rescued by a Norwegian ship, the *Tampa*, when their boat began sinking in the Indian Ocean. Thirty-seven of these were unaccompanied minors between the ages of 14 and 18. They were resettled in New Zealand, along with about 160 of the other rescued Afghanis. Many of them have now been reunited with their families under the quota program. In 2005, 76 of these refugees were granted citizenship, including all 37 of the 'Tampa boys'.²⁶

Family Reunification

Family unity is considered very important by UNHCR, as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) cites that the family 'is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.'²⁷ Different countries have different policies on family reunification and different definitions of who is included as 'family'. UNHCR includes the nuclear family, particularly unaccompanied minors, as a priority for reunification, followed by other dependent members of the family and then other relatives. Unless the person being reunited with a family member is a refugee, UNHCR does not fund the reunification process.

Some countries have separate quotas on family reunification, but others do not set a limit on these cases. UNHCR urges that 'information on family reunion provisions...be included in orientation materials given to resettled refugees, at the earliest possible stage.'²⁸ Information on family reunification can ease some anxieties that often affect resettled refugees.

Canada's Window of Opportunity

In Canada, the first possibility for family reunification is the One Year Window of Opportunity, which is described as 'an administrative mechanism...that allows immediate family members...to reunite with the principal applicant without the need to apply under one of Canada's other immigrant programs or be sponsored by the family.'²⁹ Only immediate family members can be reunited with the principal applicant under this program. For Canada, immediate family includes 'spouses, common-law partners (including same sex partnerships) and dependent children.'³⁰ De facto dependents, those family members who do not meet the definition of immediate family, but are in some way dependent on the family unit, may be reunited under the same conditions as immediate family members who do not apply within the one-year time period.

Under this program, the family members to be reunited do not have to meet any of the requirements for the three eligibility classes and do not have to be defined as a refugee themselves. They also do not have to meet the requirement to prove their ability to establish in Canada.

There are certain requirements that must be met in order for family members to reunite with their relatives in Canada. The first is that, as the name of the program suggests, within a year of the principal applicant's arrival in Canada, the family members must submit their application to a Canadian visa office. It is important that all immediate family members be identified, even if the principal applicant does not know the location of these family members, as it is required for them to be identified before the applicant leaves for Canada.

If a year has passed before the family members are able to apply for reunification, they may apply for resettlement on their own, or may be privately sponsored. If these options are not available, or the family member does not meet the definition of a refugee, he or she may apply to be a Family Class immigrant.

New Zealand

In New Zealand, some family reunification places are included within the quota program. Under the 600 places under the UNHCR Priority Protection category of the quota, up to 300 can be used for family reunification.

The government has recently made changes to the family reunification program in New Zealand. The definition of family members was expanded 'to recognise a wider range of family structures.'³¹ Also, in 2002 a ballot system was created to offer another option 'for refugee-linked applicants who do not qualify under the Refugee Quota or [the] standard Family Category' of Immigration.³² This Refugee Family Quota category opens up an additional 300 places for family reunification each year.

Arrival and Orientation

There are many different types of orientation programs in the resettlement countries. Most begin the orientation programs upon arrival to the resettlement countries, but there are a small handful of countries that begin the process in the asylum countries, before departure. Orientation programs usually involve introducing the refugees to their new countries and what services will be available to them.

Many countries involve former refugees in their orientation programs. These people can ease the transition process by providing someone for the refugees to identify with in their new home.

Travel Arrangements/Status on arrival

In coordination with visa offices, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) arranges travel for refugees resettling in Canada. The Canadian government does not fund travel expenses for the refugees. However, through the Immigration Loans Program (ILP), which is funded by the Consolidated Revenue Fund, loans are available to assist with these expenses.

The loans are need-based and both government assisted and privately sponsored refugee classes can be eligible for them. They can assist the costs involved in 'medical examinations abroad, travel documents, transportation to Canada, and the Right of Permanent Residence Fee.'³³ Interest is charged on these loans, but refugees can be provided with a one to three year period in which interest will not be charged on their loans.

When arriving in Canada, refugees are granted permanent residence status, unless they were issued a Temporary Resident Permit. After three years, permanent residents are eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship.

In New Zealand, the Government pays for the travel expenses of refugees who are being resettled under the quota program. All of the travel arrangements are made by NZIS and when a significant number of people are coming from the same country of refuge, it is sometimes possible for the NZIS to send an escort officer to accompany them. NZIS also issues all travel documents and visas to the refugees before their departure to New Zealand.

When arriving in New Zealand, quota refugees are granted permanent residency status and are eligible to apply for citizenship after three years.

Orientation Process

The Canadian orientation process begins before the refugees depart their countries of asylum. Pre-departure orientation is provided by the IOM and focuses on travel arrangements, reception, and orientation to Canadian society. This way, the refugees can feel more informed about their new homes and what will be expected of them there. This can 'help to reduce anxiety in the first weeks in a new country' and provide realistic information about what to expect when they arrive there.

When the refugees arrive in Canada, they are met at the airport and transportation is provided to their destination. If overnight accommodation and meals are required, this is also made available. For government assisted refugees, temporary accommodation is provided by the government through hotels, motels, or reception house services. Reception houses are preferred over hotels and motels because they 'offer a more holistic and communal environment than do hotels and motels, and help alleviate feelings of abandonment and isolation felt by many refugees upon their arrival in Canada.'³⁴ Resettlement support organisations across Canada have opened these reception houses to provide new immigrants and refugees temporary accommodation. Private sponsors are required to provide any temporary accommodation needed for the refugees they sponsor.

When they arrive, assistance is provided for applying for medical insurance and social insurance numbers, and they are referred to other settlement services. Settlement services are provided by Service Provider Organisations (SPOs) funded by the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. These SPOs include non-profit organisations, community groups, provincial and municipal governments, and educational institutions. Some of these SPOs have staff members from refugees' countries of origin and are able to communicate more effectively with the refugees. The federal government does not directly deliver settlement services.

The New Zealand orientation process is much more centralised than that of Canada. The process is delivered through a combination of government agencies and NGOs, funded by the Government. On arrival, quota refugees are greeted at the airport by NZIS and provided transportation to the Refugee Reception Centre in Auckland. This reception centre serves as the refugees' temporary accommodation while undergoing a six week orientation program.

This orientation program is offered in the refugees own languages and information is provided about living in New Zealand and the settlement services available to them outside of the reception centre. A number of settlement services are available at the reception centre, including introductory English instruction and health services. The Auckland University of Technology provides the English language portion of the program. Medical and dental check-ups, as well as psychological assessments are provided by the Ministry of Health. Trauma counselling is also available through the Refugees as Survivors Centre. The Refugee and Migrant Service, RMS, offers social services and trains volunteer support workers to assist the refugees when they depart the reception centre.

Income Support and Basic Needs

It is important that resettled refugees receive income support, since it usually takes quite a while to establish themselves in their new country. Income support varies by country, and usually depends on what kind of income support is available to others in the country who are unemployed or otherwise outside of the labour market. UNHCR suggests that the length of support should also be dependent on such factors as levels of trauma and employment skills.

Canada

Establishment support is mainly provided in Canada through the Resettlement Assistance Program. This program is available to government assisted refugees, and can be used to support their income for up to one year after their arrival. This program also covers 'temporary accommodation, help finding permanent housing, basic household items, financial orientation,' and other necessary support.³⁵ Private sponsors provide income support for their sponsored refugees. Just like other unemployed Canadians, resettled refugees are also eligible for unemployment benefits for as long as they need to establish themselves.

'Basic needs of life', such as food, clothing, shelter, and essential household furnishings, can also be provided for up to one year after a refugee's arrival. For some JAS cases, this can be extended to two years. The ILP loans that are available to government assisted and privately sponsored refugees to cover travel costs can also be used to assist in housing rental and work tools.

New Zealand

At the reception centre, the Ministry of Social Development provides a weekly allowance for the refugees. When they leave the centre, they are 'eligible to receive an Emergency Benefit at the same rate as benefits provided to unemployed New Zealanders.'³⁶ A reestablishment grant is also provided for assistance with purchasing household items. Reestablishment grants are available for up to \$1200 per family. Some resettled refugees may also be eligible to receive additional assistance. Asylum seekers are eligible for most of the same benefits, but are not eligible for the reestablishment grants.

Integration and Community Involvement

In the case of refugee resettlement, integration is more suitable than assimilation to the host society. In the *Refugee Resettlement* handbook, UNHCR stresses the importance of integration into the resettlement societies as opposed to assimilation into the new culture, which could further add to the stress of the resettlement process by forcing them to quickly take up the culture of their new societies. Slow adaptation into the new culture while sharing their own cultures with the wider community can be a much easier process. The process can prove to be even more successful when a community volunteer program is developed to aid resettling refugees.

Integration Goals

To address the issue of integration in resettlement countries, UNHCR set out a plan of nine goals for a successful integration program in the handbook:

1. To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society.
2. To promote the capacity to rebuild a positive future in the receiving society.
3. To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within families.
4. To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support.
5. To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and the rule of law.
6. To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity.
7. To counter racism, discrimination and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities.
8. To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership.
9. To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experience.³⁷

These goals 'describe the practical elements of an integration program and the basic resources that will be required to assist refugees in their resettlement,' so that resettled refugees have the best chance of acquiring long-term stability in their new homes.³⁸

Community Involvement

Canada and New Zealand have similar volunteer programs, though again, New Zealand's program is much more centralized while Canada's programs are focused in the separate provinces. The programs draw the support of the native population, but many also have volunteers and staff of immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

Canada

The Manitoba Inter-faith Immigration Council was established in 1968 and includes both volunteer and paid staff to offer social support to immigrants and refugees. The Council is involved in providing orientation services, as well as other settlement support services that refugees may need help with in their new communities in Manitoba, such as housing and healthcare. The volunteer program offers resettled refugees 'friendship, informal language training and basic practical support and...[links to] other social and recreational activities in Manitoba.'³⁹

The Saskatoon Coalition is a network of volunteers who work with refugees and immigrants in Saskatchewan. They also work with local residents and service professionals to help them address the needs of refugees. A drop-in centre has been established to further assist new immigrants and resettled refugees with community services.

The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) works with over 170 organisations in Ontario that offer their services to migrants and refugees who settle in that province.⁴⁰ It was formed in 1978 to coordinate the agencies' responses to the needs of migrants and refugees. Ontario also has another program, which is made for smaller areas in which refugees are resettled. This is the Thunder Bay Community Resource Program. It acts as a 'model to meet the resource challenges in smaller cities and towns by offering culturally and linguistically appropriate settlement services'.⁴¹

These community programs, as well as other programs in the remaining provinces, promote the private sponsorship program by offering training and support to those who choose to sponsor. The sponsorship program has been a successful way of getting communities involved in the resettlement process, and the People of Canada were given the Nansen Refugee Award in 1986.⁴²

New Zealand

The role of RMS in New Zealand is most similar to the Manitoba Council, and is the central agency in training volunteers and providing social support for resettled refugees in the country. Like the Council, the RMS agency began as the Inter-church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement. It was formed in 1975 to provide services to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, but has since changed its focus to quota refugees. The agency became an incorporated society in 1990 and the name was changed to the Refugee and Migrant Commission.⁴³

The agency employs social workers and cross-cultural workers, as well as trainers for the hundreds of people who volunteer to assist in the resettlement process each year. Services that RMS offers to refugees resettling in New Zealand include 'advice, information and advocacy; crisis intervention and home-based family

support programmes; community orientation; community linkages and referrals services...[and] training, deployment and support' for volunteers.⁴⁴

RMS has a unique volunteer training course to ensure that the most appropriate assistance will be available to refugees resettling in the country. The 15 hour course is held over six sessions and includes issues such as 'the refugee experience, the role of the RMS volunteer support worker, refugee cultures, support services and resources for refugees and their support workers, refugee health & well-being and education.'⁴⁵ At the end of the course, participants receive the *RMS Certificate in Refugee Resettlement Support*. RMS volunteers provide assistance with 'setting up homes; linking with Work & Income, schools, ESOL (English as a Second Language) courses, local doctors; orientation to their local community (facilities, public transport) ongoing support (hospital appointments, mail, Work & Income appointments, social visits); [and] alerting RMS professional staff to special needs or issues.'⁴⁶ The volunteers work in teams of two to four people and are supervised and continuously supported by RMS staff over a six month period.⁴⁷

Housing

UNHCR recognises that 'ensuring that resettled refugees have access to secure and affordable permanent housing is perhaps one of the most challenging and complex problems facing countries of resettlement.'⁴⁸ Both Canada and New Zealand have programs which help resettled refugees find permanent housing, as they may face particular disadvantage in the housing market. Both countries also have government subsidised housing available for resettled refugees.

Permanent Housing Assistance

The Government of Canada provides temporary accommodation for government-assisted refugees, and private sponsors must provide any temporary accommodation needed for their sponsored refugees. The government refers their groups of assisted refugees to the community agencies within the provinces they are resettling in to assist in finding appropriate housing. Private sponsors can also work with these community agencies to help their sponsored refugees find permanent accommodation.

While the resettled refugees are staying at the reception centre, RMS works closely with Housing New Zealand to find permanent housing for the refugees. This agency provides state housing to permanent residents who qualify and provides housing to quota refugees. Asylum seekers have to find their own accommodation on arrival, and may look to the Auckland Refugee Council to provide accommodation in their Glendene hostel. There are agencies that can help with finding permanent housing once their status has been verified.

Locations

In Canada, refugees are resettled by province area. In 2004, the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers, 18,340, were resettled in the province of Ontario, many in the city of Toronto. British Columbia resettled 2,367, Alberta resettled 2,210, and Manitoba resettled 1,252. Five-hundred sixty were resettled in Saskatchewan and 199 were resettled in Nova Scotia. In the Atlantic Provinces, which include Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick, 370 refugees were resettled. The Territories, which include the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, only resettled 5 refugees in 2004.⁴⁹

Québec has an agreement with the federal government, the Canada-Québec Accord, in which it has a separate responsibility for choosing the refugees to be resettled there. This province resettled 7,383 refugees in 2004.⁵⁰

The largest resettlement area in New Zealand is Auckland, where in 2003-2004, 481 refugees were resettled. Other resettlement areas include Christchurch, Hamilton, Hutt Valley, Napier, Nelson, Palmerston North, Porirua, and Wellington.

Health

There is a very long list of health concerns in cases of refugee resettlement. UNHCR recognises these major areas in the resettlement handbook: mental health, nutritional deficiencies, intestinal parasitic disease, infectious diseases (such as HIV & AIDS, tuberculosis, and Hepatitis B & C), injuries sustained by trauma and torture, chronic disease, childhood development, dental, visual, hearing, immunisation, and women's health care.

Suggested areas of support for health care issues include access to affordable or free services, language assistance, orientation to the system, and sensitivity to religious and cultural needs. Screening and assessment can provide health care needs which 'may not be readily met through general health care services', as well as detection and treatment of certain diseases, and introduction to prevention services and to specialists that are available.⁵¹

Arrival

For refugees resettling in Canada, medical screening takes place during the application process, as Canada will not take people with certain medical conditions. The ILP loans are available for the costs associated with these medical examinations overseas for government-assisted and privately sponsored refugees. On arrival in Canada, they are eligible for the Interim Federal Health Program (FHP) which is run by the Citizenship and Immigration office. This 'ensures emergency and essential health services' to refugees before they are covered by provincial health care.

In New Zealand, one of the agencies that participate in the orientation process at the Mangere Reception Centre is the Auckland District Health Board. Quota refugees at the centre are given a complete health screening and assessment, as well as any dental care and follow-up health care needed, free of charge. The purpose of this is to identify and treat any problems, refer anyone who needs special care to an appropriate specialist, and to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Children are not treated for dental problems at the centre because children's dental care is provided in the communities for free.

Asylum seekers have been given 'a form that offers a free voluntary medical screening at Public Health Services throughout New Zealand' by border officials since 1997.⁵² Screening for asylum seekers is voluntary until their status has been recognised. In addition to regional Public Health Services in certain areas, asylum seekers can access this medical screening at Auckland's Greenlane Hospital. Services at Mangere are not available to asylum seekers, but the screening for them is the same, except for the dental services. Medical check-ups are required in the country of origin for family reunification cases who are not applying as refugees in their own right.

Community

Canada's health care system is based in each of its provinces, instead of being based with the federal government. Therefore, the resettled refugees must apply with the provincial health agency to get access to subsidised health care services. Canada's community organisations can help with this application process. For government-assisted refugees, the government refers them to the appropriate organisation. Private sponsors are expected to assist their sponsored refugees with this process.

The Bridge Community Health Clinic in Vancouver offers services much like those found at the reception centre in New Zealand. It was established in 1994 when it was observed that refugees were having trouble accessing health services in the area. It began as a 'collaborative venture' of several support agencies, such as a hospital, Vancouver's health authority, and a resettlement support organisation. Free health assessment services are provided, as well as information on preventative health care programs. The clinic refers people to services in their own communities and also 'provides formal training opportunities' for community health professionals.⁵³

Upon their departure from the Mangere centre, quota refugees in New Zealand are provided with a Community Services Card. This card allows them to access the subsidised health care that is available in their resettlement communities. Asylum seekers are also eligible for this, but many are not aware of the services available to them.

Mental Health Issues & Victims of Trauma and Torture

It is common for resettled refugees to experience mental illness through their involvement in the process. Some conditions that affect resettled refugees are anxiety, depression, eating disorders, grief and loss, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychosomatic disorders, and substance abuse. It is also not uncommon for some refugees to have faced trauma or torture during their refugee experience before resettlement. An estimated 35 percent of refugees in the world 'have been subject to severe physical torture and/or psychological violation.'⁵⁴

The Canadian Council for the Victims of Torture (CCVT) offers several programs in the area of resettlement support. In addition to crisis intervention, individual and group therapy, and referral to service professionals, the Council has programs that link survivors with volunteers. These volunteer programs assist with rebuilding survivors' connections to others and provide 'moral and practical support to attend appointments for medical, legal, health or settlement related matters'.⁵⁵

The Auckland Refugees as Survivors (RAS) centre is also located at the Mangere Reception Centre. This centre 'offers an early intervention programme to all newly arrived refugees.'⁵⁶ A study at the centre in 1999 revealed that 20 percent of the refugees had experienced significant physical abuse; while 14 percent reported having psychological symptoms and 7 percent were diagnosed with PTSD.⁵⁷

Language Training and Support

Language assistance programs are vital to the early stages of resettlement. This allows resettled refugees to thoroughly understand their receiving society, as a large part of resettled refugees do not speak the local language on arrival. Many of the support services in Canada and New Zealand either have interpreters on staff or have easy access to interpreters in order to effectively communicate with their clients.

It is also important that resettlement countries give refugees access to language training programs to help facilitate easy integration into the society. When these programs are free of charge, less stress is put on the refugees to learn the new language.

Local Languages

When arriving in their resettlement country, many of the refugees do have prior knowledge of local languages. Asylum seekers, however, usually show a higher rate of this than quota refugees.

Out of the over 32,000 refugees and asylum seekers resettled in Canada in 2004, only 39 percent could not speak either English or French.⁵⁸ Of those who could speak those languages, 48.4 percent could speak English and 7.2 percent could speak French. A little over five percent could speak both English and French.

In 2004, NZIS published a research project on resettlement in New Zealand titled *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement*. For this project, they interviewed a group of 209 recently arrived refugees (who had been in New Zealand for six months).⁵⁹ Of those interviewed, 17 percent could speak English well and two-thirds 'had learnt some English language' before arriving.⁶⁰ Ten percent of the recently arrived refugees said that they 'could not read and/or write any language.'⁶¹

Language Support

On arrival, it is important for those who do not have a strong knowledge of local languages to have access to interpreter and translation services. Both countries have orientation materials or programs available in many of the refugees' own languages, and this helps them to better understand the transition process.

Canada's language support services are provided provincially to assist in finding out about all of the resettlement services available to them. One such language support service is the Manitoba Language Bank, serving Winnipeg and the rest of the province of Manitoba. The language bank provides translation of important documents and provides interpreter services to 'courts, police, hospitals, schools, government departments, social service agencies and any other service in the

community requiring help in communicating with clients'.⁶² The organisation also provides training for interpreters. Services by the Manitoba Language Bank are free to immigrants and refugees for up to three years after their arrival.

When refugees arrive in New Zealand, there is language support available at the Mangere Reception Centre. The orientation program is taught in the refugees' own languages so that there is a better chance at completely understanding what information they need to know about resettling in New Zealand. As in Canada, there are interpreters available in the resettlement communities. While studying with the ESOL Home Tutor Service, the volunteer tutors can also provide some translation assistance.

Language Training for Adults

In both countries, there are many language training programs available to immigrants and refugees. These programs are usually catered to adult learning, as adults do not learn new languages as fast as children. A great deal of them charge fees, but both governments have set up programs that allow language training to be offered free for the newcomers.

Both the federal government and provincial governments fund free language instruction to adult immigrants and refugees newly arrived in Canada. There is a federal curriculum for language instruction under a program called LINC, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. In the province of British Columbia, the program is called ELSA, English Language Services for Adults. Through this program, language courses are offered in schools, universities, and community organisations throughout the country. Full and part time courses are available, as well as free childcare for those who need it.

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education has teamed up with the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) to offer a jump-start to language acquisition by teaching English classes to adult refugees alongside the orientation program at the Mangere Reception Centre. Each refugee is assessed and given instruction according to his or her language needs. AUT classes consist of two parts: morning classes are dedicated to English instruction, while afternoon classes deal with orientation to New Zealand.

After leaving the centre, many refugees may choose to continue their study through the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Home Tutor Scheme. This service provides one-on-one instruction by a volunteer home tutor each week for a period of time, which is usually six months. The service also arranges weekly 'Social English Groups' so that newcomers can 'develop conversational English and social networks'.⁶³ The service also offers training for tutors.

Employment and Education

Resettled refugees may face several disadvantages in the job market when they arrive in their new country. Many who have prior training may have lost their training documentation or that training may not be recognised in the resettlement country. Support and training services in the receiving society makes the search for employment easier for them to find a job or get the proper training for the career they want to pursue.

Refugee children also face hardship when they arrive in the receiving society. School systems may be much different than in their homeland or they may have had interruption in their schooling. Language barriers also are a cause for concern with students. Resettlement countries such as Canada and New Zealand have established programs which help ease the anxieties of starting over in a new school system.

Employment Services and Job Training

For refugees and immigrants in Canada, there are employment services in each province that assist in 'obtaining required certification and/or trade documents,' and there are also 'job finding clubs which hold sessions on job search techniques, including résumé writing, interview skills and use of the telephone.'⁶⁴ There is a National Employment Service, in which the newcomers can access labour market information, and the service includes the National Job Bank and the Electronic Labour Exchange. For those eligible for Employment Insurance, job training programs are available through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). There are also community organisations that offer job training and employment services through the Employment Assistance Services support measure (EAS).

Just as in Canada, New Zealand does not have a job placement service specifically aimed at resettled refugees. They are, however, 'recognised as having special needs and are given priority consideration for government-funded work placement and training programmes.'⁶⁵ Skill New Zealand is an agency that provides training opportunities for those who need help in the labour market. They also offer English language courses and life skills training. Some city councils also fund some 'similar vocational training and income generating initiatives that focus on the refugees' traditional skills and occupations'.⁶⁶ Some resettled refugees can find work with some of the support service organisations, such as RMS, which employs several resettled refugees as cross-cultural workers.

Education and Language Training for Young Refugees

In Canada, public schools for elementary and secondary students are provincially funded. In Ottawa, there are Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs) who are placed in the schools to help refugee students adapt to their new school systems. These officers 'promote a positive and sensitive school environment by supporting positive race relations and providing training to teaching and other professionals.'⁶⁷ They also work directly with the students to orientate them to the Canadian school system, as well as to support services in their communities. The Ottawa Immigrant Services Organisation and School Boards of Education fund the Program. While their adult counterparts are offered free language instruction in the community, students receive any language instruction they need in their schools.

Refugee students in New Zealand begin their orientation to the school system at the Mangere Reception Centre. AUT provides classes for pre-schoolers, primary, and secondary students, with the goal of preparing them for entrance into mainstream schooling when they leave the centre. Pre-school age children go to the Early Childhood Education centre, with programs aimed at enabling them 'to eventually feel safe with unfamiliar surroundings, people, and activities.'⁶⁸ Older students are assessed 'to determine their levels of oral language, reading, writing, and numeracy skills, in both English and mother-tongue.'⁶⁹ When they leave the centre, profile reports are written for each student to provide their new schools with information about their learning levels and any special needs. For those students who need continued English language instruction, ESOL support is funded to the school for up to four years after the student arrives.

Conclusion

Overall, it seems that New Zealand's program is the better of the two, although there are a few areas in which Canada overshadows New Zealand. To come up with this conclusion, I compared the issue areas in this way:

- New Zealand's selection process is not as strict and based more on humanitarian principles. Unlike Canada, they do not turn down applicants for health reasons. They also do not require the refugees to prove their ability to quickly establish self-sufficiency. However, Canada's private sponsorship program allows for them to offer a new home to more refugees.
- New Zealand has a history of helping unaccompanied minors, whereas Canada does not accept them.
- Canadian resettled refugees must pay their own way or get a loan to travel to Canada, but New Zealand transports the refugees through government funding.
- New Zealand has a well organised and centralised reception program, which allows the newcomers to be introduced to their new society before going out into their communities.
- Both countries have well organised volunteer programs. But, each has its upside – New Zealand's program is centralised, Canada's is enhanced by the private sponsorship program.
- Finding housing is easier in New Zealand because it's guaranteed, though they do not get to participate in the decision as much as in Canada.
- Canada's health screening is part of the application process, and of course, stricter because they can use that to turn down an applicant. For refugees, New Zealand's screening process is easier because it is done in one place and treatment is offered free at the reception centre.
- Language training may be easier for refugees in New Zealand because they begin learning the new language before joining the wider community.
- Employment services are about the same in each country, but early introduction to the New Zealand school system at the Mangere Reception Centre may be easier on students.

Also, most of Canada's settlement support services seem to be angled at all immigrants and refugees, whereas more of New Zealand's support services are targeted specifically at resettled refugees.

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