

Our Vision: To rapidly and significantly increase refugee student access and entry into the U.S. to pursue higher education. To mobilize the collective action of leaders and organizations in government, higher education, humanitarian relief, and elsewhere to advocate for, design, and launch new solutions including the development of new infrastructure. To listen to and integrate refugee student voices at every step.

The Challenge: Current Data

80 million people forcibly displaced globally

26.3 million refugees

x2 increase in forcibly displaced in the last decade

40% forcibly displaced are children

<1% of refugees resettled globally each year

67,100 average # of refugees resettled to the U.S., 2008-2017

32,898 average # of refugees resettled to the U.S., 2018-2020

2018 U.S. fell behind Canada as the top resettlement country globally for the first time since the 1980 Refugee Act

1.4 million refugees in need of resettlement in 2021

3% of refugees globally have access to higher education (vs. **37%** of non-refugee population)

<30 refugee students come to the U.S. each year on an F-1 student visa

Feb. 4, 2021— President Biden instructs Secretary of State and Secretary of Health and Human Services Department to “deliver a plan” by early June 2021 to enhance the capacity of U.S. to welcome refugees “by expanding the use of community sponsorship and co-sponsorship models” and “by entering into new public-private partnerships.”

Key Terms

Refugee | “Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” - 1951 Refugee Convention.

Refugee resettlement | The transfer of refugees most in need of international protection to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence, usually through UNHCR’s identification and referral process.

Complementary Pathways | Safe and regulated avenues for refugees to safe third countries that complement traditional government-run, UNHCR-operated resettlement. Ideally these will be pathways to permanent residency.

Complementary Education Pathways | Facilitate refugees’ movement to a safe third country for the purpose of higher education, while also having their protection needs met.

Community Sponsorship | The pairing of refugees with groups of individuals (such as local clubs, businesses, university communities, faith groups, etc.) who commit to providing clearly defined financial and/or in-kind contributions and volunteer services to support refugee welcome and integration.

Private Refugee Sponsorship | A complementary pathway in which private entities or organizations like universities lead in, and provide financial and logistical support for, the relocation and integration of refugees accepted through resettlement or complementary pathways programs, often nominated by sponsors. Private sponsorship is a form of community sponsorship.

F1 Visa | The main type of student visa in the U.S. The only current avenue for refugees to enter the U.S. as students. High barriers for refugee access.

Country of First Asylum (Current Host Country) | The country in which a refugee or asylum seeker is based before moving on a complementary pathway/resettlement opportunity after being forced to flee his/her home country.

Durable Solution | Any means by which the situation of refugees can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved to enable them to live normal lives with full access to rights and freedoms. These traditionally include voluntary repatriation (return to country of origin), local integration in their current host country, or resettlement to a third country.