

GOAL: Increase the number of individuals supported in accessing complementary pathways to durable and dignified solutions outside Iraq

The Global Compact on Refugees, and subsequently the UNHCR Roadmap 2020 – 2030 on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, emphasize the need to make complementary pathways available to refugees on a more systematic basis. While resettlement is an important tool to meet the protection needs of refugees at heightened risk, complementary pathways can expand third country solutions, ease pressure on host countries and enhance refugees' self-reliance by building their capacities to attain a durable solution.

Complementary pathways in Iraq exist in a complex context. The lack of domestic visa processing means applicants are often asked to travel to embassies in neighbouring countries. Documentation requirements further restrict access, and UNHCR's voice for advocacy is key to proposing alternatives. As barriers are removed, UNHCR can look towards expanding new pathways and encouraging third countries, scholarship providers and employers to consider refugees in Iraq – both for pilot initiatives and larger programmes.

UNHCR is increasing refugee access to complementary pathways, by developing a strong evidence base, and designing coordinated systems involving all relevant partners, whilst promoting refugees' self-agency.

Complementary pathways for admission are further developed

Outcomes

New complementary pathways programmes are piloted in Iraq, evaluated and scaled-up when possible.

Existing programmes are refined and promoted both within refugee communities in Iraq and in third countries.

Existing programmes are reviewed periodically and if not delivering the expected outcomes, deprioritized.

Complementary pathways for admission are easily accessible to refugees

Outcomes

The number of refugees admitted on complementary pathways increases, including through simplified access.

Collection and analysis of data on the availability and use of complementary pathways in Iraq is improved to inform strategies.

Complementary pathways program design reflects better the specific situation of refugees in Iraq, and legal, administrative, and practical barriers are addressed.

Complementary pathways include protection safeguards and provide dignified and durable solutions

Outcomes

Complementary pathways are responsive to the international protection needs of refugees and support their access to fundamental rights and basic services, including risks of return to the country of asylum/origin amounting to *refoulement*.

Complementary pathways are part of a progressive approach to solutions and contribute to the objective of enhancing refugee self-reliance.

Strategic Priorities

To achieve the above priorities, UNHCR has set the following three strategic objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1 Barriers to accessing complementary pathways are reduced and removed

- Work with Iraqi and third-country authorities to resolve administrative and practical access obstacles, such as the availability and accessibility of travel documents, in-country visa processing, skills and education certification, or the issuance of exit permits or payment of overdue residency fees.
- Facilitate family reunification, which remains the most accessed pathway in Iraq, through advocacy and partner coordination and prioritise family reunification procedures for highly vulnerable individuals. Simplify procedures so that refugee families can access family reunification procedures independently, without NGO or UNHCR support.
- Develop innovative approaches, including remote interviews and representation via legal proxy, in collaboration with embassies and third-country authorities to reduce access barriers.
- Build the capacity of embassies and consulates in Iraq and the region, UNHCR and partners at the national level on facilitating refugee access to complementary pathways, including identification of potential beneficiaries, application procedures, information sources and available opportunities.
- Monitor and evaluate complementary pathways accessible from Iraq to ensure programmes are tailored to the refugee needs, with protection from *refoulement* and consideration to Iraq-specific barrier.

OBJECTIVE 2 Refugees are capacitated to identify and pursue their own third country solutions

- Ensure accurate and user-friendly information on procedures is available to refugee communities through digital communication tools, such as UNHCR's 'Help' and 'Opportunities' pages, as well as through additional online channels.
- Training and support for national and local actors – protection, community outreach volunteers, etc, including through new partnerships, to initiate, design and implement programmes to share information and guidance on complementary pathways applications procedures.
- Promote 'success stories' for employment and education pathways to serve as proof of concept for additional programmes to consider candidates in Iraq and motivate refugee populations to improve their competitiveness and actively apply for opportunities.
- Expand education pathways in Iraq through participation in pilot projects (including Duolingo scholars) and engagement with education providers in new countries. Promote courses in foreign languages to increase opportunities available to refugees in Iraq.
- Expand available pathways in Iraq by collaborating with initiatives offering education and economic opportunities to refugees (such as universities, Talent Beyond Boundaries and TalentLift) and to help identify potential refugee candidates.
- Target post-graduate study opportunities to meet the demands of refugee student populations who wish to seek further education in third countries.

OBJECTIVE 3 Data and innovative tools are utilised to promote refugee access to complementary pathways

- Improve data systems to capture information on refugees accessing other complementary pathways, including through surveys, self-reporting, and collaboration with third countries and IOM.
- Map existing actors and information sources engaged in complementary pathways in Iraq through community consultations and surveying to strengthen collaboration with such providers.
- Improve capacity to identify refugees who may be eligible to access complementary pathways through existing data at the point of registration with UNHCR or partners' programmes, enabling the early capture of additional information on family links and refugee skills to allow for targeted information sharing and support on family reunification.
- Increase collaboration between third countries and UNHCR Iraq on refugees received via humanitarian pathways and named sponsorship separate from UNHCR-referred resettlement.
- Increase operational ability to support case identification for individuals encountering barriers to complementary pathways through targeted training for UNHCR and partners at the field level to increase referrals for applicants in need of direct support.

The primary aim of complementary pathways in Iraq is to expand solutions, as resettlement remains a limited protection tool globally. UNHCR and third countries have committed to expanding legal migration pathways available to refugees. Alternative migration pathways are key to Iraq-based refugees obtaining durable solutions. These pathways allow refugees to contribute their skills and knowledge to society and the economy in third countries, and to support their families home/in exile through remittances, and active support for family reunification helps families to integrate more easily in third countries via emotional and practical support. To date, the CPaths team have assisted more than three hundred families (nine hundred individuals), with one hundred and eighty assisted individuals successfully departing over the past two years.

COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS IN IRAQ

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The permanent reunification in a third country of dependent nuclear family members (parents of minor children, children under 18, and spouses) with family members who previously travelled to third countries as refugees or were granted asylum domestically.

COMMUNITY AND NAMED SPONSORSHIP

The financial and practical commitment to sponsoring and supporting a refugee to travel and integrate into society in a third country. Often strict financial requirements and limited eligibility (refugee status may be required). Sponsors may be community organisations, family members, friends and collective community groups.

HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Special visas issued by third countries to allow for permanent relocation for specific refugee profiles.

EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Employment opportunities for refugees with specific skills and experience to help meet labour shortfalls in third countries. They must include protection from refoulement and path to asylum, permanent residency and/or citizenship.

EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Scholarships and financial aid tailored to refugee requirements. Provide the opportunity to study in a third country and build personal skills for future employability. To be a pathway there must be protection against refoulement and an opportunity to regularise stay in the third country.

More information on specific pathways can be found on UNHCR's global 'Help' page - <https://www.unhcr.org/complementary-pathways.html>