

Private Sponsorship of Refugees - The New Face of Resettlement for the European Union?

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Proposed Research

My proposed research will focus on the utility of private sponsorship programmes for refugees in Europe as an alternative safe and legal way to gain protection. I will use a Case Study Methodology to collect data on temporary programmes that exist (or have existed) in Europe to demonstrate their utility.

My research will include: secondary data collection and comparison of current private sponsorship programmes; sampling of available literature and news articles on political and civil society interest in private sponsorship programmes; and a specific country study, which applies the collected data to demonstrate the possibility of implementing a private sponsorship programme.



Figure 1. Government of Canada Website

Utility of Research

This research aims to demonstrate that private sponsorship programmes are an untapped resource for EU governments to explore as an alternative pathway to protection. It is hoped that the research can be useful in the following ways:

- ❖ that a flexible private sponsorship programme can respond to ongoing global resettlement needs
- ❖ programmes will build on existing immigration policies, and increase refugee participation in the process
- ❖ humanitarianism will increase with diaspora and private sector support
- ❖ private sponsorship programmes can provide safe, alternative, legal pathways to the EU for refugees fleeing persecution

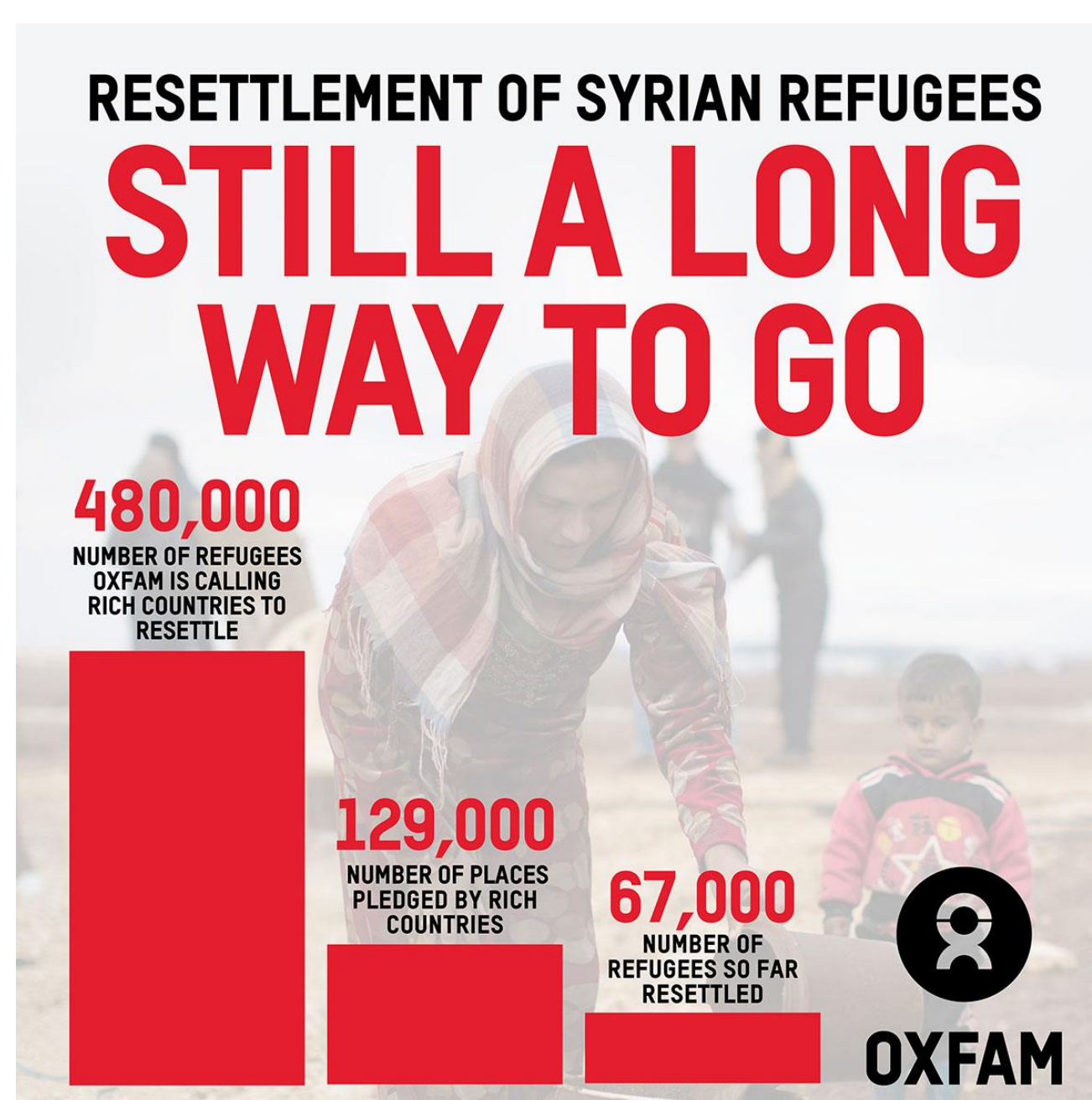
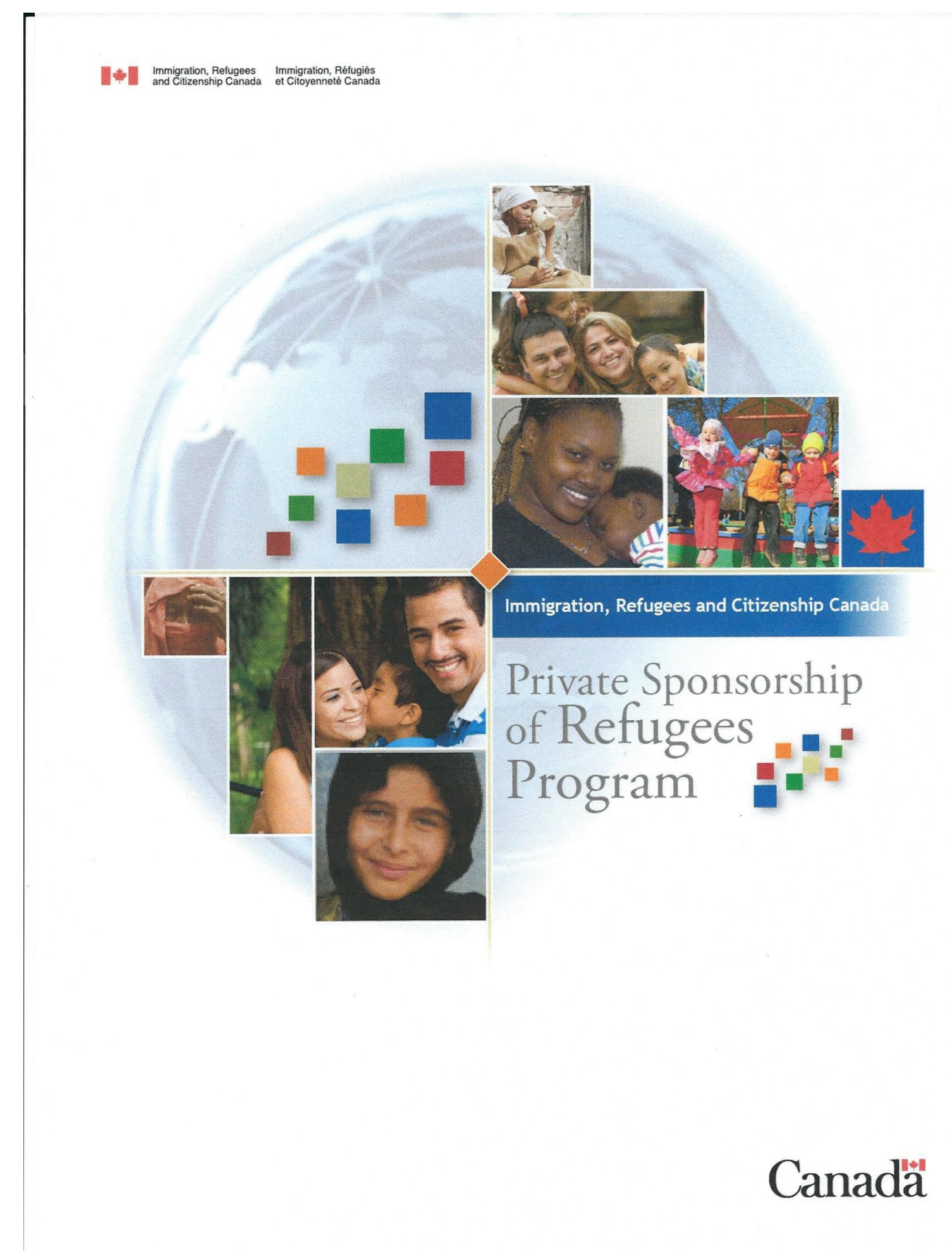


Table 1. OXFAM, Resettlement of Syrian Refugees, March 2016.



Background

Broadening resettlement to the EU through the creation of private sponsorship programmes will establish an alternative safe and legal pathway to protection for refugees.

Owing to skepticism, the voluntary UNHCR resettlement programme has few EU participants, with available spaces being cut by governments amid economic downturns.

Media coverage of the conflict has put a face to persecution, and private sponsorship programmes would encourage civil society to participate directly in refugee resettlement.

Discussion

Opponents argue that resettling refugees is expensive, and private sponsorship programmes risk governments deferring their resettlement responsibility to civil society. Further, EU countries lack established settlement organisations common in Canada and Australia, which may make replicating their successful programmes difficult on an ongoing basis.

There is limited research on this topic, as only a small number of private sponsorship programmes have been implemented. However Canadian studies indicate that privately sponsored refugees are quicker to become self-supporting compared to government sponsored refugees.

What is Private Sponsorship

'Private Sponsorship' has no agreed upon definition, given the multitude of actors involved and differences in the objectives the programme seeks to meet.

Kumin has identified two central features:

- I. a sponsor undertakes to provide support to a refugee for a pre-determined time period, and
- II. they have the ability to name the particular refugee.

Sponsors can include: an Individual, a group of individuals, community organisations, private organisations, educational institutions etc.

'Support' involves: financial, social and emotional supports.

Components of Private Sponsorship Programmes involve identifying: the sponsor and their obligations (including the duration of the undertaking), the refugee being sponsored and how they will be selected, whether the status conferred on the refugee will be temporary or permanent, associated costs and fees, how the program will be evaluated etc.



Figure 2. Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs Website.

Case Study Examples

Germany

Germany's private sponsorship programme is administered at the state level. It allows citizens and foreigners with legal residence to sponsor a Syrian refugee with whom they have a familial link. The Sponsor has to show adequate means of support for an unidentified duration. Once the refugee arrives they are granted a 1 to 2 year renewable residence.

Ireland

Ireland launched a short term private sponsorship programme that closed in 2014. Focusing on family reunification, the Sponsor (a naturalised citizen of Syrian birth or a lawfully residing Syrian) and the Syrian refugee being sponsored must have a family connection. The Sponsor is financially responsible for the duration of the refugees' two year residence, and is required to provide accommodation.

Contact

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