

# Fact Sheet

## Refugees

### Durable solutions for refugees

There are three recognized solutions available to refugees, often referred to as “durable solutions” to indicate that the ultimate objective is to place the refugee in a permanent or “durable situation.”

**Local Integration:** this solution is predicated on the willingness of the host country to allow refugees to work and to function as legal residents and to become viable, participating members of the adopted community. However, most host countries view refugees as a liability due to their poverty and the strain that their presence places on host economies. Some experts have argued, however, that properly done, local integration could be beneficial to both the host and receiving communities.

**Repatriation:** while this is the preferred option since most refugees wish to return home when circumstances permit, it can be challenging for countries emerging from internal conflict to have the infrastructure necessary for returning refugees. However, the prospect of repatriation sometimes means waiting years before normalcy returns to the refugee’s country of origin and safe return becomes possible.

**Resettlement:** the option that appeals to large number of refugees, particularly those in situations where they can neither remain safely in the host country nor return home in the near future. Resettlement in a third country such as the United States or Canada is a solution available to only a small percentage of the world’s refugees; yet it is the most sought after option. Resettlement is often promoted as the way in which some countries, generally the more affluent ones, share in the responsibility of caring for the world’s refugees.

At present only a small number of countries have resettlement programs; among them the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Chile, Spain, Sweden and the Netherlands. The UNHCR actively encourages more countries to consider resettlement programs as the need for resettlement is increasing. Worldwide, resettlement was available to about 100,000 persons in 2007, with the U.S. welcoming about 48,000 refugees to communities throughout the United States.

### Why do we resettle refugees?

Resettlement is, of course, an act of rescue for some of the world’s most vulnerable persons, releasing thousands each year from near death situations, protracted suffering in a refugee camp or the grinding poverty of an urban slum. Resettled refugees are often those who can arouse the conscience of an otherwise indifferent or unknowing society to this global humanitarian crisis. For Episcopalians and Christians generally, the Gospel imperative to care for the stranger is the theology behind our ministry to refugees and forcibly displaced persons. Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) carries out, with other faith-based and secular agencies, a national program of refugee resettlement through a public-private partnership with the U.S. government. EMM affiliate offices and parishes in one third of the dioceses of the Episcopal Church participate in resettlement work. Refugees are received from all parts of the world and sponsorship is offered to refugees without regard to national origin, race or religion.