
Equalization to Integration

Private and Government Sponsorship of Refugees

Private sponsorship was introduced as a mode of augmenting the intake of refugees into Canada above and beyond those brought in under direct government sponsorship. The model has been a tremendous success, but there have been numerous proposals to equalize and/or integrate the two schemes because of the differential successes as well as the inequities of the two models. The Minister of Employment and Immigration has already introduced a number of measures to reduce inequities through changes in the eligibility criteria for training and in benefits for privately sponsored refugees, and has pledged to establish a program of joint sponsorship.¹

Before an integrated model is implemented as a third stage in partnership of the public and private sectors, several steps would be helpful. First, a careful review of the objectives of such a model would be necessary. Also, an assessment of existing data relevant to such integration and an examination of what policies would need to be altered and what short and long term consequences might be anticipated for each model of integration could then follow.

A refugee resettlement policy relevant to the creation of an integrated model would need to take several factors into account.

1. Limiting Parameters

— There should be no mandatory private sponsorship of government sponsored refugees.

— The policy should not exclude private sponsorship of refugees.

2. Selection

(a) *Numbers* — The number of refugees taken in should not decrease, and, if possible, should be increased.

(b) *Choice* — The refugees selected should be those most in need. At the same time, the refugees selected should reflect those desired by sponsors in Canada. (These two objectives are not inherently compatible but they are not inherently irreconcilable either.)

(c) *Speed* — The new model should not inhibit the requirement of an emergency response to crisis situations.

3. Adaptation

(a) The model should ensure all ref-

ugees resettled in Canada have equal access to services, programs and allowances.

(b) The model should ensure that no private sponsorship group carries an unanticipated totally disproportionate share of the burdens of sponsorship. (Among Indochinese sponsorship groups, 16% of the refugees required support beyond one year and 60% of these were supported by their sponsors.)

(c) The model should be consistent, if possible, in giving priority either to language and cultural adaptation or to economic self-sufficiency.

(d) The model should attempt to give government sponsored refugees the same advantages provided by the personal private networks for privately sponsored refugees that enabled them to obtain jobs four weeks earlier than government sponsored refugees and, perhaps (as in Quebec), achieve a higher participation rate in employment.

(e) The model should attempt to provide as many refugees as possible with a personal volunteer support system which has shown to be so effective and beneficial in the resettlement of refugees, a benefit which most government sponsored refugees do not now presently enjoy.

4. Costs

The new model should not cost any more in total costs or in the cost per government sponsored refugee and, if possible, should utilize the savings, through the use of private sponsorship, to augment the whole refugee intake program since, "the voluntary sector, properly supported, can provide the needed services more adequately than the Government directly, and at considerably less cost."²

5. Co-operation

Any model proposed should be one which enhances and affirms real co-operation between the government and the private sector so that private sponsors do not feel as if they are merely being used. They should be given opportunities to participate in the formulation of policies affecting refugees. Second, any model proposed should facilitate the development of a three-

way partnership which includes the refugees themselves as well as the government and private sectors.

Comparative Data

Comparative studies of cost and adjustment factors related to private and government sponsorship reveal that, for example, in the case of the Indochinese refugees, the settlement costs of private sponsorship were \$753 less per refugee (a 33 1/3% saving) than the costs of government sponsored refugees, after deduction of the base costs of transport, overseas costs, etc., for all refugees. The savings result from shorter support periods on average, donated chattels (clothing, furniture, and appliances), and some donated professional services (legal, dental and accounting).

Privately sponsored refugees obtained employment on an average of 4 weeks earlier than government sponsored refugees in spite of the fact that government sponsored refugees had better language skills and higher educational qualifications.

Also, the satisfaction with the personal support system contrasted with the disappointment refugees experienced in obtaining attention from overworked government counsellors.³

Alternative Sponsorship Models

Simple cost sharing and per capita grants would significantly increase the costs to the government and would not provide private support for government sponsored refugees. A combination loan/grant scheme might solve the cost problem but not the human support one. The friendship family model for government sponsored refugees has worked well in some areas but has had difficulty in larger urban areas.

An incentive scheme (which continues the principle of the government matching proposal initiated with the Indochinese Refugee Sponsorship Program but applied to the economics of individual sponsorship) might be tried. There are at least two variations.

Scheme A

For every government sponsored refugee co-sponsored by the private sec-

TABLE 1
(In 1981 dollars)

	Costs per Refugee		Grant Available for Priv. Sponsor
	(1)	(2)	
Estimated cost sponsorship per refugee	2100	2100	
33 1/3% savings of private sponsorship	-700	-700	1400
Estimated Cost of Government-Private Co-sponsorship	1400	1400	

TABLE 2
(In 1982 dollars)

	Costs Per Refugee			Grant For Priv. Sponsor	Available For Base Costs
	(1)	(2)	(3)		
Estimated cost of gov't sponsorship	2250	2250	2250		
One-third Saving	-750	-750	-750	1500	750
Estimated Cost of Gov't-Private Co-sponsorship	1500	1500	1500		

tor, the government would pay one-half of the estimated costs of a refugee sponsored by the private sector. In 1981 dollars, after deduction of \$1400 base cost for all refugees, the calculation would be as illustrated in Table 1 above.

As is the case now, church groups or collectives of individuals would sign up to co-sponsor refugees selected by the government. If they did so under an umbrella agreement, the umbrella organization would receive \$1400 for the expenses of the co-sponsored refugee plus a grant of \$700 towards an additional privately sponsored refugee. Individual groups could accumulate credits towards a future sponsorship or assign their credit.

If fully utilized for 14,000 government sponsored refugees, it could result in 7,000 privately sponsored refugees. Since the normal number of anticipated privately sponsored refugees might be about half that number, there would be an additional base cost of \$1400 per refugee or about an extra \$4,000,000 cost to the government.

Scheme B

For every three government sponsored refugees co-sponsored by the private sector, the government would pay the estimated costs of a refugee sponsored by the private sector. In 1982 dollars, after deduction of \$1500 for base costs, the calculation would be as illustrated in Table 2 above.

If there are now an estimated 3,000 private sponsors per year and the program above were fully utilized to increase private sponsorships to 4,000, Scheme B would produce enough revenues to contribute towards the base costs of 2,000 such sponsorships. Since the government now pays the base costs of all 3,000 privately sponsored refugees, there would be a new saving of \$1500 for 1,000 refugees or \$1,500,000. These funds could be used as a contingency fund:

- (a) to pay for improved back-up services to refugees;

TABLE 3

Objective	Scheme A	Scheme B
Selection		
(a) Numbers	Would increase 20%	Would increase 6.6%
(b) Choice - need - sponsors	Responds to both but even more sensitive to sponsors	Responds to both
(c) Speed	No inhibitions to emergency response	No inhibitions to emergency response
Adaptation		
(a) Equal access to Services	As at present but there would be extra costs for the additional refugees	Would increase services slightly for all refugees
(b) Equity to Sponsors	No contingency for special cases	Contingency fund for special cases
(c) Priority language or economic adaptation	Both schemes increase the bias to economic self-sufficiency over language acquisition in the initial phases as this is a bias of private sponsorship	
(d) Network for Economic Adaptation	Greater burden on fewer people	Decreased burden per person but more people needed
(e) Personal Contact for Gov't sponsored refugees	There would be a greater incentive for the private sector to co-sponsor gov't refugees and fewer people would need to be involved; therefore, there would be a greater probability for more gov't sponsored refugees to be co-sponsored	Lesser probability that as many gov't sponsored refugees would be co-sponsored
Costs	More cost to gov't.	Less cost to gov't so more left for improvements & contingencies

- (b) to subsidize any private sponsorship that ran into extraordinary costs above the average.

Comparison of Scheme A and Scheme B — See Table 3 Above

If both schemes are compared in relation to the objectives outlined above, Scheme B is clearly better from the government perspective except for the fact that there is a decreased possibility that all government sponsored refugees would be supported by private networks. From the private perspective, Scheme A seems better since more refugees would be brought in and a higher proportion would be responsive to

private priorities, but it would not have the advantage of Scheme B in offsetting inequities in private sponsorship or in improving back-up services.

Conclusion

Whatever plan is utilized, it is imperative that the process for developing a new model exemplify the process of co-operation of the private and government sectors. It should not emerge by fiat. The present process of federal/private sector consultations hopefully will not only result in a new, more effective model, but will also build a base for more systematic co-operation of the public and private sectors.

¹Speech to TESL, CANADA, Edmonton, Alberta, Nov. 11, 1982, p. 14 -15. "I have also initiated . . . a proposal to undertake joint sponsorship between the federal government and private sponsors for refugees." cf. also the Minister's speech to the Canadian Polish Congress, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Nov. 12, 1982, p. 11.

²Evaluation of the Indochinese Refugee Group

Sponsorship Program." Canada Employment and Immigration, 1982.

³cf. Lawrence Lam, "Vietnamese-Chinese Refugees in Montreal," Ph.D Thesis, York University, April, 1983, pp. 229-234. See also, M. Lanphier, "Sponsorship of Refugees in Canada," Migration News, 1982.