



**REFUGEPOINT**

# 2021 fourth quarter report

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**A LIFELINE FOR FORGOTTEN REFUGEES**

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*A young Afghan evacuee tries on a pair of new winter boots at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. Photo: Staff Sgt. Benjamin John.*

## Quarterly Highlight

Now more than ever, refugees need access to resettlement and other pathways to safety. The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the evacuation of thousands of individuals in need of safe, new homes. On top of those fleeing the crisis in Afghanistan, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), identified more than 1.4 million refugees in need of resettlement last year. The international community has responded by seizing this challenging moment as one of immense opportunity, and RefugePoint has been at the center of many new initiatives.

Last quarter, we were among the founding partners for the new [Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans](#), which allows communities in the U.S. to welcome displaced Afghans by pairing refugee families with groups of Americans who have committed to receiving them and received training to do so. The program was launched in October and by December we saw the first Afghan families depart from military bases in the U.S. to their new homes in American communities.

In addition, we are one of the main partners in a new program to help refugees in Central America access visa pathways to the U.S. and Canada.

We remain central to global policy discussions related not just to resettlement, but to related pathways such as family reunification, labor mobility, and education. We've continued to co-lead executive-level discussions to reinvision the ways that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can support resettlement and other pathways to safety.

In December, RefugePoint was the only NGO given the opportunity to speak at the session on the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways at the High-Level Officials Meeting, the most prominent refugee-related event in the past two years. Echoing [our report from earlier in the year](#), we stressed the importance of ensuring that resettlement reaches the refugees that need it most, while also advancing new pathways to safety.

# Self-Reliance: Helping refugees improve their lives

## Direct Services

*Providing lasting solutions for the most at-risk refugees remains at the core of our work. RefugePoint focuses on equipping urban refugees in Nairobi to become self-reliant. We achieve this through stabilizing support services to ensure access to food, shelter, medical care, and empowerment through counseling, skill-building, and livelihoods assistance.*

During the last quarter of 2021, we helped 81 clients to reach self-reliance, with the ability to sustainably meet their own needs. In 2021, we supported a total of 557 clients to achieve self-reliance. We welcomed 164 new core clients in the fourth quarter, serving a total of 1,569 core clients in 2021.

In Q4, we focused on tackling vaccine hesitancy through community outreach. We continued to educate the refugee community on COVID-19 vaccines in an effort to overcome widespread misinformation. We also held meetings with 27 religious leaders from various denominations to discuss hesitancy and myths related to the vaccine, and called upon the leaders to promote vaccinations. We held a similar virtual forum for community members.

During Q4, we supported community health through the facilitation of two medical outreach initiatives. In partnership with the [Foundation for Health and Social Economic Development Africa](#) (HESED), we provided medical consultations to 352 clients, distributed reader glasses to 115 clients, and screened an additional 247 clients for non-communicable diseases. We partnered with the [Oak Foundation](#) and the Ministry of Health in the second outreach initiative, through which 110 clients received COVID-19 vaccines. The Oak Foundation is one of the NGOs we are engaging with in our refugee-led organization (RLO) capacity-building initiative.

Finally, we established an Accountability and Oversight Committee (AOC) during the 4th quarter. This committee, with majority refugee representation, allows RefugePoint to gather refugee views about programs and feedback regarding approaches that would leave lasting impacts on the community. The committee will provide additional communication channels between RefugePoint and the community members we serve. The committee members will also assist in identifying opportunities for collaboration between RefugePoint and grassroots organizations, while pointing out areas of mutual interest. The AOC will participate in the holistic review of our program and its components to provide feedback on program implementation.



## RefugePoint's Urban Stabilization Path

### COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTREACH

Q4 **2,910**  
YTD **8,080**

### EMPOWERMENT & STABILIZATION



#### Patients Receiving Medical Assistance

Q4 **865**  
YTD **1,418**



#### Food Assistance

Q4 **563**  
YTD **1,608**



#### Education Support

Q4 **329**  
YTD **329**



#### Counseling

Q4 **80**  
YTD **357**



#### Businesses Launched

Q4 **16**  
YTD **122**

### GRADUATED CLIENTS TO SELF-RELIANCE

Q4 **81**  
YTD **557**

## Field Building and Systems Change

*In addition to the direct services that we provide to urban refugees in Nairobi to achieve self-reliance, we also work to make large-scale impact through field building and systems change. One way that we aim to achieve that is through the [Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative \(RSRI\)](#), which promotes opportunities for refugees around the world to become self-reliant and achieve a better quality of life. The RSRI, co-founded by RefugePoint and the [Women's Refugee Commission](#), aims to collectively reach five million refugees with self-reliance programming in five years and, in the process, to identify the most effective models and measurements to aid the global expansion of self-reliance opportunities.*

Between October and December, RefugePoint organized a series of three peer-to-peer learning sessions for 16 community-based and refugee-led organizations in Nairobi, Kenya. During these sessions, participants shared learning and experiences on topics such as fundraising, budgeting, and community health preparedness. RefugePoint staff supported the planning, development, and facilitation of these sessions.

The global roll-out of the [Self-Reliance Index \(SRI\)](#) continued with new partners using the tool in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Kenya, Uganda, and the United States. New applications include Graduation Approach programming in Ecuador and Costa Rica, integration of the SRI as a core measurement tool in International Rescue Committee's project "Refugees in East Africa: Boosting Urban Innovations for Livelihoods Development" (Re:Build), and piloting of the tool in the United States with the [Refugee Dream Center](#) of Providence, Rhode Island. In November, Ned Meerdink, RefugePoint's Senior Program Officer, conducted a briefing session on the SRI for 19 community-based and refugee-led organizations in Kenya. As of December, 23 partners in 17 countries were using the SRI to inform their work on refugee self-reliance.

In November, RefugePoint and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) co-hosted a [virtual event](#) to present findings from a joint project that compiled and reviewed the evidence base on refugee self-reliance. Simar Singh, RefugePoint's Senior Programs Manager and co-author of the study, presented key findings and recommendations along with colleagues from DRC and Georgetown University.

In December, RefugePoint participated in the High-Level Officials Meeting, organized by UNHCR to take stock of progress towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. Simar Singh, representing the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative, delivered a statement on behalf of the wider international NGO community. Also at the meeting, the [U.S. State Department announced](#) that it would join the self-reliance [pledge](#) that the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) made with 15 partners at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum. Progress towards the RSRI pledge was also featured in a [UNHCR stocktaking report](#).

# Resettlement & Other Pathways:

## Helping refugees relocate to safety

### Direct Services

*In addition to equipping refugees to become self-reliant, we also work to relocate refugees to safety through resettlement and other legal migration pathways, such as visa programs for employment, education, and family reunification.*

**During the fourth quarter, RefugePoint helped 3,135 refugees access pathways to relocate to safety from 53 locations in 24 countries worldwide. RefugePoint staff have assisted 2,121 refugees in accessing resettlement services this quarter, as well as an additional 258 refugees in pursuing alternative pathways, such as labor mobility, family reunification, and community sponsorship.**

RefugePoint initiated several new programs in the fourth quarter of 2021. We played a critical role in the Sponsor Circle Program for Afghans, sending a small team of staff to military bases in the U.S. to enroll Afghan newcomers in the program.

In addition to this innovative work in the U.S., RefugePoint began two new projects in Central America and the Caribbean, our first time working in those regions. Our Resettlement Experts worked in Guatemala and in the Dominican Republic, interviewing Venezuelans and Guatemalans to refer them for resettlement.

Despite worldwide COVID-19 surges, RefugePoint Experts around the globe submitted resettlement referrals for refugees to relocate to safe and stable countries. RefugePoint submitted resettlement applications for 35 refugees in Nairobi to be resettled to the U.S., Canada, and Australia, totalling 101 resettlement referral submissions from Kenya for the year. This required significant operational adaptation due to the pandemic.

The end of 2021 brought a flurry of good news from our Experts working on alternative pathways to safety for refugees. *(Continued)*



## Refugees Assisted in the 4th Quarter

Countries where RefugePoint assisted refugees to access resettlement and other pathways to safety.

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. BENIN - 8                | 15. MALAWI - 450                    |
| 2. BURUNDI - 569            | 16. NIGER - 52                      |
| 3. CAMEROON - 12            | 17. RWANDA - 17                     |
| 4. CHAD - 10                | 18. SENEGAL - 11                    |
| 5. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC* - 45 | 19. SOMALIA - 90                    |
| 6. EGYPT - 286              | 20. SUDAN - 2                       |
| 7. ETHIOPIA - 333           | 21. TANZANIA - 276                  |
| 8. GAMBIA - 3               | 22. UGANDA - 224                    |
| 9. GHANA - 174              | 23. UNITED STATES** - 15            |
| 10. GUATEMALA* - 25         | 24. ZAMBIA - 156                    |
| 11. IRAQ* - 132             |                                     |
| 12. KENYA - 35              | *NOT SHOWN ON MAP                   |
| 13. LEBANON* - 44           | **COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP FOR AFGHANS |
| 14. LIBYA - 76              |                                     |

To name two successes, our Complementary Pathways Expert, who works on improving access to education visas in the U.S., supported a South Sudanese refugee to bring his wife and child to the U.S. with him. Additionally, our Family Reunification Expert in Uganda helped 17 individuals travel to rejoin their families in safe countries and she has received many happy photos of their reunions.

Our economic mobility program in Nairobi continued to work with candidates to fill job vacancies in Canada. Following the arrival of the first candidates from Kenya in June 2021, the program worked with candidates across different stages in their job application and immigration processes. In December, the Program was excited to learn that 21 candidates had been shortlisted for job interviews with an employer in Nova Scotia.

## Field Building and Systems Change

*In addition to helping refugees relocate to safety through direct services, RefugePoint also hosts trainings, develops tools, and makes policy recommendations to improve global systems related to resettlement and other pathways. During the previous quarter, our staff trained 1,064 individuals from UNHCR and partner organizations on topics ranging from child protection to complementary pathways.*

The final quarter of the year was a significant moment for field-building and systems-change for resettlement and other pathways to safety for refugees. Most of this work focused on new pathways that we helped develop, such as the Sponsor Circle Program, the historic community sponsorship program in the U.S. (Refer to Pg. 1 for further information about the Sponsor Circle Program]

In addition, our Experts deployed to UNHCR conducted 20 training sessions for UNHCR and their implementing partners on child protection, resettlement, family reunification, and complementary pathways during Q4. Our Child Protection Experts provided individualized support in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Rwanda, greatly improving the ability of local partners to do high-quality protection assessments on behalf of children in need of protection. Also in Uganda, our Resettlement Expert hosted several discussions with community leaders to answer their questions about the resettlement process. The same Expert also recorded a series of informative videos to play in the waiting rooms of the resettlement offices, at the request of UNHCR.

During this final quarter, the Economic Mobility Pathway Project (EMPP) in Nairobi continued to conduct trainings and briefings to UNHCR and NGO operations in East and Horn of Africa and in Latin America with a view to building their capacity around refugee economic migration.

### Helping refugees relocate to safety



**Quarterly: Q4 2021**

**3,135**

Refugees assisted in accessing resettlement and other pathways to safety this quarter.

**Annually: 2021**

**12,103**

Refugees assisted in accessing resettlement and other pathways to safety this year so far.

# Cross-Cutting Protection Priorities

## Child Protection

*RefugePoint prioritizes refugee children in all of our programs and we collaborate closely with partners to fill critical gaps in refugee child protection. This quarter, our staff conducted and reviewed child protection assessments for 401 refugee children.*

RefugePoint Child Protection Experts often conduct protection assessments (Best Interest Procedures) to assist in determining long-term solutions for at-risk children, including unaccompanied and separated children. In many cases, relocation to safe countries is recommended and pursued, although these opportunities are limited and not always available. Last quarter, our Expert in Niger collaborated with UNHCR partners to assess and recommend child survivors of human trafficking and other horrific abuses for humanitarian admissions to Italy. Eventually, five of the children assessed were granted education visas and relocated to Italy to pursue their education and live their lives in peace.

In collaboration with RefugePoint's Counseling and Child Protection programs, our Education Officer in Nairobi, Kenya conducted a life skills training for 15 students. Most students shared that they benefited most from the time management training and SMART goal setting. During this period, our Child Protection Officer in Nairobi completed a short-term mission to UNHCR Malawi, where she conducted casework and trained UNHCR implementing partners in Best Interest Procedures.

## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

*Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) includes any support that people receive to protect or promote their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing (physical, economic, social, mental, emotional, cultural, and spiritual determinants of health). It is a key component of wellness for staff and crucial for the self-reliance of clients.*

During World Mental Health month in October, Sonasha Braxton, our Senior Technical Advisor, MHPSS, was invited to represent RefugePoint at WHO's Global Mental Health Forum. On October 27, the first ever all-agency staff virtual wellness day took place. The date served as a RefugePoint holiday in which staff took part in staff-led classes, health and wellness discussions, and community building experiences.

In November and December, two MHPSS onboarding sessions were held for 16 new and returning staff. Additionally, the last of a four-part training on Trauma-Informed Care for the Urban Refugee Protection Program, "Caring for Ourselves and Cultivating Resilience" took place in November, which 80% of staff attended. This session focused on the self-care continuum, debunking self-care myths, creating healthy boundaries, and identifying and utilizing tools for self-care.



## Expert Story: Psychological First Aid

Many of the youth that our Child Protection Experts work with have experienced and continue to deal with extreme trauma. After working on a particularly difficult and complex case for a child who had been tortured as a child soldier and was experiencing horrific physical and psychological injuries, one of our Experts reflected:

*The child's case reminds me that inasmuch as we are humanitarian workers, we are humans first and we have emotions. As humanitarians, we easily can suffer from vicarious trauma or other related traumas as a result of the different caseloads we manage. There is fulfillment in following up a dire case and seeing tremendous progress from basic needs being met, to medical conditions improving, and psychological status also improving. However, all this is not possible if different agencies with different strengths do not work together, and it is also not possible if regular psychological debriefing is not prioritized for direct staff, especially caseworkers who encounter traumatizing events on a daily basis.*

In an effort to enhance that support, our Expert contacted his regional Senior Mental Health Officer to organize a virtual training on [Psychological First Aid](#). He worked with her to create two different sessions: one focused on staff supporting adults, and another for those working with children. The participants came from all different departments, and our Expert reported that the staff members felt much more prepared to deal with difficult situations after learning new techniques.

Mental health support is absolutely integral for refugees trying to recover from the traumas they have endured, and providing staff with the skills to assist in that healing process is key. Moreover, giving staff the resources to monitor their own mental health is equally instrumental.

# Staffing & Finances

## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

In addition to receiving 237 donations from individual donors as part of our Giving Tuesday and End of Year campaigns during the fourth quarter, RefugePoint was also the recipient of generous grant awards to support our work with Afghan refugees, including from The Chirag Foundation, The Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, and Seed the Dream Foundation. We also received foundation grants from The Nommontu Foundation, The Apatow-Mann Family Foundation, Inc., Select Equity Group Foundation, and the Five Together Foundation. We are grateful for the generosity of all of these private foundations!

In Q4, RefugePoint was also awarded a three-year grant from The Landry Family Foundation, which will support our work through 2024.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

RefugePoint ended the fourth quarter of 2021 with \$13,844,845 in revenue against expenses of \$7,387,323. This significant variance is largely the result of accruing a large multi-year grant commitment in 2021. Most of this grant is allocated for future years spending.

## STAFFING

Doreen Cutonilli joined RefugePoint as the Sponsorship Project Coordinator in October.

Saidi Muthoni Rehema joined RefugePoint as the Finance Associate Intern in November.

Tamara Omazic moved into a new position as Sponsorship Caseworker in November.

Hannah Markay moved into a new position as Sponsorship Caseworker in November.

## PRESS

[Thousands of Afghan refugees on U.S. bases wait for Americans to welcome them home](#), by Khaled Hosseini, NBC News

[Afghan Evacuees To Resettle In Mass. With Help From Private Citizens Under New Program](#), by Sarah Betancourt, GBH News

[State Dept. Expands Domestic Afghan Refugee Resettlement Efforts](#), by Savannah Sellers and Joe Fryer, NBC News (Morning News NOW)