



# **Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Programme**

Outcomes evaluation report

An evaluation carried out by Dovetail Consulting Ltd,  
commissioned by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

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## Glossary

**Complementary pathway:** A safe and regulated avenue by which refugees may live in a country and have their international protection needs met that is an alternative to the Refugee Quota Programme.

**HOST:** or HOST Aotearoa, is the umbrella organisation responsible for coordinating the CORS programme and supporting sponsor groups and sponsored refugees.

**Nominated pathway:** A refugee selection process in which a community group names a specific candidate for sponsorship.

**Matched pathway:** The second refugee selection process, in which a refugee is identified by the UNHCR or other organisation and then referred to CORS for matching with a suitable sponsor organisation.

**Traditional vs non-traditional settlement locations:** Traditional settlement locations include Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill. Non-traditional locations fall outside of these areas.

**Refugee Quota Programme:** Under the quota programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refers 'mandated' refugees to New Zealand to consider for resettlement. The quota includes women at risk, medical/disabled cases, and emergency protection cases.

## Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS) is an additional and complementary pathway to refugee settlement that sits alongside the New Zealand Refugee Quota programme. It is a category where approved New Zealand community organisations (sponsor organisations) apply to partner with refugees and support their settlement in the community. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) contracted Dovetail Consulting to implement an outcomes evaluation of CORS to identify and assess the outcomes of the CORS programme and to enable decision-making on future delivery.

Qualitative data was gathered through 16 interviews with principal applicants and some family members, 14 participating sponsor organisations, and three stakeholder groups. This was analysed alongside quarterly narrative reports and programme documentation. Thematic coding was applied across all qualitative data, with findings triangulated and tested through internal sensemaking. A pre-analysed IDI insight was also integrated.

## Outcomes

The CORS programme has been found to have achieved the early intended outcomes expected for a programme of its size and length. All of the criteria in this evaluation were at least “meeting expectations”, with just under 80% of all criteria at least “exceeding expectations”. Five domains were judged as excellent, with clear strengths of the programme being the ability to welcome refugees, support them with hospitality and respect, settle children into school and promote self-agency for sponsored refugees. The CORS programme has three primary policy objectives. This evaluation has found the following in relation to outcomes against these policy objectives.

### *The CORS pathway provides an opportunity for community organisations to be actively engaged in resettlement*

The CORS programme provides an opportunity for communities to draw on their community resources and networks to meet the needs of sponsored refugees. Almost all sponsor groups in this evaluation demonstrated a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and were supporting sponsored refugees in practical and meaningful ways. While capability varied, groups generally built effective networks, engaged with local services, and adjusted their support over time to promote independence for the refugees they sponsored.

Participation in the CORS programme was described by almost all sponsor organisations as a rewarding experience and groups enjoyed getting to know their sponsored refugees, learning about new cultures and, in some cases, making lifelong friends. Some sponsor organisations also reported that the programme empowered them to contribute to broader humanitarian goals.

### *The CORS pathway enables sponsored refugees, with the support of community organisations, to quickly become independent and self-sufficient*

Sponsored refugees felt warmly welcomed by their sponsorship groups and wider communities and all sponsored refugees described feeling respected, included, and treated with kindness by those around them upon arriving in New Zealand. The sponsored refugees in this evaluation all had their basic needs met, specifically in the domains of housing, children’s education, health and wellbeing. All sponsored refugees were in safe appropriate housing that met their needs, and almost all felt settled and able to make informed choices about where they live. Children were generally settling into school well, particularly young children who were picking up English quickly and making friends. Similarly, sponsored refugee needs were met in regard to health and wellbeing, with the next step being to instil ongoing, proactive management of health.

Almost all sponsored refugees were making steady progress toward self-sufficiency. Nearly all were able to manage day-to-day tasks, navigate key systems, and improve their English. All principal applicants understood the steps needed to find work or access education in New Zealand and all had taken at least some action toward this, whether by enrolling in English classes, starting volunteer work, or applying for jobs. Of the 16 sponsored refugees interviewed, eight were in employment, with four in full-time employment and four in part-time

employment. This aligns with IDI data which shows 41% of principal applicants in the CORS programme were employed at six months and 59% of working aged people were no longer on the unemployment benefit at six months.

There were examples of sponsored refugees working toward longer-term employment goals, with six studying toward a formal degree and three of these studying while working part-time. Several interviewees spoke to the speed of settlement and how quickly sponsored refugees were able to take steps toward independence and self-sufficiency as a clear benefit of the CORS pathway.

#### *CORS provides an alternative form of admission to complement the quota programme and demonstrates New Zealand's response to the scale of refugee movement and commitment to international responsibility-sharing*

The CORS programme is a unique and complementary pathway to refugee resettlement in New Zealand. The CORS eligibility criteria requiring certain standards of English language, employment or education history and age mean that sponsored refugees have the ability to settle quickly and ensures sponsor organisations will be able to provide support for this to happen safely. The criteria also act as a mechanism to provide opportunities for individuals and families who may have “fallen through the cracks” of traditional resettlement pathways. This was described as a lifechanging opportunity for many, particularly younger, single men. This evaluation has found this to be a significant strength of the programme as a supplementary pathway.

A total of 151 refugees have been resettled in New Zealand as part of the three-year pilot programme, which is approximately 10% of the current annual quota programme. CORS could demonstrate New Zealand's response to the scale of refugee movement and commitment to international responsibility-sharing by bringing refugee resettlement options in line with countries who also offer community resettlement pathways internationally.

#### Considerations for scaling and programme improvements

There appears to be adequate capability in communities to continue the programme at scale, with an overwhelming response from sponsorship organisations interested in participating in the CORS programme. There is also interest in ongoing support, with 11 of the 14 sponsor organisations reporting that they would continue to sponsor in future. Some organisations felt they had built up their own capacity to welcome refugees in future as part of this pilot in terms of resourcing, skills and networks. A key consideration will be ensuring the umbrella organisation is adequately resourced to work at scale to support future community organisations.

A small number of participants in this evaluation had the view that the eligibility requirements are overly restrictive. However, from an outcomes perspective, it was found that the criteria are supportive of outcome achievement. This model is well-placed to support rapid integration and ensures sponsored refugees can be settled safely and effectively in a community setting. This evaluation did not find a discernible difference in outcomes as a result of refugees nominated vs matched pathways. This evaluation has found that sponsor organisations have different strengths and are able to offer different types and levels of support.

Key areas for improvement to ensure refugee outcomes are achieved include:

- Strengthening and streamlining sponsor training and onboarding processes
- Continued expectation management for both sponsor organisations and sponsored refugees
- Addressing expectations around qualification recognition and employment
- Providing a support option for sponsored refugees beyond sponsor groups and HOST.

#### Conclusion

The CORS programme has provided safety and security for sponsored refugees who have taken part in this evaluation. Those who have come through the CORS pathway have met specific criteria, which mean they can be safely resettled by community sponsor groups. This has proven to be a successful pilot that has achieved the outcomes expected for a programme of its size and length. In many cases, the speed and quality of resettlement outcomes for sponsored refugees exceeded expectations. There is evidence to support the continuation of this pathway from an outcomes perspective if scaling of the programme is deemed feasible.

## Introduction

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) contracted Dovetail Consulting Ltd to design, lead and implement an outcomes evaluation of Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS).

## About Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship (CORS)

CORS is an additional and complementary pathway to refugee settlement that sits alongside the New Zealand Refugee Quota programme. It is a category where approved New Zealand-based community organisations (sponsor organisations) apply to partner with refugees and support their settlement in the community. The approved community organisations provide direct settlement support to refugees for the full two years of their sponsorship programme. Settlement support provided can include practical advice, helping to secure housing, enrol in education and health services, find jobs and form connections within the community.

CORS was first approved by Cabinet in June 2016. The initial pilot of the programme accepted 25 refugees in 2017/18. Following the initial pilot, a process evaluation was carried out by MBIE's Evidence and Insights Branch in 2019. Process changes were implemented on the basis of evaluation recommendations, and a second pilot was approved in May 2020. This pilot accepted 150 sponsored refugees from July 2021 and was later expanded to include a further 51 places. A second process evaluation was carried out in late 2024.

## This evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to identify and assess the outcomes of the CORS programme to enable decision-making on future delivery. The core evaluation aim is to understand the extent to which the CORS programme has achieved its intended outcomes for sponsored refugees and for communities. The intended outcomes were summarised and agreed upon during a design process with key stakeholders within INZ and MBIE and were influenced by the policy objectives for CORS<sup>1</sup>. The evaluation has also explored the potential for the CORS programme as a complementary pathway for refugees alongside the quota programme; the effectiveness of the scaling of the CORS programme; and the potential for further, future scaling if desirable.

## Key evaluation questions and Theory of Change

Key evaluation questions (KEQs) were co-designed and agreed upon during the design phase of this evaluation. These questions have guided lines of enquiry, data collection, analysis and reporting throughout the evaluation:

1. Has the CORS programme achieved its intended outcomes for sponsored refugees, sponsor organisations and broader communities?
2. How does the CORS programme contribute to New Zealand's broader refugee resettlement goals, and what unique benefits or challenges does the CORS model present as a complementary resettlement model?
3. What potential improvements can be made to the programme to ensure sustainability and consistency of outcome achievement and what should be considered for potential future scaling of the programme?

A Theory of Change was co-designed with the key stakeholders in this evaluation. This has been included in [Appendix 1](#). A Theory of Change describes how a programme or policy will bring about change, and shows how

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<sup>1</sup> The policy objectives for CORS are: (1) Provide an opportunity for community organisations to more actively engaged in resettlement, (2) enable sponsored refugees, with the support of community organisations, to quickly become independent and self-sufficient so that they are able to enter the labour market, navigate their communities, and access mainstream services without requiring additional support, (3) provide an alternative form of admission for refugees to complement the Refugee Quota Programme and, demonstrate New Zealand's response to the scale of refugee movement, and commitment to international responsibility-sharing.

resources and inputs such as funding, staff and knowledge support activities undertaken. It also shows how these activities create outcomes that may support wider impacts.

## Rubric

Evaluation criteria and standards (i.e., the rubric) has been developed, in collaboration with key stakeholders, for the evaluation of the CORS programme. This has been used when responding to and making judgements around the KEQs. The rubric draws on both early outcomes and outcomes within the Theory of Change, setting expectations about how meeting expectations and excellence could realistically look 6-18 months after settlement. The evaluation criteria are signposted through the evaluation report and the full rubric is detailed in [Appendix 2](#).

## Evidence gathering

This evaluation has utilised a mixed-methods approach.

- **Analysis of project documentation:** Key documents related to the programme, such as planning materials, previous evaluation reports, anonymised narrative reports and progress reports were reviewed to provide an understanding of the CORS programme and to triangulate data gathered through this evaluation.
- **Interviews with sponsored refugees:** A total of 16 sponsored refugee interviews were conducted online. These were held with principal applicants and in some cases their partner or another family member (one to three participants per interview). There were seven single individuals, five families and three couples/pairs interviewed. Eight interviewees came through a matched pathway and seven through a nominated pathway. Seven interviewees had been in the country for 8-11 months, one had been in New Zealand for 12-14 months and six had been in the country for 15 months or more.
- **Interviews with sponsor organisations:** A total of 14 sponsor organisations (one to two representatives) participated in online interview discussions. Three group interviews were held, each with two to three sponsor organisations. Six individual interviews with organisations were also held. Sponsor organisations spoken to were 64% urban (n=9, N=70%), 36% rural (n=5, N=30%), 28% sponsoring through a matched pathway (n=4, N=30%) and 72% sponsoring through a nominated pathway (n=10, N=70%). Of those sponsor organisations interviewed, eight were religious groups, three were NGO's and three were ethnic community groups.
- **Interviews with other relevant stakeholders:** A total of three online interviews with one to two relevant stakeholders from HOST and INZ.
- **Integration of pre-analysed IDI data:** INZ have collected and analysed IDI data for this project related to employment, which has been drawn on in one section. However, the small number of individuals in each outcome category meant that most IDI data could not be reported due to confidentiality restrictions, limiting its broader use in the evaluation.

All sponsored refugees and sponsor organisations who took part in an interview received an acknowledgement of participation in the form of a \$50 online voucher.

## Ethics

This evaluation has adhered to rigorous ethical standards to ensure that all participants were treated with respect and that their contributions were handled responsibly. This project received ethics review and approval from Aotearoa Research Ethics Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (AREC 25\_15).

## Analysis and sensemaking

The analysis for this evaluation has followed a thematic approach, primarily drawing on qualitative insights to understand the experiences of sponsored refugees, sponsor organisations and other key stakeholders. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with participants' consent. These were thematically coded against the outcome areas identified in the design phase. A similar process was undertaken to analyse quarterly narrative

reports from sponsor organisations, and these were used to triangulate themes from interview discussions. Some limited quantitative data, such as an insight from a separate IDI analysis were integrated into the report.

An internal sensemaking session was held, where initial findings were tested with the research team, including the three interviewers and one advisor. Judgements were made based on evidence emerging from coding and these continued to be refined through the writing process. Assessments against criteria required that almost all cases in the evaluation met the criteria statement, but there was room for outliers in decision making. The rubric draws on both early outcomes and outcomes within the Theory of Change, setting expectations about what meeting expectations and excellence could realistically look 6-18 months after settlement.

### Limitations

While some participants in this evaluation may have been settled in New Zealand for relatively longer periods of time (12-18 months), many will have been in New Zealand for a shorter period at the time of interviewing, and judgements have taken time limitations into account. Given project constraints, this evaluation has focused on the experience of principal applicants, with a limited number of interviews with wider family members where applicable. Any judgements made about other family members have used evidence provided by the principal applicant. Finally, this evaluation is based on interviews with a small proportion of CORS sponsored refugees, so while care has been taken to ensure a range of perspectives have been captured and considered, the findings may not fully represent the views and experiences of all individuals involved in the CORS programme.

### Quote key

The following acronyms signify where a quote has come from. Quotes have been lightly edited for readability.

**SG** – Sponsor group

**SR** – Sponsored refugee

**NR** – Narrative report



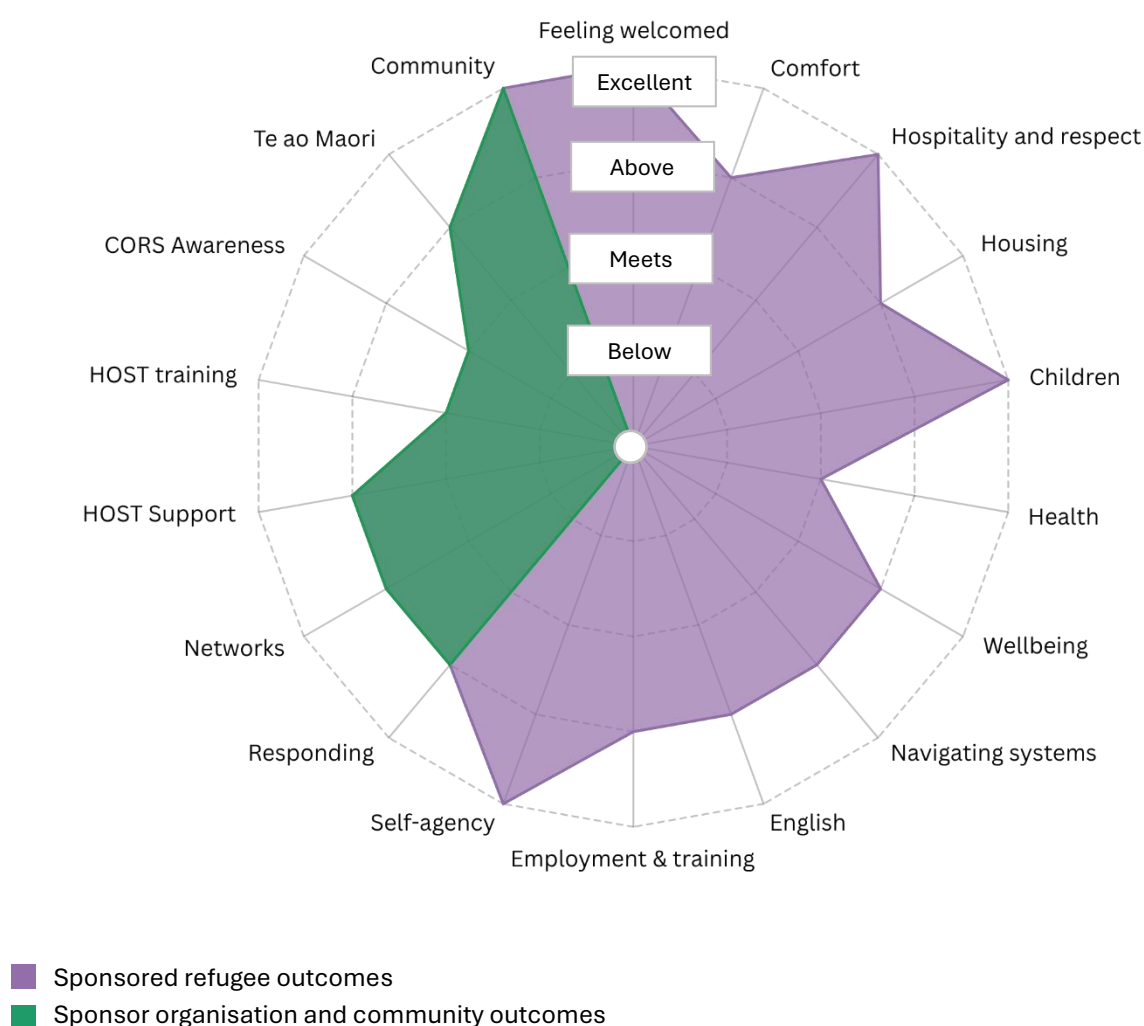
## Has the CORS programme achieved its intended outcomes?

Evidence gathered through this evaluation suggests that the CORS programme is meeting or exceeding expectations sought in the first 18 months of settlement. All of the criteria in this evaluation were at least “meeting expectations”, with just under 80% of all criteria found to be “exceeding expectations” or beyond. Five domains were judged as excellent. Sponsored refugees were found to be settling well, developing independence, and building meaningful lives in Aotearoa. Almost all have access to housing, education, health services, and are growing their English language skills. Individuals and families are navigating daily life with increasing confidence, often supported by strong relationships with their sponsor groups.

Sponsors have played an important role in facilitating refugee resettlement, generally understanding their responsibilities and actively drawing on their networks to raise funds, access resources, and connect people with services. Sponsored refugees have been welcomed into communities and introduced to te ao Māori, tikanga, and mana whenua through sponsor groups and broader networks. The ability for the programme to foster an environment where sustainable community ties can occur were community-level areas of excellence. Alongside praising HOST, sponsors suggested improvements to streamline and prioritise training. Awareness of CORS has grown in participating communities, and the sponsorship model is fostering lasting ties and community bonds.

The following chart summarises the criteria judgements against outcome areas for sponsored refugees, sponsor organisations and broader communities.

**Overview of outcome achievement against evaluation criteria**



## Sponsored refugee outcomes: Participation

Participants in this evaluation described being warmly welcomed into their sponsorship and wider communities upon arriving in New Zealand. Sponsor organisations facilitated opportunities for sponsored refugees to become familiar with their new communities and almost all sponsored refugees were familiar and increasingly comfortable with the new environments they found themselves in, with some differences across settlement locations. Sponsored refugees consistently described feeling respected, included, and treated with genuine kindness by those around them, including their sponsor organisation.

### Feeling welcomed in the community and developing relationships

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees feel welcomed and are starting to build relationships with sponsors and local community members.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are beginning to develop relationships beyond their sponsor group, engaging with a range of people in the wider community.

All sponsored refugees described feeling warmly welcomed by both their sponsor groups and the wider community, particularly on arrival at the airport, where they were greeted warmly with kindness and gifts. Sponsored refugees felt they were provided with opportunities to get to know their local community in the first three months and sponsors played a significant role in this, organising welcome events, making introductions, planning trips and outings and supporting daily needs in a way that helped sponsored refugees feel visible, safe and valued.

*“When we are walking or on the train people say hi, how are you? When you came the church tell us about you. We feel welcomed all the time. That help us to not feel we are different.” – SR*

*“What makes me really surprised is everybody knows my name when I arrive and what really makes me cry is no one calls me refugee.” – SR*

There was a sense of genuine friendship between many of the sponsored refugees and their sponsors, and this was consistent across settlement locations. Sponsored refugees regularly referred to their sponsors as being like family, describing them as people they could trust. Sponsors supported in a wide range of areas such as helping with errands, providing advice and giving practical and emotional support. Strong relationships formed between sponsored refugees and their sponsor groups, and many sponsors also connected sponsored refugees with others in their social networks.

Beyond their sponsor groups, almost all sponsored refugees were also developing wider relationships with neighbours, classmates, co-workers, sports teams, faith groups, and fellow migrants. Some were flatting with new friends or volunteering in their community. For a small number of sponsored refugees, community engagement was limited to English classes or casual greetings. These individuals described barriers to deeper connection which could include cultural differences, age gaps, or living in quieter areas, but still reported feeling safe and accepted.

*“Everybody knows me. I felt like I'm not coming to a city, but I came home. Even if they don't understand my culture, if you don't understand my belief, they just say to me welcome to New Zealand. You are safe here. If you need any help. This is my number. You can call me.” – SR*

While a small number of participants were less active in building wider social networks beyond their sponsor group, they still described strong relationships with their sponsor groups and people from similar cultural or faith backgrounds. Even in the one instance in this evaluation where the sponsored refugee did not remain in touch with their sponsor organisation, they still reported feeling warmly welcomed and set up to begin building their own relationships. These instances did not materially affect the overall finding. Overall, the range of relationships formed, the consistency of the warm and thoughtful welcoming of sponsored refugees, and the evidence of sponsored refugees beginning to participate independently in community life supports a judgement of excellent.

## Familiarity, comfort and engagement in spaces

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees know about local opportunities for social engagement and have taken initial steps to participate.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are engaging in community activities and events, developing a sense of familiarity and comfort in these spaces.

Almost all sponsored refugees were familiar and increasingly comfortable with the new environments they found themselves in. Across different locations, people described knowing how to get around their neighbourhoods, navigate public transport (where available), and use shops and services. Sponsor organisations played a key role in helping establish this comfort, offering initial orientation, helping set up practical routines, and introducing sponsored refugees to key community spaces. After an initial orientation and support from sponsor organisations, almost all sponsored refugees were actively participating in their communities independently, with many involved in English language classes, volunteering, sports teams, faith gatherings, or cultural events.

*“We wanted to see them integrated and making connections and it's been interesting to watch because... they've got high capability around finding their own connections.” – SG*

The level of comfort that sponsored refugees felt differed across settlement locations. For some sponsored refugees in smaller or more remote areas, access to community spaces and facilities was limited. Long distances and a lack of transport made it harder to participate in public life in the same way as those in larger centres. Sponsor groups in smaller settlement locations made conscious efforts to mitigate these limitations by finding housing for the sponsored refugees close to their own homes and providing transport to ensure people could access amenities. Sponsored refugees also found their own ways of getting comfortable and engaged in these spaces, such as connecting to ethnic communities in nearby cities or focusing on engagement through school or work.

*“There is no shop in halal certified. I was a meat lover, and I give up meat I become vegetarian. It was really challenging; my daily routine I am used to, it really shifted.” – SR*

This outcome was judged as above expectations. While not all sponsored refugees were equally engaged in public life, almost all were participating in community activities and felt comfortable in their new environment and some were sitting at an excellence level, engaging in community events and reporting total comfort in their new spaces.

## Hospitality, belonging and respect

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees feel they have experienced hospitality, cultural respect, and inclusion engaging with others in the community.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees feel a growing sense of belonging in community, reporting that they have made friends who they feel connected to.

Sponsored refugees in this evaluation described feeling respected and included by those around them, reporting that people in their community would often go out of their way to make them feel safe, offer practical help, and show interest in their cultures and faith practices. Sponsored refugees reported no concerns about being settled with sponsor organisations from different faiths and explained that they were being actively enabled to practice their own faith. In these cases, sponsor organisations would offer supports such as morning transport to prayer, help to locate halal food options and, in some cases, attending faith ceremonies and celebrations with the sponsored refugees. Sponsored refugees also spoke about feeling safe to be themselves, even when surrounded by people of different beliefs.

*“They try to treat with us in a way that we feel comfortable. They are very careful and very respectful to us in terms of religion and everything.” – SR*

*“Yes, of course we can practise completely our religion... They never meet Muslim people, and they ask questions. I feel happy to answer and let them know what is it and what is not.” – SR*

For many, this respect and welcome led to a growing sense of belonging. Sponsored refugees described forming real friendships, some within their sponsor group, and others through school, work, faith communities, or everyday encounters. These relationships helped sponsored refugees to feel at home in a new country. Sponsored refugees in non-traditional settlement locations reported very strong feelings of connection, despite fewer local services. The generosity of their communities, shown through offering rides, inviting them to events and showing up for celebrations, seemed to reinforce a sense of belonging.

*“They’re saying we are very happy to have you around us... and at the same time, I was entrusted to listen to them to learn from them [by] asking question. I’m feeling comfortable now much, more comfortable than when I arrived in New Zealand.” – SR [NTSL]*

*“They’ve lost everything all their lives. When they come to another place, they just want to belong. It’s not something you can do; you’ve just got to kind of be it. Create that place.” – SG*

While a small number of sponsored refugees experienced moments of cultural isolation or disconnection, these were often offset by broader support from sponsor groups and wider communities. The evaluation found that almost all sponsored refugees were not only treated with respect, but were beginning to develop strong, genuine friendships and relationships that reflect a deeper sense of belonging in their new communities, therefore this has been rated as excellent.

## Sponsored refugee outcomes: Basic needs

Sponsored refugees all had their basic needs met, specifically in the domains of housing, children’s education, health and wellbeing. All sponsored refugees were in safe appropriate housing that met their needs, and many felt settled and able to make informed choices about where they live. Children were generally settling into school well, particularly young children who were picking up English quickly and making friends. Similarly, sponsored refugees needs were met in regard to health and wellbeing, with some areas for improvement. Sponsor organisations were successfully setting sponsored refugees up for success and in most cases providing the tools for individuals and families to continue to make their own decisions on their basic needs.

### Safe, appropriate and stable private housing

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are living in safe and appropriate private housing that meets their needs.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees feel stable in their private housing situation, with a clear plan for long-term accommodation.

At the time of the evaluation, all participating sponsored refugees were living in safe and appropriate housing that largely met their needs. Some had moved directly into long-term accommodation after arriving in New Zealand, while others moved into temporary housing before finding a place that would meet their specific needs and preferences. In every case, sponsored refugees reported having a say in where they lived and felt they could make their own decisions about housing.

Sponsor groups played a critical role in the housing process, and, in all cases, they had either found and furnished a house before the sponsored refugee arrived or organised for temporary accommodation on arrival. In a few cases, sponsored refugees were still living in the house they had been placed in on arrival and in one of these cases the sponsor group was subsidising rent or asking for a small amount of money to cover expenses. However, many treated their original house as temporary, stating size, location, quality and personal preferences

as reasons for wanting to find something else that was more suitable. In these cases, sponsor groups supported sponsored refugees to view properties, speak with landlords, and understand tenancy processes. Many sponsor groups spoke about the challenge of securing suitable accommodation, particularly in smaller towns or tight rental markets, but also described the importance of ensuring families had genuine choice and control.

*"We're living with one of the community people and she's not taking rent, but she takes some money to help with electricity and water and Wi-Fi. We haven't got our private house yet, but we're looking forward for that. It's a little bit expensive here. Hopefully we go to social housing." -SR*

*"It was the start of winter and the house started to become not good. It was very, cold and noisy. We have found a good house now and we are very happy with this house. They helped us. They rang me many times, sent me Trade Me, and said you can choose any one from this. They helped us to get it, but we have a choice, many choices to choose and rent one but they just help us to find." - SR*

Sponsored refugees are now living in a range of housing situations, including family homes, independent apartments, flatting with ethnic community members or in two cases (both young, single men) with an established flat of "kiwis". In most cases, particularly for those in traditional settlement locations, sponsored refugees were living in locations that were suitable to their needs with access to transport, shops, schools, and other amenities. A few people were still living with sponsor group members or others from the community and spoke positively about these arrangements but also expressed that they were looking forward to moving into more independent housing when financially possible.

*"I decided to move. I have learned enough living with family (SG). Now let's learn how the flat culture is here and now I'm living with other friends from different countries." - SR*

*"This is a location close to my GP, also close to my workplace... I bike or walk most days." – SR*

Cost was the most common challenge for sponsored refugees, particularly for larger families or those who were still working toward full time employment. A small number were exploring options for social housing, which has resulted from conversations with quota refugees or from Work and Income. Those who reported wanting social housing had been in New Zealand for seven to eight months at the time of this evaluation. Housing was seen to be particularly unaffordable for those with larger families who reported needing more bedrooms to meet their needs. Conversely, some noted that the high cost of housing had motivated them to become more financially independent and were proud of their self-sufficiency in this area.

*"We came to our sponsor house and then I moved my own house. When I talk to my friends, they have government houses. Our rent is very expensive, but it's safe for us because is also motivated to be productive. I understand that's why most of my friend eat and sleep because they have cheap houses. They don't worry about nothing. But for us it's different." – SR*

*"It's not big enough so far because I have six children and we are eight person. Five bedroom is going to be very expensive. We will manage, but I'm just thinking if the government of New Zealand just give me a [social] house, it will be better." – SR*

Overall, the housing outcome sits just above expectations. All sponsored refugees were in safe and appropriate homes, and many felt settled and confident navigating the rental market. While some sponsored refugees were still being supported by their sponsor organisations in various ways, others have met the criteria level for excellent by finding private, stable accommodation that they are self-funding. Therefore, this criterion sits between the two at above expectations. While the cost of housing remains an ongoing challenge for some, sponsored refugees were generally supported to make informed choices and were being supported to work toward independent living.

## Children enrolling and settling in school and home

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Children of sponsored refugees are enrolled in education and their parents understand key school processes.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Children are settling in their education setting and parents feel increasingly confident in supporting child's education.

All school-aged children (under the age of eighteen) in the evaluation were enrolled in education, with parents actively involved in supporting their learning. Children were enrolled in local public schools soon after arrival and some families also enrolled younger children in early childhood education settings such as play centres, which provided additional opportunities for connection with other families. Sponsor groups helped parents understand the school system and made practical arrangements such as organising enrolments, arranging school uniforms, and attending initial playcentre visits.

*“The first time I took my kids to the school; I met the principals and teachers. They're so kind, so lovable and caring. I came to discuss with my wife, and I said we are very lucky.” – SR*

*“They enrolled at a play centre so that the mothers will go with the children, but also, they will be mixing with other mothers. All of their two year old's life, they were in hiding. So, playcentre would have been the first time in his two years that he was able to run around on grass and play in a playground. We could not get him away from those slides.” – SG*

Sponsored refugees felt that their children were settling into school well. There were five principal applicants with children that were interviewed as part of this evaluation and 18 children across these families. Many of the children of sponsored refugees in this evaluation arrived with limited English, but their parents reported they were quick to adapt to their new school settings. For two of these 18 children, the transition into school wasn't as smooth, and in these instances, it tended to be teenage children with limited English language skills that were struggling to settle. However, in these situations, there were clear plans in place such as pausing English language lessons to reset or working with school staff to address settling concerns. One family reported changing schools, which had worked well. Parents described feeling supported, even when the school system felt unfamiliar at first. In one example, a father described speaking to his son's teachers about his child going on a school camp and feeling reassured by their advice and views:

*“They are totally independent in the schools. My son went to a two-day camp. It was the first experience ever in my life that our child is going to a school camp. It's not in our culture. I asked the teachers and they said, “oh I really like camp and I enjoyed it” and so I told my wife that they have to take care of our kids and they will show them everything. He went and he was very excited because it's his first time. I asked him, how do you feel, it's the first time you will be away from your Mum, and he said, “I'm happy”, he was very excited and very happy. – SR*

Outside of the school environment, all parents reported that their children were settling well. Many had started extracurricular activities such as kapa haka and art and all had made friends. Several parents spoke about ferrying their children to birthday parties, study dates and sleepovers, signalling an active social life for these children.

*“My youngest son always refuses to come by car. He said I want to walk with my friends. Last week he met at his friend's house, and they enjoy the weekend.” – SR*

*“Sometimes it's parties or events after school they ask, ‘are you coming?’ She's coming to tell me, ‘Just take me here because my friends are coming.’ There I go and drop em' there. My two oldest children are coming and going by themselves, they are taking Metro bus.” – SR*

Overall, sponsored families were engaged with their children's education and felt confident navigating school systems. Children were building friendships, gaining confidence, and participating in school life. While a few

children experienced challenges settling into their new school environments, these were managed by the parents, who know where to go for support and were navigating their children's education with confidence. Therefore, this meets the criteria for excellence.

## Health

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are enrolled with a GP, have accessed necessary medical care, and are aware of key health services.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are proactively managing their health needs and express confidence in navigating the healthcare system.

All sponsored refugees in this evaluation were enrolled with a GP and understood how to access local health services. This was typically arranged with support from sponsor groups, who often facilitated early medical appointments and provided information about local practices, dentists, and mental health services. In some instances, sponsored refugees did require specialist services such as dental care, eye visits and referrals to specialists and all reported no issues in accessing these. This was not the experience of sponsor groups, who highlighted access to medical care as a significant challenge in narrative reports. However, sponsored refugees appeared to have been sheltered from these initial struggles as none of these challenges were highlighted in discussions through this evaluation. Those who had interacted with the healthcare system reported that their needs had been, or were being, addressed at the time of this evaluation.

Some families received health-related supports such as free or low-cost appointments through community services cards or school dental services. There were no reports of serious health issues going unsupported. Sponsored refugees also shared that they were aware of finding information about disability support if they needed it. In a small number of cases, children with disabilities were linked into support systems through school referrals or MSD. Sponsor groups also shared knowledge between themselves about where they could access services that would be appropriate for sponsored refugees.

*"Sponsors helped register. Now we are familiar with access to the health services. In case if you need any psychological appointment and they are always there to help us." – SR*

*"Two of my kids, I took to the practice for their vaccines. Me and my wife yesterday we had some issues about our teeth. And we went to the dentist, and we sort our problem." – SR*

The most significant and challenging health service for refugees and sponsor groups continues to be dentistry. Sponsor organisations shared that they were able to address immediate concerns for sponsored refugees through self-funding or through support from WINZ, however in some cases, dental costs exceeded \$5000 and sponsor groups reported covering these costs to avoid sponsored refugees accumulating debt soon after arrival. Another challenge was waiting times for appointments in some locations, including for surgery or dental care, though this was viewed as a broader issue with the New Zealand health system rather than specific to the CORS sponsorship pathway.

*"The biggest challenge has been the dental care of one family member. We really appreciated the knowledge of other sponsor groups who recommend a dentist skilled in working with former refugees who understood the WINZ entitlements. The wider community were very supportive in gifting money to cover these costs." – NR*

*"The waiting list is really lot. But I don't want to compromise, it's the reality. It's not only for me as refugee, it's common. Even those in this country, they have that long waiting list. I think I'm lucky as long as we accepted, and we are part of the system." – SR*

While access was good overall, there was a sense that sponsored refugees viewed healthcare as a part of the initial settlement process, rather than something that needs to be continuously and proactively managed. Many



sponsored refugees had completed initial consultations but did not appear to be in the habit of seeing a GP regularly or scheduling regular dental check-ups or cleans.

*"I haven't had many interactions with doctor or dentist because there was not much of a need for me to go." – SR*

*"I'm healthy person. I do not go to local GP. Even if I go, I can understand myself." -SR*

Overall, sponsored refugees are enrolled in basic healthcare and expressed an awareness of key services. A more proactive approach to long-term health care, including regular check-ups and understanding the importance of preventive care, will support longer-term health outcomes. Sponsor organisations are well-positioned to have these conversations with sponsored refugees during the resettlement period.

## Wellbeing

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees know how to access wellbeing resources if they are needed (e.g., community support, counselling).	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are engaging in activities that support their wellbeing (e.g., social connection, cultural expression, exercise).

Sponsored refugees generally understood how to access wellbeing and mental health support if needed. Most had been linked with health providers or support organisations who could assist with referrals, and sponsor groups reported confidence in knowing where to direct people if issues arose. However, there was a desire for more specialised trauma support that came through from sponsored refugees, and some sponsor organisations as well, which speaks to a broader challenge for the New Zealand mental health system in supporting refugees.

*"My mental health is more difficult than before. When I was in Indonesia, I have depression. But when I come to New Zealand, its more anxiety. Like if I do this maybe I would make a mistake if I said that, maybe it will be wrong. I found a counsellor. She said you need to accept your environment and we do some training. It helped, but because they not background refugee trauma, they don't train in that. Immigrant is totally different from refugee." - SR*

Sponsored refugees in this evaluation reported regularly engaging in activities to support their own mental health and wellbeing. For some, spending time with family, going for walks and visiting local attractions or parks were favourite pastimes. Others, particularly younger sponsored refugees, were engaged in social activities such as sports, social clubs and cultural groups. While some reported limited time for hobbies due to work, study, or parenting responsibilities, there was a clear sense that people were finding ways to do things they enjoyed and to look after their wellbeing. There were a small number of cases in which sponsored refugees were prioritising employment over other aspects of life in order to send money overseas, however these tended to be the exception rather than the rule.

*"My wife loves to go to the supermarkets even she buy something or not. She loves cooking, also, she's like to go to park to meet friends. My hobby is playing cricket." – SR*

*"I go to the gym. I am playing volleyball. I know some people from the gym. – SR*

Another important factor for sponsored refugee wellbeing was connection to culture and identity. Generally, sponsored refugees had a strong desire to find a balance between integrating into New Zealand and maintaining their own cultural practices and sense of identity. Those in traditional settlement locations reported having access to similar ethnic groups, places of worship and culturally appropriate foods, all of which supported them in finding this balance. Access to these things was limited in non-traditional settlement locations and some sponsored refugees reporting not wanting to burden their sponsor organisations with specific cultural needs. In these cases, sponsor organisations worked hard to provide access, driving sponsored refugees to neighbouring locations where they could worship or connect as well as actively seeking out these opportunities.



*“If there are other families from the same culture would help as a single woman. Other than that, everything is perfect.” - SR (NTSL)*

*“Maybe the most helpful thing could have been, if there were more [ethnic language] speaking people around him and close to him that he could, lament and grieve in his heart language.” - SG*

Almost all sponsored refugees spoke to being aware of where to find support if they needed it and were engaged in everyday activities that supported their sense of wellbeing. The judgement for this is above expectations because of the clear, proactive approach that most were taking to managing their wellbeing. However, it is important to highlight that many sponsored refugees have experienced significant trauma and specific support for these needs is a gap for many that still requires ongoing work.

## Sponsored refugee outcomes: Self-sufficiency and agency

Almost all sponsored refugees were making progress toward self-sufficiency, managing day-to-day tasks, navigating key systems, and improving their English, with many also pursuing work or study. Sponsor groups played an important role early on, offering hands-on support, but gradually stepped back as confidence grew. While support was still valued, most sponsored refugees described making their own decisions about important parts of their lives, and many were beginning to advocate for themselves and plan for the future.

### Navigating systems

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees can complete basic daily tasks independently and know where to seek help if needed.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are increasingly confident navigating systems, independently managing their own affairs.

Most sponsored refugees demonstrated a strong sense of agency and motivation when it came to completing everyday tasks and engaging with the systems around them. The initial orientation period played an important role with sponsors supporting appointments, explaining processes, providing transport, and helping with translation. These early supports made it easier for sponsored refugees to get started with the practicalities of life in New Zealand.

Once those basics were in place, most described feeling confident to navigate things on their own or with minimal support. Public transport was used frequently, and many had begun or completed the process of getting their driver licence, which was seen as an important step toward independence. At the time of the evaluation, 10 of the 14 principal applicants who were asked had attained some form of driver license.

*“Either public transport or our sponsors will drive us. It's OK so far, but not as good as a car. I'm planning to get a full and get my own car to move around as I wish.” – SR*

Tasks like registering with services, shopping, or attending appointments were generally being managed independently and almost all sponsored refugees felt they could go to their sponsor organisation for support if they needed it. Some sponsored refugees were also managing more complex systems themselves, with some in university education working through scholarship application processes and others navigating waitlists within the health system. In these cases, sponsor organisations tended to be more involved, but overall, there was a clear sense that people were gaining confidence in this space.

*“Just having someone else with them at an interview or on the end of the phone or working through these processes is very, very helpful for them.” – SG*

Overall, sponsored refugees in this evaluation spoke about engaging in a range of tasks and processes that require the independent navigation of systems such as transport, making appointments and as other areas of this evaluation have highlighted, navigating schooling, healthcare and housing. Some sponsored refugees are also engaging with more complex systems such as tertiary education but are still receiving support to do so

through their sponsor groups. Therefore, this judgement is not quite at excellent, but is above expectations as all sponsored refugees in this evaluation are navigating basic systems independently and do not require any additional support for this.

## English language improvement

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are engaged in English language improvement.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees have progressed their English, allowing them to converse more confidently and participate in their community.

Almost all sponsored refugees, including principal applicants and other family members, were actively engaged in improving their English through a combination of formal classes, community programmes, and informal support from their sponsor groups. For some, this meant building their skills up from a very basic level, while others were looking to build on a strong, existing grasp of the English language to become more confident and fluent in speaking. In both cases, English language immersion was important. This was a given for those who were settled with English speaking sponsor organisations.

*“I used to speak in English all the time. But when I came, it wasn't this level, just beginning. Because I live around people, all people speaking English, there's no people speaking Arabic and so I got the language more and learning everyday something new.” - SR*

There was a wide range of English language capability across participating sponsored refugees. Some were highly articulate and confident navigating everyday conversations, while others were not yet at this stage. However, all were able to manage basic communication and could ask for help when needed. The ability to speak English was often noted by sponsors as a key factor in how quickly sponsored refugees were able to become independent, and this was also a factor in how easily sponsor organisations could provide support. Younger children picked up English quickly through school and socialising, while parents and other adult refugees with limited English spoke about needing more time and practice, particularly to adjust to Kiwi accents and pace of speech.

*“The principal applicant whose English was fluent was away a lot more quickly, navigated life, social interactions. He was just happy to do it by himself and didn't need interpreting.” - SG*

*“My children's English has improved. The teachers and lessons are very good. My three older children (between 12 and 16yrs) know little bit English, so it was bit hard for them. But the youngest ones can speak very well.” - SR*

This evaluation has found that the level of English capability of sponsored refugees is an important factor in strength and speed of settlement outcomes. Sponsored refugees with stronger English language on arrival were able to begin looking for employment, apply for university courses or focus on getting to know their new communities without a language barrier. Sponsored refugees with advanced English language skills in employment described thriving in the workplace because they could understand instructions, form connections with colleagues, begin advancing their career goals and work effectively in teams.

*“Since I'm not a qualified teacher, I can't apply for that in New Zealand if I want to work as a teacher here, I need to be qualified first. But the language helped me to find a job easier than ones who didn't know English well.” - SR*

*“It was easily for me to join in a course or university because one of the requirements was that you could speak English, at least in intermediate level. This is really help me.” - SR*

English language skills, as well as a basic understanding of Western culture, were also seen as beneficial for forming connections with people outside of sponsor groups. Sponsor organisations from the same or a similar ethnic background were able to provide an instant community to sponsored refugees, which was hugely

important for settlement, however, this may remove the need for these sponsored refugees to go out into broader communities and make other connections. Limited English language skills could add a layer of complexity to this. One sponsored refugee explained English language and understanding of Western or New Zealand culture go hand in hand when it comes to integration outcomes:

*“I think that that helped me tremendously, having that English capability. I think an important part missing is the understanding of the culture. If you're invited for dinner, the first time that's out of generosity. What would it take to be invited back, for the second time? [How do we build] sustainable relationships? Finding that commonality. For many refugees, they're very disconnected from New Zealand culture. They might be invited for dinner once. I often sit down with my sponsor, and we talk about pop culture, what's happening around New Zealand. I can have a typical conversation, give feedback. If I would change anything about any government handling refugees is creating space that [creates] the familiarity with New Zealand culture. That doesn't mean that they should abandoned their own culture.” – SR*

Overall, the focus on English language improvement was strong, and almost all sponsored refugees were making good progress. Some sponsored refugees arrived with excellent English, or quickly became able to converse in English with confidence. For others confidence and practice could reasonably be expected to come with time. Therefore, this judgement sits at above expectations. Those with relatively good English on arrival were found to have stronger and faster settlement outcomes in general than those with lower levels of English on arrival.

## Employment and education

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Principal applicant understands the steps to access employment, education/training and has begun taking initial actions.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Principal applicant and partner (if applicable) are in stable employment or education/training and working toward meaningful future career goals.

All sponsored refugees understood the steps needed to find work or access education in New Zealand. Almost all sponsored refugees had taken at least some action toward this, whether by enrolling in English classes, starting volunteer work, or applying for jobs. Of the 16 sponsored refugees interviewed, eight were in employment, with four in full-time employment and four in part-time employment. This number aligns with the IDI data, which showed 41% of principal applicants were employed at 6 months. The IDI analysis also showed that 39/66 (59%) of working aged people were no longer on the unemployment benefit at 6 months.<sup>2</sup> Most of the sponsored refugees who were in employment during the time of the interview were in jobs unrelated to their prior qualification, with two working in roles closely related to their field. Two sponsored refugees were looking for more full-time work, and one was in the reference check process for a role related to their field. Three were focussing on improving their English fluency before finding paid employment.

General employment roles were often accessed through sponsor group networks or community connections, but those looking for work in their field were going through a traditional application process like enquiring in-person or responding to job listings online. There did not appear to be a relationship between settlement location and likelihood of finding paid employment as there were sponsored refugees from both traditional and non-

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<sup>2</sup> IDI analysis only includes those who had been in NZ for 6 months or more, and for whom data was available. These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the [Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and/or Longitudinal Business Database (LBD)] which [is/are] carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the [IDI and/or LBD] please visit <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/>.

traditional settlement locations that reported difficulty finding work, and in both locations, sponsor group influence and networks seemed to be a significant factor in sponsored refugees finding employment.

*“He walked into the shops and got a job on the first day from somebody who'd read about him on Facebook.” – SG*

*“I started applying for jobs and it's hard to find job. I don't know if it just this city or there's something I don't know other cities. Now I am working as an interpreter. That's like more casual.” – SR*

*“I tell these guys, if you can work, please work. I'm not into people going to work and income and receiving a benefit. I had for some time my family we were getting supported. I'm not into for long term. I encourage them to get into the workforce and slowly you'll learn and get to know people. One day, I want them to be successful and that's one of my approaches.” – SG*

The concept of meaningful employment differed across sponsored refugees. For some, meaningful employment meant earning enough to support a current or future family, and for these individuals the type of work they engaged in wasn't necessarily important. There were also a handful of examples in which sponsored refugees were working toward long-term meaningful employment goals, either in their field or in an aspiring field. Some sponsored refugees were able to work their way up internally within their workplaces. Others viewed meaningful employment as being able to use their overseas experience and qualifications and, in many cases, these individuals struggled to have their qualifications and experience recognised in the New Zealand context.

None of the sponsored refugees in this evaluation reported that their prior qualifications had been recognised upon coming to New Zealand. The lack of recognition of their qualification was a surprise for some of these sponsored refugees who expressed that they felt they had been selected for CORS on these merits but felt that they were now expected to work in low-wage, low-skilled roles.

*“I have applied for many roles, not totally unrelated to what I have studied.” – SR*

*“It's the challenge, I have sent hundreds of CV still, I'm sending everyday one of my to do.” – SR*

For sponsored refugees who had studied or worked in specialised fields, there was a recognition from them that the qualifications they had obtained prior to coming to New Zealand had become outdated due to advanced in technology and ways of working. These individuals were looking at others ways they could put their transferable skills to use. Others expressed a desire to shift career paths entirely and were taking active steps to do so. Eight sponsored refugees noted that they were willing to pursue roles that were unrelated to their prior qualifications and experience. They recognised that only a formal degree would make their career shift viable and were happy to find other employment first to save money or work while studying, after which they could move towards a formal degree. Six of the interviewed sponsored refugees were studying towards a formal degree. Three sponsored refugees were studying while working part-time.

In cases where sponsored refugees were successfully pursuing education, sponsor organisations played a significant role in navigating StudyLink and scholarships, and in one instance where a sponsored refugee required financial support, the community fundraised to cover university fees.

*“My [family member] was working in a good company in finance. When we arrived, we were disappointed that we should have [other] qualification. But [my family member] got a job in customer service, now they promoted them to finance.” – SR*

*“Last semester I achieved 100% attendance at my Polytechnic. I'm going to continue and after that I hope I can study maybe social work or social, psychology because I studied the same subjects [overseas].” – SR*

*“He did a programme which gives you university entry. He's just started his second semester and wants to [work in the clinical field in mental health]. He is just absolutely on track.” – SG*

While education and training to access meaningful and fulfilling employment were of interest to many of the sponsored refugees in this evaluation, these goals were sometimes seen to be out of reach, especially for families needing to prioritise income. Some sponsored refugees spoke about the barriers to study while on a benefit, or the difficulty of balancing parenting demands and costs with education goals.

*“I’m working in a factory. I would like to study mechanics. WINZ, I requested, but they say we can’t support unless you cut off your benefits. We can’t survive with the children.” – SR*

This criterion was judged as “above expectations” because all principal applicants understood the steps to access employment, education/training and many had moved beyond this, entering into full-time and part-time employment or study. However, this is not yet at excellence as finding work, particularly work aligned with qualifications and experience is still a challenge for many sponsored refugees and not all principal applicants are in stable employment or education/training. The support of sponsor groups and a willingness to work one’s way up appears to have given many sponsored refugees an edge in the employment market. As mentioned in previous sections, strong English language skills from the outset has also aided in finding suitable employment or pursuing education.

## Independence and self-agency

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are making small but meaningful decisions about their daily lives and future, with guidance from sponsors when needed.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees demonstrate a growing sense of agency, making informed decisions, and advocating for their own needs with increasing independence.

Sponsored refugees in this evaluation felt that they had agency and the ability to make informed decisions about important things in their lives. Individuals in this evaluation described decisions they have made about where to live, what kind of work they want to pursue and how they want to spend their time. While sponsor organisations were available to support and sometimes provided advice to sponsored refugees, all interviewees agreed that they ultimately had the power to make decisions. Some were completely financially independent and took great pride in their ability to meet all their own needs without government assistance, with some comparing their situation favourably to other refugees who had come through more traditional settlement pathways.

*“I am very independent. I can provide myself everything. I buy first car on cash. I thought you will never be enough yourself because I never get opportunity. I really live my life, the life I want.” - SR*

*“Yep, we are free. My wife, we are independent, and we can make all of our decisions except when we feel like we need some sort of advice from our friends or the community.” – SR*

In many cases, sponsor groups supported early decision-making, and many spoke about their thoughtful approach to balancing support with ensuring sponsored refugees were the ones making the decisions. One sponsored refugee described finding a job independently and asking his sponsors to review the employment contract before signing. Another described working with sponsors to plan within their financial means, while still holding responsibility for the decisions.

*“If I’ve got something I want to do, we can discuss and because I’m new in the country, I don’t have big experience, they give us ideas. In the end I decide what I want and what is good for me.” – SR*

*“If they want their independence, or if they want to go and be reunited with other family overseas, we don’t own them. We want them to have full agency of their lives, and if that includes us, well, that’s offered from our side.” – SG*

In one instance, a refugee described their experience being able to give money back to a charity and the feeling of being the one supporting others, rather than being supported. For this individual, this was a true expression of self-agency and a marker of independence:

*“IRD talked to me, and they said to me we have extra money, we will give you back or would you like to put a charity? And I say it's \$50, put the charity. I was the one who take a charity since I was born. But this is one year and half. I'm the one who helping people. I don't know how to express this feeling.” - SR*

In almost all cases, sponsored refugees were not only managing the basics but building the confidence to advocate for their own needs by navigating government systems, raising housing concerns, or making education and career choices for themselves and their children. All sponsored refugees demonstrated a growing sense of agency, reported making informed decisions, and felt able to advocate for their own needs with increasing independence. Even in a case where the sponsor organisation and their sponsored refugee had differing views about the sponsored refugees choices, the sponsored refugee advocated for themselves and their own needs. Therefore, considering the short time that participating sponsored refugees had been in New Zealand, this is judged at excellent.

## Sponsor and community outcomes: Delivery of settlement capabilities

Sponsor groups are a defining feature of CORS, and their involvement was central to the success of the pilot. Almost all sponsor groups demonstrated a strong understanding of their role and responsibilities and were supporting sponsored refugees in practical and meaningful ways. While capability varied, groups generally built effective networks, engaged with local services, and adjusted their support over time to promote independence. Feedback on HOST was largely positive, with sponsor groups valuing the relationship and support. Groups also provided some feedback to streamline future training and onboarding.

The programme generated greater awareness of refugee resettlement in communities not previously involved in this space, however a broader awareness of the CORS pathway will likely take more time. Sponsor groups were working to ensure sponsored refugees were introduced to te ao Māori and tikanga Māori, building core skills and understanding that they could take into their future lives in New Zealand. Finally, this evaluation has found strong community ties have emerged both within and outside of sponsorship communities and it is likely that many sponsored refugees will sustain these connections beyond the formal sponsorship period.

## Understanding role and refugee needs

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsors understand their role and responsibilities and provide support to sponsored refugees, occasionally drawing on traditional settlement networks.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsors demonstrate a deep understanding of refugee needs, proactively seeking additional opportunities, and adapting their support to meet needs.

Almost all sponsor groups demonstrated a strong understanding of their role and responsibilities as part of CORS, offering consistent and practical support while also encouraging sponsored refugees to become independent. Sponsors all strived to ensure the needs of the refugees they sponsored were met and most were deliberate about stepping back as confidence and capability grew.

*“If they want their independence, well, we don't own them, we want them to have full agency of their lives and if that agency includes us, well, that's offered from our side.” – SG*

In many cases, sponsor groups went beyond the basics, forming close relationships, and demonstrating a deep and personal understanding of individual and family needs. Some sponsors that were of a different ethnic background to their sponsored refugees learnt about the different cultures and attended places of worship and religious events. In two instances, the sponsor organisations were learning the language of their sponsored refugees. This was an opportunity to connect with other cultures as well as make sponsored refugees feel welcomed.

*“Muslim countries, they celebrate [Eid] widely and with families and friends. This year we had no more family members around here, so our sponsors took part and invited us to [their] house and they gathered and organised a party to celebrate our Eid together.” – SR*

*“She’s been learning Arabic. She would like to learn one word a day or a phrase a day. She wanted to give back to them. So, it wasn’t all about them being told to learn English there. She wanted to learn those things.” – SG*

While most sponsors navigated this well, a small number expressed uncertainty or difficulty in finding the right balance or level of involvement. Some sponsors found it difficult to provide adequate support to refugees with significant trauma and needs that were higher than anticipated. There were also a small number of cases where sponsor organisations struggled to balance their support responsibilities with building independence. In one of these cases, the sponsor organisation sought support from HOST much later than needed, by which point the relationship with the sponsored refugee had deteriorated.

*“After over a decade in Indonesia, they just want to come and be their own people and not be relying on anyone for anything. We very much respected that but then the problem was they didn’t have enough money, so they sort of needed us. I don’t think they want to need us. They’re difficult to help because they were so independent that our suggestions weren’t listened to.” – SG*

However, these were minor exceptions, with almost all sponsor groups understanding their role and priorities of building independence and supporting sponsored refugee agency, including in cases where the sponsored refugee may wish to move city or go in a direction the sponsor organisation didn’t necessarily agree with. Some sponsors demonstrated a deep understanding of the needs of their sponsored refugees and were actively seeking additional supports and opportunities, but this was not happening consistently across the majority of sponsor organisations, placing this judgement at above expectations.

## Networks and partnerships

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsors establish basic networks, engaging with local services, community groups, relevant agencies and resources.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsors have built strong, sustainable partnerships with key community organisations, mana whenua, service providers, and other sponsors and draw on these.

Sponsor organisations had established basic networks with relevant organisations to support settlement. Almost all sponsorship organisations came into the CORS programme with some level of established relationships and networks. The programme has had an overwhelming response from sponsorship organisations interested in participating in the CORS programme, with demand outstripping availability of sponsorship opportunities. Sponsorship organisations tended to be faith-based organisations like churches, NGOs, former refugee communities or businesses.

Faith-based communities were able to draw on the financial and time resources of their congregations and in some instances, individuals within these organisations had network connections such as health practitioners and counsellors. These organisations tended to have the reach and ability to fundraise large amounts of money upfront, usually around \$5,000 to \$13,000 per refugee, some of which exceeded amounts that were needed to settle individuals and families. Former refugee organisations tended to have strong employment and housing networks, stating that finding access to these was fairly simple within their communities. They also described creative ways of supporting their sponsored refugees such as negotiating rent discounts with landlords and finding GPs that provided affordable services for refugees. NGOs were also well networked, drawing on existing relationships with other organisations in the sector.



*“There's someone in the church that owns a storage unit and he's just given us [one]. We've got marvellous resources and we are so set up to take these families because we've got people everywhere.” – SG*

*“We've got developer, we've got big businesses in our community, and I also have business and I've got a lot of links to a lot of people. It wasn't very hard for us to find accommodation and it wasn't very hard for us to find jobs. I could easily go to someone and say, can you give this guy a job.” – SG*

*We managed to get clothes, chairs, tables, any sorts of things. We did do BBQ sausage sizzle. It was also successful, and we did advertisements in order to get donations. – SG*

In order to support settlement, almost all sponsor groups made significant efforts to establish new networks with local services and community organisations to support settlement. This included engaging with MSD offices, schools, medical centres and maternity service providers. Through the CORS programme, some organisations also connected with each other, sharing resources and knowledge across areas.

There was some evidence of sponsor groups stepping in to support other sponsor groups where knowledge or capacity was lacking. In some instances, this included sponsor groups' nominating refugees for other sponsor groups who were having trouble with the matched pathway or extending support to refugees who wanted to move from other areas where their sponsor group was located. There were also examples of sharing resources and processes collaboratively and inviting sponsored refugees to other sponsor groups' orientation sessions.

*“One of the other sponsor groups, we work very closely. He organises events like Waitangi, and I can send my guys there.” – SG*

Four of the sponsor organisations in this evaluation has sponsored a relatively large number of principal applicant refugees through the CORS programme and three of these organisations expressed that they would continue to do so in future, the other had a key team member leave the organisation and said that future sponsorship would be dependent on internal capacity. These sponsor organisations reported having strong networks and resources to continue supporting sponsored refugees in future.

All sponsor organisations had established basic networks as part of the CORS programme and were engaging with local services, community groups and relevant agencies to meet the needs of sponsored refugees. Some sponsor organisations went beyond this, partnering with other CORS organisations, mana whenua and service providers. However, there is still an opportunity for almost all sponsor organisations to strengthen relationships and build sustainable connections with mana whenua and other community groups in future, and this will likely be possible with time. Therefore, this judgement sits at above expectations.

## Satisfaction with HOST

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsor organisations are satisfied with the support they have received from HOST	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsor organisations felt very supported by HOST and actively reached out for support when needed.

Sponsor groups spoke positively about the support they received from HOST, and many described the relationship as open, responsive and trusting. Having an umbrella organisation meant that there was one clear point of contact for questions or concerns, so sponsor organisations did not have to navigate the many different actors and agencies involved in the programme. Another strength of the support received was the sound and practical advice that many were provided with before and during the settlement process.

*“HOST have ongoing meetings with immigration and any questions you just say hey, can you ask immigration this? So, one contact.” – SG*



One concern that a number of sponsor organisations raised during the settlement process was around balancing support with encouraging sponsored refugee independence. Sponsor organisations felt relieved to have a third party to ask for support when they were unsure. A few sponsor groups explained that the CORS sponsorship process could be complex or emotionally challenging at times. In these cases, HOST was seen as a steady and supportive partner and sponsors appreciated being able to speak openly and felt they were heard and backed throughout the sponsorship process.

*“Any questions we had, they responded promptly with sound advice. We were wondering if we were offering too much support. HOST came back saying yeah, you are doing too much, pull back a little bit.” – SG*

*“It’s really good to have that intermediate umbrella organisation, someone to go to just to share some of the scenarios or issues that you might be going through to.” – SG*

*“HOST have been really great recently, telling us a few months ago we probably needed to pull back and let him make a few mistakes. Maybe we were hand holding with him too much.” – SG*

There was one instance that did not meet the criteria for excellence, in this case issues between the sponsored refugee and their sponsor organisation went unnoticed for a significant period of time. The sponsor reached out to HOST for support eventually and HOST was able to provide neutral support and advice to navigate the situation, however, by this point the relationship had broken down completely and the sponsored refugee and their sponsor group were no longer in contact. Given these instances, this judgement is sitting at above expectations, with almost all sponsor organisations pleased with the support they received and actively reaching out for help, but a select few instances where this support was not being sought out when needed.

## HOST training and support

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	The umbrella organisation has provided relevant training and support materials that have supported sponsor capability.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsors have found the training and support provided by the umbrella organisation useful; and the umbrella organisation is able to identify when a sponsor group needs specific support.

Sponsor groups generally valued the training and support materials provided by HOST, with many pointing to the Community of Practice as the most useful resource provided by the organisation as it allowed groups to connect, share solutions and troubleshoot common challenges collaboratively. Sponsor groups also appreciated the fact that training sessions were recorded and available for review to support flexibility.

*“I found the meetings where we had lots of sponsors quite helpful. It was a really good way of asking how did you do this.” – SG*

However, a theme across some sponsor organisations was frustration at the large volume of trainings and materials provided by HOST. Sponsor organisations would like to see the training process streamlined, with clear guidance given on prioritising core training and materials.

*“Some of the material HOST has produced has been useful, but for the first year or so of the current pilot there was a seemingly endless series of Zoom meetings.” – SG*

*“Some of that information was good, but it would have been nice just to have some simple things that we really needed.” – SG*

The umbrella organisation has provided relevant training and support materials and a range of options for different organisations to access materials and trainings. However, given the feedback on the relevance and frequency of trainings, this judgement remains at meeting expectations. Some changes to processes would

support greater clarity and efficiencies for sponsor organisations participating in CORS in future. These changes are explored further in the [section on improvements](#).

## Awareness of CORS

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Some community members and organisations have developed a basic awareness of the CORS programme and of refugee needs.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	A network of community members and organisations is emerging, with groups demonstrating increased awareness of CORS.

Sponsor groups saw a steady increase in awareness of CORS and refugee needs among local communities and services, particularly in places without previous resettlement experience. There were a few examples of landlords offering flexible terms, local doctors discounting services, or neighbours actively offering support. However, awareness was still limited in some government agencies and services, particularly Work and Income. This was frustrating for some groups who felt they had to take on a substantial advocacy or liaison role. Other groups were optimistic about the role they had played in educating these services about CORS.

*“Although we were told that INZ had fully briefed MSD, we found most WINZ staff had not heard of CORS. I couldn’t arrange an interview without having a client number, and I couldn’t get a client number without having an interview. With one family, we have spent much more time than we expected taking them to WINZ, acting as agent, and dealing with paperwork and phone calls.” – SG*

*“There are other services who hadn’t dealt with refugee resettlement previously, who are now hopefully much more equipped to deal with those scenarios.” – SG*

While community-level change is difficult to quantify, there was evidence that having sponsored refugees in communities prompted conversations, curiosity, and growing understanding within broader communities. There was evidence that community members were developing a basic awareness of the CORS programme and of the needs of refugees. However, the ability to make judgements on the emergence of community members and organisations with increased awareness of CORS is limited and the limited data available means this judgement remains at meeting expectations.

## Te ao Māori, tikanga, and mana whenua

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees have had opportunities to be welcomed and introduced to te ao Māori, tikanga, and mana whenua connections.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees have experienced meaningful cultural exchanges, with some participating in Māori initiatives in their community.

Almost all sponsor groups had taken steps to introduce sponsored refugees to te ao Māori, with many supported to attend events like Matariki celebrations, Waitangi commemorations, or pōwhiri at marae. In other cases, sponsored refugees had learned some te reo Māori and tikanga through their studies, workplaces, or community groups. There was evidence of curiosity and respect for Māori culture, and sponsored refugees frequently referenced picking up te reo phrases or observing cultural practices in daily life.

*“We had a session on Māori at a marae. Almost all the refugees from our group went. We had a seminar the whole day and learned about their background and history.” – SR*

*“I really like Māori language. I know some of the words that when we go to any like meeting, they say some of the words first in Māori” – SR*

In some cases, the relationship went further, with Māori classmates, neighbours, or clients taking the time to share aspects of their own culture, including food, language and customs, with sponsored refugees doing the same in return. This kind of mutual cultural exchange was more common in regions with larger Māori populations.

*“When I was working, I had some clients that were Māori. They shared with me some food and words, and I shared my experience with them.” – Sponsored refugee*

*“My flatmates are very aware of Waitangi, and we watched the live coverage. Matariki, we have similar things in our culture.” – SR*

However, there is more that can be done to support sponsored refugees to gain a deeper understanding of te ao Māori and move toward meaningful cultural exchanges and participation. Some sponsored refugees explained that they still don’t understand some of the customs or traditions they come across in their day to day lives and, in some instances, found their sponsor organisations weren’t able to provide this insight, or shared that they were afraid to ask for fear of offending people.

One sponsor organisation expressed that they would like to engage iwi and mana whenua in future if the CORS programme is to continue. However, they felt it wouldn’t be appropriate to ask for resource investment in a programme that is still in a pilot stage. Formalising involvement of mana whenua and iwi in future could strengthen this outcome area.

*“My sponsorship organisation are focusing a lot to understand the system and how work. I don’t have an experience of their culture, so we don’t do any cultural orientation from the beginning and that’s gives me a lot of questions. Why are people putting their noses to each other? Why do they say words like whakapapa, aroha? I cannot ask because I didn’t see the conversation as open. I’m afraid of if I said maybe I insult them?” – SR*

*“I found that quite challenging when it’s just a pilot. So, you start going and engaging on this really big topic, you start trying to do that engagement work for a really short period of time and upsetting a lot of things for something that’s not potentially going to be ongoing.” – SG*

This judgement was placed at above expectations as almost all sponsored refugees reporting having opportunities to be welcomed and introduced to te ao Māori, tikanga, and mana whenua connections and for some this went beyond simple introductions to concepts and language. While some sponsored refugees have reported experiencing meaningful cultural exchanges, none reported participating in Māori initiatives in their community.

## Community ties

Not yet meeting	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Performance below meeting expectations	Initial connections between sponsored refugees, sponsors, and community groups have formed, with some level of interaction and support.	Performance more advanced than meeting expectations	Stronger, ongoing community ties are emerging, with local groups and organisations showing continued involvement beyond the initial sponsorship period.

While community-level change is difficult to capture in an evaluation of this length and nature, this report has outlined evidence that sponsored refugees have felt supported to engage with their communities in a variety of ways. Despite the early stage of the pilot, sponsored refugees and sponsor organisations have spoken about the strong, ongoing community ties they believed were being created as refugees continue to build relationships with people in their neighbourhoods, religious communities and social groups. This was particularly evident in smaller towns, where sponsor groups noted they actively worked with local residents to include sponsored refugees in day-to-day community life.

*“People come from areas where it's mostly fear based. So, to invite them into a space where we're creating trust links across really disparate boundaries is a pretty profound thing to be done.” – SG*

Through this evaluation, participants shared examples of communities gaining a stronger understanding of refugees and their cultures. For many, this programme has supported to break down barriers between refugees and the communities they resided in, and in some cases has challenged sponsor organisations' stereotypes or preconceptions of what it means to be a refugee. In non-traditional settlement locations, sponsored refugees were often the only people from their ethnic background in a small town or city and the programme created a safe space for these individuals to share their own culture and themselves with these smaller communities. In traditional settlement locations, sponsored refugees were invited into the homes of everyday New Zealanders to enjoy meals and connect.

*“I asked them how have you found people? Have you had any kind of negative, but it's all been positive. They do stand out in the community because they are Muslim, and they still dress very much like Muslims. We're probably a very conservative area, so you would expect a few heads to turn. But we haven't had any negative feedback from that whatsoever.” - SG*

*“Every government department, the banks, they are aware that these are real people, who've had a difficult time. That's a huge addition to your society.” – SG*

There have clearly been strong initial connections formed between sponsored refugees and their sponsor organisation through this process and the evaluation has found that in many instances the sponsored refugees have been welcomed by broader communities as well. Stronger, ongoing community ties are emerging, with local groups and organisations showing continued involvement beyond the initial sponsorship period. It appears likely that the mutual understanding, trust and familiarity built through the sponsorship process for many sponsored refugees will enable community ties to be sustained beyond the formal sponsorship period, though this will vary depending on individual and regional circumstances and remains to be seen. Given the emergence of strong community ties for almost all sponsored refugees at this early stage of the programme, this criterion has been rated excellent.

## Contribution to broader refugee resettlement goals, and unique benefits and challenges of CORS

A total of 151 refugees have been resettled in New Zealand as part of the three-year pilot programme, which is approximately 10% of the current annual quota programme<sup>3</sup>. The CORS programme, if continued, could demonstrate New Zealand's response to the scale of refugee movement, and commitment to international responsibility-sharing by bringing our refugee resettlement options in line with countries who also offer community resettlement pathways such as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

The CORS programme contributes to New Zealand's broader refugee resettlement goals in several ways, which have been explored through the lens of the programme's unique strengths and challenges in this section.

### Unique benefits of the CORS model as a complementary pathway

#### Involving communities in refugee resettlement supports settlement outcomes for those who meet CORS criteria

A strength of the CORS programme is the involvement of community groups and organisations to support refugee resettlement. Rather than relying solely on government-delivered services, CORS enables sponsored refugees to be supported by sponsor organisation who can draw on their community resources and networks to meet the needs of sponsored refugees. This evaluation has highlighted areas in which sponsor organisation involvement has supported sponsored refugee resettlement, particularly in supporting individuals and families to navigate systems, build relationships and become familiar with New Zealand culture and new communities. Being in contact with refugees prior to arrival was also seen to aid in settlement in some cases but wasn't necessarily an essential part of the process.

*"First, and most important, we believe the CORS programme is an excellent initiative. We believe it is good for the New Zealand and we believe the CORS programme refugees can be more easily resettled with the support of a sponsoring group." – SG*

*"[In other cases] refugees haven't necessarily had great outcomes, to be honest, because there is no community commitment and I think the difference is the community." – SG*

*"There's so much to hold you back from settling in. For refugees who come to New Zealand, they often feel very lonely and ostracised. There's a language barrier, cultural differences that also stands in the way to settle in. I now live in places where there are no other refugees, and I didn't feel their absence, the absence of my community or my culture as much". – SR*

A key area where sponsor involvement was supporting sponsored refugees was in employment. In some cases, the sponsor organisations would serve as references or endorse sponsor refugees to organisations when employment opportunities arose. In other cases, the sponsor organisations themselves would find jobs for the sponsored refugees or help them to explore other opportunities. Sponsor organisation networks and the support provided to understand how the New Zealand job market works are a clear benefit of the CORS pathway.

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<sup>3</sup> New Zealand accepts 1,500 refugees a year, who have been mandated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and referred by them for resettlement. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, "Refugee Quota Programme," MBIE, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/interpreters-online-toolkit/interpreter-reference-resources/format-of-interviews/refugee-quota-programme>.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR. "Community Sponsorship," United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed June 3, 2025. <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/local-integration/community-sponsorship>.

*"I think also from [a small town], it's a lot of networking and connections and plays a vital role in finding jobs, particularly if the job market is hard." -SG*

*"I was able to utilise [our connections] really easily in terms of helping them to find a job. Just by talking to people about someone who's come from a refugee background with a degree, educated, changed so many people's opinions so quickly and so easily. - SG*

### **Involvement of sponsor communities can speed up settlement and integration for those who meet CORS criteria**

Speed of settlement appears to be another strength of the CORS pathway, both resulting from the support of sponsor organisations and the fact that CORS sponsored refugees have met the CORS criteria. While many of the sponsored refugees who participated in this evaluation had been in New Zealand for less than eighteen months, some had already achieved a great deal since their arrival, as outlined in the outcomes section of the report. The speed of settlement was also highlighted as a strength of the programme by sponsor organisations who participated in this evaluation. Some, who had come to New Zealand as refugees themselves, highlighted how surprised they were by the speed at which the refugees they sponsored had found employment, attained a license and made new friends.

*"I came as a refugee and stayed at the refugee centre for almost 3 months. For me getting to be introduced into the workforce took me a very long time, it took me years to find a job and years and years to get a license. I purchased my first car after almost two years. Compare that to a sponsored refugee. I send them the link for driver license, and I say try to practice it, within one or two weeks after arrival they get the learners." – SG*

*"Some of them they find within 2-3 weeks, they get a job. It's so fast." – SG*

### **Involvement of communities draws on community resources, which may offset the costs of resettlement for the New Zealand government.**

The CORS programme shares the costs of resettling refugees in New Zealand with sponsor groups. This is possible because sponsor groups, through a variety of mechanisms, draw on their own networks and resources to provide support to sponsored refugees. Sponsor organisations each took their own approach to generating support resources. Churches tended to fundraise within their own communities, raising pools of funding to support furnishing homes and paying for medical visits. Other groups, such as former refugee communities, tended to tap into non-cash resources and networks to support settlement by finding employment opportunities, discounts on cars or rental properties to help get sponsored refugees on their feet.

*"We did spend money for household stuff, and I managed to negotiate with the landlord one month free rent, you know until they settle". – SG*

*"We put together like a wedding registry for all the different items for the house. We had a church member moving to the UK and he said I'm just going to donate the contents of my house to the refugees. Within a week, our church members had given \$10,000." – SG*

In addition to fundraising and network support, sponsor organisations highlighted non-monetary contributions such as volunteer time, transport costs, training time and time spent raising awareness of CORS across different communities. While some participating sponsor groups had paid employees that were able to support sponsored refugees as part of regular employment, most were contributing their own time to provide voluntary settlement support. Some sponsor organisation participants shared that the programme allowed them to become more involved and contribute to someone's life in a way they would have not been able to prior to the CORS programme.

Some challenges arose for community groups in providing financial and other resource support to sponsored refugees. The first was unanticipated costs such as dentistry and trauma counselling support, the cost of which exceeded expectations in many cases. Some organisations found the time commitment to support sponsored

refugees was above and beyond what they had expected, and group dynamics and changes meant that the burden of this was sometimes not well managed.

*“We’ve had dental care in excess of \$5000. We still have some quite big bills to pay, probably in excess of \$2000. That’s probably where it’s going to stop. We want them to make some contribution towards the dentistry because they are saving some money and they have sent some money.” – SG*

### CORS creates opportunities for those who may not have been eligible for traditional settlement pathways.

The CORS pathway eligibility criteria requiring certain standards of English language, employment or education history and age mean that sponsored refugees have capability and capacity to settle quickly and ensures sponsor organisations will be able to provide support. However, the criteria also acted as a mechanism to provide opportunities for individuals and families who may have “fallen through the cracks” of traditional resettlement pathways. In some instances, this challenged sponsor organisations’ ideas and preconceptions of what it means to be a refugee, with some explaining that they expected to be sponsoring families but were matched with motivated men who had an eagerness to work and contribute.

*“Some of them were prepared to take families and they ended up getting assigned single men, young men, because it turns out that that’s a huge cohort of unsettled refugees because they’re right at the bottom of the quota system.” - SG*

This was seen as a lifechanging opportunity for many, particularly younger, single men, who felt they could have spent the rest of their lives in unsafe living situations if it weren’t for the opportunity to come to New Zealand under CORS. This evaluation has found this to be a significant strength of the programme as a supplementary pathway that can work alongside traditional resettlement pathways.

*“Many refugees who committed suicide, were young single male because they felt just felt ignored and abandoned. Opportunity like this. Well, there’s a language requirement. You have to be able to speak English and this certain age limit as well, and also working experience. So even having a bit of skill gave opportunity to someone like me. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been here, I would be there waiting for a day that I would fall sick, that I wouldn’t recover. And they’ll say, oh, now let’s give you an opportunity. It has helped people like me. Who’s willing and capable of doing things.” – SR*

*My messages is for this programme to continue. Because I know a lot of people who would benefit, there are people who lived in Indonesia for the last 10-11 years and they have got no future, no hope. This programme would give them a new future and I would love to see this help, if not all of them, at least some more people.” - SG*

### CORS opens non-traditional settlement locations with the right matching and expectation management.

Refugees were settled across a range of locations through the CORS programme, from more traditional resettlement locations such as large cities, through to non-traditional settlement locations such as smaller towns across New Zealand. There were seven sponsored refugees settled in non-traditional settlement sites. Of these, four were interviewed. Non-traditional settlement locations had their own settlement challenges, as this evaluation has highlighted, but they were also seen to have distinct advantages when utilised within a community sponsorship model such as strong community ties and connection with broader communities.

*“When I struggle with my old house, I tried to choose [to move to] Christchurch. Because if you’re not comfortable with the house, you are not comfortable with all your life. But when I moved to this [new] house, I felt everything has changed to make happier and I like everything here. When I want to go for anywhere, it just maybe take 10 minutes, 15 minutes to centre city or everywhere, you can just drive like 15 minutes.” – SR*



*“Employment, of course, was a big concern as well as mental health. But in all those smaller regions. They're settling in extremely well, like in Whangarei, where we weren't quite sure how, because employment is already a short supply. Everyone found a job. Then Waikanae, they thought they would have to travel or move to Wellington for work, they found work in Waikanae.” – SME*

The CORS pathway makes settlement in non-traditional locations possible, but it is important to ensure that those settling in these locations understand the kinds of challenges they may face in these areas. Some may choose to stay, and others may decide to move to other areas of New Zealand and sponsor organisations should remain open to these possibilities.

### CORS creates an opportunity for community members to give back

Finally, the CORS pathway involved communities in the resettlement of refugees, which was often described as a very rewarding experience. Sponsor organisations enjoyed getting to know their sponsored refugees, learning about new cultures and in some cases making lifelong friends. A number of participants explained that the CORS programme provides a way for communities to offer humanitarian support as individuals or smaller communities. Some sponsor organisations reported that the experience was empowering, allowing them to draw on collective resources across communities to make a contribution toward improving the lives of others.

*“It's not that people are ungenerous. It's just they don't know where to start. You know [there are] many millions of refugees in the world. You just feel that kind of helplessness and you have one person or one family that it's within your power to help in a way that. Is enabling rather than disabling. It doesn't put you on the back foot, but actually uses what you have, what you can contribute.” – SG*

*“But there's someone there in front of me. I could just give a bit of support and sort of see them integrating and it's not always straightforward and easy. You can't just bring 10,000 people to New Zealand and suddenly life's changed. But there is that sense of doing something.” – SG*

## Unique challenges of the CORS model as a complementary pathway

### Sponsored refugee expectations about the nature of CORS and the realities of employment need to be managed prior to and during settlement

One of the most persistent challenges for the CORS pathway has been managing the expectations of sponsored refugees, particularly those who had spent years awaiting settlement. Many refugees arrived with high hopes of quickly establishing careers, studying full time, or reuniting with family. However, the cost of living, limited employment opportunities, and policies relating to reunification, study and employment acted as barriers to some of these hopes. In a small number of instances, refugees misunderstood the scope of support that sponsors were able to provide and, in these cases, sponsored refugees felt they were missing out on entitlements or wraparound services, comparing their own experiences with those who had come through other pathways.

*“They talked to other refugees and felt they didn't have as good a deal. We tried to explain, but it was different from what they'd expected.” – SG*

The other area for consideration is reunification. Almost all sponsor organisations were navigating this well, managing sponsored refugee expectations and talking about potential opportunities to use the CORS pathway to achieve reunification in future. This may be a challenge present in all pathways, but for the CORS pathway, there may be a refugee expectation that their sponsor organisation will sponsor family members in future, which is not necessarily the case. This expectation will require continued management in future.

*“They're very keen to bring their brother out and it would be great if their brother could come out one day. I said, you will have to be the sponsors for that. That doesn't mean that we might not give them some support.” – SG*



These instances of sponsored refugee expectations not being met were not widespread in this evaluation, with a few examples of comparison and some comments about future reunification expectations that were discussed with sponsor organisations. The challenge for this pathway is likely to remain if it is to continue as a complementary pathway to refugee settlement. More generally, sponsor organisations will likely have to continue to navigate expectations management. It will be important to have clear guidance for sponsored refugees about the purpose of the CORS pathway and the kinds of support their sponsor organisation can provide, alongside continuing to work with sponsor organisations to actively manage expectations.

### Sponsor group expectations need to be managed prior to and during settlement

Managing sponsor organisation expectations is another challenge that the CORS programme will have to continue to oversee in future, although this evaluation found that sponsor organisations were generally aligned with the mission and vision of CORS. It was clear through conversations that HOST had invested significant resource into continuous expectations management for sponsor organisations through the pilot period.

Specific areas for expectation management included ensuring sponsor organisations understood that they were responsible for drawing on their own resources and tools to support refugees, rather than traditional resettlement pathway resources. HOST also supported sponsor groups to balance support with encouraging independence and moving beyond pre-conceived expectations about the nature of the relationship with sponsored refugees in cases where sponsored refugees were very independent from the get-go and wanted to move to another city, for example.

*“There was a job lined up, but the person didn’t want it. They made their own decision, and we had to accept that, even if it didn’t match our plan.” – SG*

Again, this evaluation has found that these expectations seem to have been well managed, but this will continue to be a unique challenge of the programme that will require ongoing management.

### Working across cultures

Some sponsor organisations nominated individuals from their own ethnic communities, but for many, particularly those on a matched pathway, there are cultural differences to navigate as part of the CORS programme. Supporting someone across cultural and religious differences added layers of complexity. Sponsors were sometimes unprepared for the significance of issues such as halal food, Islamic holidays, having places for prayer or differing norms around child-rearing, hospitality, or gender. Others noted challenges related to differing expectations around wealth and status.

*“They eat my plate [but I] don’t eat anything of their stuff... I didn’t tell them it was a religious day because they don’t know the Islamic calendar.” – SR*

*“They were shocked we suggested buying second-hand things. In their culture, that signals poverty.” – SG*

In a programme that by its nature brings together different cultures, there will be a need to continue managing this and ensuring support is available for both sponsors and sponsored refugees.

### Reliance on sponsor groups to deliver supports

Settlement outcomes are assisted by utilising the networks, resources, skills, and volunteer support of sponsor groups, as this evaluation has already highlighted. However, reliance on sponsor groups to deliver a programme also has unique challenges that require close management. While groups were generally cohesive and well organised, groups varied widely in size, skill level, and access to resources. Some struggled with internal dynamics or unclear decision-making, while others expressed a desire for more structured support beyond what HOST could provide. In general, these dynamics were managed well through the pilot period; however, this will continue to be a consideration in future. The requirement for groups to have a record of formal establishment was seen to be a strength of the programme, and this evaluation would strongly support the requirement of a

minimum number of sponsorship group members, as well as clear guidance for groups on structure and operational best-practice.

Sponsor group capacity to meet the trauma needs of sponsored refugees is another unique challenge for the CORS programme. While many sponsored refugees were resilient and independent very early, others arrived carrying significant trauma, health concerns, or limited formal education. This variability made it difficult to plan a one-size-fits-all approach and some sponsor groups felt unprepared to address the mental health needs that emerged, particularly among those who had lived in precarious circumstances for years or who still had family in unsafe conditions overseas. There is only so much that sponsor organisations can do to support those with complex trauma, and this will continue to be a challenge for the programme if supports are not available. If supports cannot be sourced as a result of systemic problems in New Zealand, detailed screening may mitigate this challenge, as there could be ethical concerns associated with placing an individual or family with significant complex trauma in a community settlement setting.

*“One refugee watched Al Jazeera 24/7 after October 7. It had a big impact. He just shut down and didn’t want to engage.” – SG*

*“This is a migrant’s journey and whilst they look very similar there is a lot of nuances to it. The level of trauma that comes with that, some of the issues around sense of belonging when you’re arriving somewhere completely on your own with no family or connection to that place. We have definitely become more aware of as an organisation and as a community.” -SG*

## Improvements and considerations for potential future scaling

This evaluation has identified a number of potential improvements as well as suggested considerations for potential future scaling of the CORS programme.

### Potential Improvements

#### Strengthen and streamline sponsor training and onboarding processes

There was a clear call from sponsor organisations for a more streamlined training and onboarding process. From the feedback provided, suggested improvements to the process for sponsor organisations are:

- Provide clear guidance on priority or foundational training, with additional options that build on this knowledge; this may support sponsor groups to prioritise and reduce a sense of overwhelm.
- Include specific guidance on boundaries, including clear information about common boundary challenges, such as refugees wanting independence and family reunification conversations.
- Set clear expectations for sponsor organisations on areas such as potential costs and refugee trauma support needs.
- Utilise the knowledge and expertise built within sponsor organisations involved in the pilot period to create peer-support resources and opportunities for knowledge sharing and mentoring.
- Ensure training and resource materials are accessible, avoiding overly academic language. For example, providing FAQs on government processes such as the MSD/WINZ process, IRD, and police information to ensure the uniform delivery of information to sponsored refugees.
- Ensure all sponsor organisations have a list of entitlements so they know what sponsored refugees can access in terms of traditional support in the first few months of settlement.

#### Manage sponsored refugee and sponsor organisation expectations prior to arrival

Many sponsored refugees arrive with limited knowledge of life in New Zealand or what CORS provides. Some of the sponsored refugees in this pilot expected that their previous work experience or qualifications would be immediately recognised in New Zealand, or didn't understand the types of housing that would be available to them. The programme could consider:

- Information packs that cover information on settlement stages, settlement location and employment realities.
- Make the role of sponsor organisations clear in writing, outlining the level of support they are required to provide and for how long.
- Continue to manage sponsor organisation expectations, communicating the importance of centring the needs of the sponsored refugee.
- Provide clear guidance to sponsor organisations about things like reunification, sending money overseas and moving cities, all of which seemed to be working well through this evaluation period.

#### Address expectations around qualification recognition and employment

While employment and study were seen to be going well for sponsored refugees that took part in this study, there are still unique challenges such as a lack of recognition of international qualifications and refugee expectations for employment. There may be opportunities to:

- Consider the kinds of qualifications and employment histories that are recognised under the CORS programme selection criteria to support the best possible chance for employment in a related field.
- Manage expectations of qualification recognition and likelihood of re-training requirements, particularly if a sponsored refugee has a degree that is unlikely to be recognised in New Zealand (e.g., nursing) and the applicant expresses that they wish to continue working in the field.
- Continue to clarify study options with WINZ and StudyLink.

- Continue to explore the opportunity for Universities and Polytechnics to become sponsor organisations or network partners to other sponsor groups for refugees looking to be sponsored and begin or continue tertiary study in New Zealand.
- Leverage sponsorship networks for employment opportunities and consider purposeful matching of refugees with groups that can provide specific employment pathways.

### Ensure there are support options available for sponsored refugees

In one instance, a sponsored refugee and their sponsor organisation were provided with mediation support. In instances like this, there is a clear pathway for sponsor organisations seeking support as the ones who hold the relationship with HOST. However, sponsored refugees may benefit from their own support channels:

- Consider a separate contact or pathway for sponsored refugees who have concerns.

## Considerations for scaling

### Capability, capacity and interest communities to sponsor

The programme has had an overwhelming response from sponsorship organisations that are interested in participating in the CORS programme, with demand outstripping availability of sponsorship opportunities. Of the 14 interviewed sponsor organisations interviewed, 11 reported that they would continue to sponsor refugees through the CORS pathway in future if this was an option. Many had built up their own capacity to welcome refugees, going far beyond financial resources and there was a sense that having done it once, they would better know what to expect the next time.

*“Look, we’ve got the resources. We’ll just keep on doing this. We’ll rinse and repeat for the next lot. We have the settlement plans. We’ve got the systems very refined. We’ve got increasing knowledge of culture.” – SG*

The sponsor groups who held these views and enjoyed the most success seemed to be those who took the role seriously, establishing committees to discuss decisions and ensuring groups had adequate members, skills and resources. These groups often delegated roles and responsibilities across their community and were committed to the cause because it is something they truly believe in. All agreed that the work is time and resource intensive, and best suited to groups with the genuine passion, time and resources to support the mahi. There were two examples of groups being approached by another organisation with funding looking to partner on the CORS programme. In one case, many members of the sponsor organisation were interested, but the group struggled to maintain group numbers and commitment from group members.

*“They were going to provide the financial support and we would provide the people on the ground. We had initially had a really big group of people that were keen. When it comes to, you know, the actual doing the actual mahi that group grew smaller and smaller.” – SG*

While bringing together organisations with different types of resources and networks may be an option for the programme going forward, this example cautions the importance of ensuring that all parties in a partnership have the interest and passion needed to maintain the work.

This evaluation found no differences in the outcomes experienced by sponsored refugees who were supported by organisations supporting a relatively high number of sponsored refugees, compared to those with fewer sponsorships. However, this evaluation is limited in its ability to make judgements here, given the size, scope and depth of these conversations. Ultimately, INZ has responsibility for ensuring that sponsor organisations have adequate resource to address the needs of the refugees they sponsor, and this approach will be important going into a potential, scaled version of the CORS programme.

## Infrastructure and delivery capacity of umbrella organisation, HOST, to support scale

The umbrella organisation was seen as a core component of the CORS programme if it were to be scaled. The structure and support provided to sponsor organisations was seen to help streamline communications for sponsor organisations as well as provide training and an avenue for advice and support. While most sponsor organisations valued HOST and their support through the CORS process, it was felt by some that HOST were not adequately resourced to meet the demands of the pilot programme. This would need to be addressed if the programme is to scale, as it will likely become more difficult to meet the needs of a higher number of varied sponsors across more locations.

## CORS refugee eligibility requirement considerations

The CORS programme emphasises self-sufficiency and has a focus on English language skills, education and employment history. A small number of participants in this evaluation shared that the eligibility requirements are overly restrictive, preventing some from accessing refuge through the programme. However, from an outcomes perspective, it was found that the criteria are supportive of outcome achievement.

This model is well-placed to support integration and the eligibility settings were seen to be appropriate from an outcomes perspective. The following observations on the impact of the CORS eligibility criteria are offered, as they may support in maintaining safe placement of sponsored refugees if the programme is to scale:

- **English language:** There was a clear link between English language ability and the speed and overall achievement of outcomes. Those with higher English language skills on arrival did not need to spend time taking English classes and were able to move quickly into study or employment. Having a high-level of English language also meant it was easier to make friends and build social connections outside of one's ethnic group, potentially leading to broader integration into New Zealand society.
- **Employment and study history:** Consideration could be given to the kinds of qualifications and employment histories that are recognised under the CORS programme selection criteria. International qualifications and work experience were a requirement for the CORS pathway, but many found that these were not directly recognised in New Zealand. This created barriers to employment in instances where the sponsored refugee wanted to continue working in their field. On the other hand, transferable skills and a history of employment did support people to move into other areas or fields of employment. It is also worth considering that many of the refugees sponsored in this programme had spent significant time in refugee camps where they were unable to work or study. It may be beneficial to formalise the process of giving consideration to a broader definition of employment and study history, including informal employment, entrepreneurship, volunteering and online education courses.
- **Age:** This evaluation did not find any significant relationship between the age criteria for the CORS pathway and settlement outcomes for principal applicants and their partners. There is some evidence to suggest that younger children are able to learn English faster than children around high-school age, which may aid in settlement outcomes. No families with adult children were interviewed as part of this evaluation, however, given the importance of the other criteria in outcomes achievement, it may be reasonable to consider requiring that adult children within a family unit also meet some of the CORS criteria themselves (specifically the English language criteria) given that they will not be receiving quota support but will be expected to integrate in the same way that principal applicants will be.

## Matched versus nominated pathways

This evaluation did not find a discernible difference in outcomes as a result of refugees nominated versus matched pathways. There may be assumptions that those using the nominated pathway are doing so to bring a person that is known to them to New Zealand, however this evaluation did not find this to always be the case. Often, sponsor organisations in this evaluation were using the nominated pathway to short circuit the process issues associated with the matched pathway or to build up their own ethnic communities. In one case, an NGO was able to leverage their overseas connections to nominate an individual from overseas, even though they did

not necessarily come from the same ethnic background or know this individual, but it was an efficient way to provide someone with refuge through the programme. In other cases, organisations who were able to name eligible individuals overseas were referring individuals to non-ethnic organisations who were awaiting matched pathway cases to speed up opportunities to welcome refugees.

There were natural differences between the two pathways that were related to the types of organisations more likely to use the pathways, rather than the pathways themselves. For example, churches were far more likely to use a nominated pathway, while former refugee communities and NGOs were more likely to use a matched pathway. Despite this, any differences in outcomes were more likely to do with settlement locations and sponsor organisation type than the pathway itself.

Over half of interviewed sponsor organisations expressed an interest in continued future sponsorship opportunities, regardless of the sponsorship pathway they utilised. Previous evaluations have highlighted process issues associated with each of the pathways, and while some of these may have impacted sponsors experiences of the programme from a process perspective, these were out of scope for this evaluation.

### Insights about different sponsorship types

This evaluation has found that sponsor organisations are able to offer different types and levels of support. Some patterns have been identified across sponsorship types which may provide insights into the appropriate placement of refugees coming through the matched pathway if the programme is to be scaled. Please note that these are general insights and will not necessarily apply to every sponsorship group type or location.

Sponsor(ship) type	Notes	Insights
Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of monetary resource and people power.</li> <li>• Low likelihood of similar language or cultural support.</li> <li>• Likely seeking a long-term, high quality relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well suited to support families or individuals looking for a longer-term relationship.</li> <li>• Higher likelihood of needing expectation management relating to supporting independence.</li> </ul>
NGO or former refugee community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrious and well-connected with broader networks.</li> <li>• Strong focus on building sponsored refugee independence.</li> <li>• High likelihood of similar language and cultural connections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for limited broader connection and English language development if only integrated into ethnic community. Consider a higher threshold for English language or emphasise importance of learning English on arrival.</li> <li>• Higher likelihood of needing expectation management relating to speed of employment and independence.</li> </ul>
Traditional settlement locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader range of employment opportunities, although not necessarily more access.</li> <li>• Higher likelihood of social and cultural connection with same or similar ethnic group.</li> <li>• Higher likelihood of ethnic enclaves, with disparate and insular kiwi communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May need extra support to integrate into New Zealand culture and to feel socially connected beyond sponsor group.</li> <li>• May be the most suitable placement for younger sponsored refugees.</li> </ul>

Non-traditional settlement locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of community and support from a broader community.</li> <li>• Less range of job opportunities and access to amenities like shops and places of worship.</li> <li>• Lower likelihood of ethnic communities nearby.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will require higher sponsorship organisation commitment to support to access cultural amenities.</li> <li>• May be a less suitable placement for single, childless refugees under the age of 25.</li> </ul>
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There was no lack of sponsored refugee and sponsor organisation interest in participating in the pilot programme, however if it is to scale it will be important to consider the partnerships needed and community readiness for these partnerships to occur. This evaluation has identified opportunities for a broader range of sponsor organisations including mana whenua, academic institutions, or businesses. However, there was no indication through conversations in this evaluation that these opportunities are currently being investigated. These groups could be brought in as sponsorship groups, or they could be formalised partners that can offer different types of support to sponsor groups such as running induction sessions or supporting with study and scholarship pathways.

## Final reflections

The CORS programme pilot has provided safety and security for sponsored refugees who have taken part in this evaluation, and achieved all the outcomes expected for sponsored refugees, sponsor groups, and wider communities in the first year of settlement. Those who have come through the CORS pathway have met specific criteria, which mean they can be safely resettled by community sponsor groups, rather than through traditional quota systems. This has proven to be a successful pilot that has achieved the outcomes expected for a programme of its size and length. In many cases, the speed and quality of resettlement outcomes for sponsored refugees and for communities exceeded expectations.

There is good evidence to support the continuation of this pathway from an outcomes perspective if scaling of the programme is deemed feasible.



## Appendix 1: CORS Theory of Change for Outcomes Evaluation

### Theory of Change | CORS Outcomes Evaluation

<b>Impact</b>  When we sustain these outcomes at scale...	<div> <b><u>Prosperous and adaptable people, sectors, and regions:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees achieve sustainable integration into New Zealand contributing economically, socially, and culturally </div> <div> <b><u>Skilled people engaged in safe and productive work:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees lead fulfilling lives, with future generations benefiting from increased stability and opportunities </div> <div> <b><u>Dynamic business environment fostering innovation and international connections:</u></b>  New Zealand demonstrates global leadership and is recognised for its innovation and commitment to resettlement </div> <div> <b><u>Diverse and inclusive communities:</u></b>  Welcoming sponsored refugees into our communities is a core New Zealand value, resulting in a strong sense of belonging to refugees' own community and to New Zealand </div>							
<b>Outcomes</b>  We will know we're achieving the right things when...	<div> <b><u>Participation:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees develop a sense of place and belonging and are actively participating in their local communities </div> <div> <b><u>Health, wellbeing and housing:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees have what they need to live safe, healthy and meaningful lives </div> <div> <b><u>Self sufficiency and agency:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees have agency over their lives, accessing study, the labour market, their communities and services </div> <div> <b><u>Settlement capability:</u></b>  A capable, and connected network of sponsors and community members are adding to resources to support sponsored refugee settlement </div> <div> <b><u>Community connection:</u></b>  Communities are strengthened by the relationships between sponsored refugees, communities and mana whenua, fostering inclusion and diversity </div>							
<b>Early outcomes</b>  We will know the activities are running well when...	<div> <b><u>Participation:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees feel welcomed into and connected to their sponsors and new communities </div> <div> <b><u>Health, wellbeing and housing:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees have access to safe and appropriate housing, healthcare, and essential services </div> <div> <b><u>Self sufficiency and agency:</u></b>  Sponsored refugees are on a journey towards independence, gaining English proficiency, understanding systems and seeking employment / study </div> <div> <b><u>Settlement capability:</u></b>  Sponsors are prepared and equipped to support sponsored refugees and are building their own and their communities' capability </div> <div> <b><u>Community connection:</u></b>  Connections forming between sponsored refugees, sponsors mana whenua and wider community </div>							
<b>Activities</b>  The things we do with our resources and inputs...	Promote and communicate information about the CORS programme	Approve, inform, communicate with, upskill and support sponsors	Support interested refugees through application process	Assess eligibility of refugees, approve and support refugees to get to New Zealand	Provide pre-arrival and post-arrival information, resources and support to refugees	Sponsors provide settlement support to sponsored refugees for up to two years	Connections with mana whenua, introducing sponsored refugees and sponsors to te ao Māori, tikanga and te reo	Sponsors link sponsored refugees to services and community resources
<b>Resources &amp; Inputs</b>  The things we need to carry out our mahi	Funding	MBIE, INZ, HOST staff time and expertise	Support from UNHCR and international CORS partners	Mana whenua time and expertise	Expertise and resources from sponsors	Existing research, evidence and best-practice knowledge	Programme principles and policies	Programme resources, templates etc.



## Appendix 2: CORS Outcomes Evaluation Rubric

This section outlines the criteria and standards (i.e., the rubric) for the evaluation of the CORS programme.

Below expectations	Meeting expectations	Above expectations	Excellent
Participation			
Performance is below the level outlined for Meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees feel welcomed and are starting to build relationships with sponsors and local community members.	Performance is more advanced than Meeting expectations but less than Excellent	Sponsored refugees are beginning to develop relationships beyond their sponsor group, engaging with a range of people in the wider community.
	Sponsored refugees know about local opportunities for social engagement and have taken initial steps to participate.		Sponsored refugees are engaging in community activities and events, developing a sense of familiarity and comfort in these spaces.
	Sponsored refugees feel they have experienced hospitality, cultural respect, and inclusion engaging with others in the community.		Sponsored refugees feel a growing sense of belonging in community, reporting that they have made friends who they feel connected to.
Health, wellbeing and housing			
Performance is below the level outlined for Meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are living in safe and appropriate private housing that meets their needs.	Performance is more advanced than Meeting expectations but less than Excellent	Sponsored refugees feel stable in their private housing situation, with a clear plan for long-term accommodation.
	Sponsored refugees are enrolled with a GP, have accessed necessary medical care, and are aware of key health services.		Sponsored refugees are proactively managing their health needs and express confidence in navigating the healthcare system.
	Children of sponsored refugees are enrolled in education and their parents understand key school processes.		Children are settling in their education setting and parents feel increasingly confident in supporting child’s education.
	Sponsored refugees know how to access wellbeing resources if they are needed (e.g., community support, counselling).		Sponsored refugees are engaging in activities that support their wellbeing (e.g., social connection, cultural expression, exercise).
Self-sufficiency and agency			
	Sponsored refugees can complete basic daily tasks independently and know where to seek help if needed.	Performance is more advanced than Meeting	Sponsored refugees are increasingly confident navigating systems independently managing their own affairs.

Performance is below the level outlined for Meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees are engaged in English language improvement.	expectations but less than Excellent	Sponsored refugees have progressed their English, allowing them to converse more confidently and participate in their community.
	Principal applicant understands the steps to access employment, education/training and has begun taking initial actions.		Principal applicant and partner (if applicable) are in stable employment or education/training and working toward meaningful future career goals.
	Sponsored refugees are making small but meaningful decisions about their daily lives and future, with guidance from sponsors when needed.		Sponsored refugees demonstrate a growing sense of agency, making informed decisions, and advocating for their own needs with increasing independence.
Settlement capabilities			
Performance is below the level outlined for Meeting expectations	Sponsors understand their role and responsibilities and provide support to sponsored refugees, occasionally drawing on traditional settlement networks.	Performance is more advanced than Meeting expectations but less than Excellent	Sponsors demonstrate a deep understanding of refugee needs, proactively seeking additional opportunities, and adapting their support to meet needs.
	Sponsor organisations are satisfied with the support they have received from HOST		Sponsor organisations felt very supported by HOST and actively reached out for support when needed
	The umbrella organisation has provided relevant training and support materials that have supported sponsor capability		Sponsors have found the training and support provided by the umbrella organisation useful; and the umbrella organisation is able to identify when a sponsor group needs specific support
	Sponsors establish basic networks, engaging with local services, community groups, relevant agencies and resources.		Sponsors have built strong, sustainable partnerships with key community organisations, mana whenua, service providers, and other sponsors and draw on these.
	Some community members and organisations have developed a basic awareness of the CORS programme and of refugee needs.		A network of community members and organisations is emerging, with groups demonstrating increased awareness of CORS.
Community connection			
Performance is below the level outlined for Meeting expectations	Sponsored refugees have had opportunities to be welcomed and introduced to te ao Māori, tikanga, and mana whenua connections.	Performance is more advanced than Meeting expectations but less than Excellent	Sponsored refugees have experienced meaningful cultural exchanges, with some participating in Māori initiatives in their community.
	Initial connections between sponsored refugees, sponsors, and community groups have formed, with some level of interaction and support.		Stronger, ongoing community ties are emerging, with local groups and organisations showing continued involvement beyond the initial sponsorship period.