



Policy Brief

SAFE PATHWAYS IN AN ERA OF MIXED MIGRATION

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“The evidence shows overwhelmingly that long-term, regular pathways will better protect migrant rights, they will better enable governments to plan for and manage movements in an orderly way, and they will support economic development in the countries that the migrants are coming from, as well as the countries that migrants are going to. Now, ultimately, it is up to all of you, it’s up to you as governments to create the policies that will enable those regular pathways.”

-Amy E. Pope, IOM Director General (IOM 2024b)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief explores the global use of complementary or safe pathways to resettle migrant populations, including those potentially eligible for refugee protections, and makes recommendations for best practices according to existing data and various example programs. It does so while accounting for mixed migration across all categories. These are grouped into (1) humanitarian protections that are available en route or on a shorter time horizon, and (2) non-humanitarian pathways which include three of the four umbrella areas of safe pathways—education, labor, and family reunification—as well as regularization and general recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Safe pathways is an umbrella term for **alternative or complementary migration tracks, statuses, and resources for individuals in transit from their country of origin to an eventual host country**. Such pathways recognize the protection needs of particular migrants, as well as of all migrants in transit, and by various methods address the dangers of irregular migration (IOM 2024b). Such pathways are necessary to protect migrants who otherwise lack regular status, whether because they are ineligible for existing programs, because they need to reach their destination before applying, or for other reasons.

Migrants without permission to enter, transit through, and/or reside in a country face a plethora of challenges, including reliance on smugglers, barriers to formal work, lack of access to basic services, inhumane detention, vulnerability to violence and exploitation, and a greater risk of dying in inhospitable terrain such as the Darien jungle, the Arizona desert, and the Mediterranean Sea. These conditions enrich criminal actors and increase migrants' dependence on humanitarian assistance. In the process, these actors harm local communities as well as the migrants themselves. Existing global legal protection mechanisms such as the 1951 Refugee Convention inadequately address the present reality of migration, leaving individuals at risk without protection.

This problem is magnified by the phenomenon of **mixed migration**, which refers to the **multiple and various motivations, strategies, pathways, and legal statuses of migrating individuals** (Burgess 2023). Mixed migration recognizes that both individuals and groups of migrants combine various statuses, goals, and vulnerabilities at one time as well as throughout stages of their journeys (Hear, Brubaker, and Bessa 2009). These individuals, who may and often do combine economic, protection, and other motives for migrating, are poorly served by the existing, bifurcated international legal regime established by the 1951 Refugee Convention. The nuance of lived experiences of migration and

the struggle to conform to existing, incomplete policy channels forces mixed migrants outside of protected categories and pathways into irregular or indefinite status as well as reliance on smugglers and more dangerous routes. Aside from the obvious physical danger to individuals, such uncertainty takes a psycho-social toll on migrants that can inhibit the myriad benefits that both host nations and migrants can expect from regular migration. Mixed migration is not new or necessarily a problem, but it highlights the ways in which existing policies fall short of both domestic and international expectations (Shachar 2020).

Safe pathways can help migrants avoid the dangers of irregular migration and maximize their well-being and contributions once they arrive at their destination.

Such reformed or new pathways should facilitate mixed migration and recognize the benefits of regular migration rather than focus on stopping flows. They are especially necessary in the face of overwhelming demand for traditional refugee resettlement and in-country asylum (Clemens 2022).

At the end of 2024, there were 123.2 million forcibly displaced people around the world. 73.5 million of these are internally displaced, 36.8 million are refugees, and 8.4 million are asylum seekers. This leaves nearly 6 million people in need of international protection, while only 188,800 of the 36.8 million refugees were resettled that year (UNHCR 2019). In the United States during the same period, the asylum backlog reached nearly 2.8 million pending cases, and the number continues to increase annually (Batalova 2025). Existing asylum systems lack the capacity to process the number of claims they receive, while also rendering most applicants ineligible because they fall outside the narrow definition of “refugee.” Nor do these systems reflect the reality that individuals decide to migrate for various and multifaceted reasons that are rarely neatly categorized.

This brief recommends two tracks for providing safe pathways to migrants who do not benefit either from ordinary legal migration pathways or from international protection mechanisms. Safe pathways that are more adequate to mixed migration flows will benefit migrants and countries of origin, transit, and destination.

1.

The first track involves **humanitarian protections** designed to avoid or ameliorate the difficult journeys that irregular migrants must otherwise make. Such protections offer short-term relief but do not provide durable solutions to displacement.

2.

The second track involves **alternative pathways** usually linked to so-called “economic” or “voluntary” migration, specifically **education, labor, regularization, and family reunification**. These pathways could alleviate some of the pressures on refugee and asylum systems by offering displaced migrants an alternative that aligns with one of their other reasons for migrating. If designed well, they could also facilitate immigrant integration and thus the myriad benefits identified in the other briefs in this series.

TRACK 1: HUMANITARIAN PROTECTIONS

Humanitarian protections can take two forms: (a) providing food, shelter, medical care, psychological support, and other needs-based assistance to migrants on the move; and (b) creating legal pathways for safe passage to the migrant's destination.

A. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Transit states face growing demands to respond to the needs of mixed migrants, leading to the proliferation of new programs (GIZ 2025; IOM 2021; MIRPS 2022; Schmidtke and Yates 2024; UNICEF 2024). Most funding for these programs is provided by NGOs or international organizations (UNHCR, UNICEF, etc.) rather than governments, although the United States (until January 2025) and the European Union have contributed a sizable share of the funding. The most notable exceptions are emergency shelters set up by transit states when migrant flows suddenly increase.

Government-run shelters can provide vital support to vulnerable migrants, but they have been criticized for operating more like detention centers and prioritizing control over care. This is especially likely when the shelters are run by immigration enforcement agents rather than social service providers, a practice which unfortunately has been commonplace in North Africa and the Sahel with terrible consequences for migrants (Amnesty International 2024; MSF 2023; Signer 2021). The 1951 Refugee Convention outlines minimum standards for the treatment of refugees as including the right to housing, work, and education while displaced (UN General Assembly 1966). Although the Convention does not require such protections for other migrants, it is underpinned by a certain respect for human rights which should be due to any individual regardless of their status, particularly given the prevalence of mixed migration flows today.



The governments of Panama and Costa Rica set up temporary care centers in the Darien province of Panama (**ETRM**) and on the southern border of Costa Rica (**CATEM**). These shelters provided access to safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, protection services, and referrals to meet humanitarian needs. Migrants passing through were registered by the government and received assistance in organizing their continued movement by bus. Each shelter was supported by INGOs such as the Red Cross and UNICEF.



The Honduran government provided temporary housing for migrants in transit through its **Centers for Assistance to Irregular Migrants (CAMI)**. With support from international organizations, the CAMIs provided shelter, basic necessities, medical care, and other assistance.



Djibouti's 2021 **First National Strategy on Migration** includes awareness and provision for the humanitarian and protection needs of migrants in transit. Djibouti's Human Rights Commission, in coordination with the **Better Migration Management program** funded by the European Union and Germany, established a complaint mechanism to curb human trafficking as well as several centers for the provision of information to and documentation of migrants transiting through Djibouti. Such centers also provide referrals to migrants looking to access services such as accommodation and medical care, although this was not provided directly by the program.

Source: GIZ (2025); IOM (2021); MIRPS (2022); Schmidtke and Yates (2024); UNICEF (2024)

B. HUMANITARIAN LEGAL PATHWAYS

Humanitarian legal pathways are temporary regularization schemes that enable migrants to take faster, safer routes to their destination. By allowing migrants to avoid smugglers and hostile terrain, these schemes save lives, reduce irregular migration, and weaken smuggling networks (EU 2020). Among the most common are provisional documentation, humanitarian admission, humanitarian visas, and community sponsorship (UNHCR 2019).

These schemes work differently in each country, but we can group them according to how they affect migrant journeys. One group includes schemes to regularize migrants on the move through transit countries (IOM 2024a; Triandafyllidou, Bartolini, and Guidi 2019). The other group includes schemes to allow migrants and refugees to request and receive protective status before they embark on these dangerous journeys (Hovil, Bueno, and Hernández Gamboni 2024; ICF and Migration Policy Institute 2018; IRAP 2024). This approach has two potential advantages. First, those who are successful can fly directly to their destination, thereby avoiding the costs, dangers, and trauma of irregular migration. Second, those who think they might be successful are likely to delay their departure and forego hiring a smuggler.



Humanitarian Visitor's Card created by the Mexican government to enable migrants to work and transit safely through the country.



Provisional National Migration Registration Document created by the Brazilian government to assist Venezuelan asylum-seekers without passports.



Mediterranean Hope, a humanitarian corridor created by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and the Waldensian Church in 2014 to support migrants, largely from Africa and the Middle East to integrate into their host society. This network of collaborators identify eligible individuals before they undertake to cross the Mediterranean by supporting them in applying for humanitarian visas valid for Italy.



The European Union's **Temporary Protection Directive (TPD)** was enabled for Ukrainian migrants fleeing war to grant them certain legal status permitting them to access a variety of rights in EU member states. Such rights include access to medical care, work authorization, free movement, and education. Positively, upon activation TPD included provision for individuals granted protection in Ukraine prior to the invasion whose nationality was not Ukrainian.

Source: IOM (2024a); Triandafyllidou et al. (2019)



Safe Mobility Initiative launched by the U.S. government in June 2023 to provide free access to refugee resettlement services at offices in Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. When an individual was ineligible for refugee status, office staff would screen the individual or family for other legal pathways to the United States or other countries. This program had limited impact, however, because it lacked direct authority to grant protective status.



Humanitarian Parole used extensively by the United States to allow vetted and sponsored migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to fly directly to the United States and receive temporary work permits.



Uniting for Ukraine. A streamlined process for Ukrainian nationals fleeing the conflict between Russia and Ukraine to enter the United States and remain legally for up to two years. Requires a U.S.-based financial supporter.



Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme launched by the UK government to resettle Syrian refugees with community sponsorship.



Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program adopted by the Canadian government. An organization, group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, or corporation can sign up to sponsor refugee(s) outside of Canada to permanently resettle in Canada. The sponsorship lasts one year and the sponsor takes on resettlement activities typically provided by the state.



Residence for Reasons of International Humanitarian Protection adopted by Spain in 2019 in response to prolonged and large groups of Venezuelan migrants to the country. This program intends to protect those individuals denied asylum, but whom nonetheless flee socioeconomic crisis in Venezuela and ought not be returned.

If designed properly, these schemes can eliminate the requirement that migrants travel irregularly across long distances just to apply for safe pathways or protection in or nearer to their final destination. Most migrants would prefer this option unless they are forced to wait in unsafe conditions. Moreover, such schemes, if effective, could alleviate the chaotic and easily politicized arrival of large numbers of migrants at borders.

However, using extraterritorial processing to block asylum seekers—or, worse, to detain returnees—rather than to grant them safe passage does more harm than good and should be discouraged. Here are some examples (Leclerc, Mentzelopoulou, and Orav 2024):

- EU Migration Transit Centers proposed by several EU members to process asylum applications extraterritorially. These proposals have never been adopted, however, because of concerns about their legality under international law and the human rights implications.
- Regional Processing Agreements between Australia and third countries such as Cambodia, Nauru, and Papua New Guinea to process refugee claims extraterritorially. These agreements have raised the same concerns as the proposed EU Migration Transit Centers, especially now that they are being converted into to “return hubs” for deported asylum seekers.

TRACK 2: NON-HUMANITARIAN PATHWAYS

Not even the best humanitarian mechanisms can address the mismatch between supply and demand: in the current contextual framework of mixed migration, more migrants are in need of protection than the existing refugee and asylum systems can offer. It therefore behooves states to explore alternative (non-humanitarian) pathways for safe mobility. Fortunately, such pathways already exist in the form of educational visas, work permits, family reunification, and regularization.

Rather than being exclusively for “voluntary” migrants, these pathways should be part of a holistic response to migrants with multifaceted reasons for leaving home.

A. EDUCATION

Pathways to status for education purposes provide an individual with the opportunity to study in another country based on conditions and for a duration defined by the government of the host nation. This may take the form of private, community, or institution-based scholarships; apprenticeship or traineeship programs; or common qualification frameworks (Clemens, Dempster, and Gough 2019; IOM 2024b; UNHCR 2019).

The benefits of education-based migration include fostering innovation, strengthening global ties, and supporting economic development in both the host nation and the country of origin if the migrant returns (see Policy Brief #2) (IOM 2024b). Challenges include higher tuition fees and quotas for international students, as well as eligibility restrictions based on academic discipline.

Another limitation is that education-based migration tends to prioritize highly educated and multilingual individuals rather than the most vulnerable. For this reason, it is important to emphasize that education and other complementary pathways must be recognized as an addition to rather than a replacement for traditional resettlement and asylum systems (Hashimoto 2021; ICF and Migration Policy Institute 2018). Moreover, even those seeking protection who do qualify may need additional support in the form of funding for travel, accommodation, and subsistence in addition to language training, cultural orientation, and psychosocial support (IOM 2024b; UNHCR 2019).

ECUADOR

Ecuador’s Council of Higher Education regulates tertiary education and issued the Regulations Governing Degrees and Diplomas Obtained at Foreign Institutions to guide migrants and returning nationals in transferring qualifications

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework. A common qualification framework to facilitate worker movement between Southern African nations to meet labor market demands

JAPAN

Government of Japan Initiative for the Future of Syrian Refugees. Permits students as primary migrants to bring their spouses and children during their studies

GERMANY

A pilot program of privately funded partnerships which recognizes and adds to the training of nurses from Tunisia, The Philippines, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina who are placed with German employers

Source: IOM (2024); Clemens et al. (2019)

B. LABOR

Labor migration pathways help countries to meet labor or skill shortages and build the skills of migrants, including those seeking international protection (UNHCR 2019). Many nations use a mix of national policies and bilateral agreements to meet market requirements.

The benefits for recipient nations are clear: economic migrants are key to filling labor shortages which are becoming increasingly important in aging high-income nations where migrants fill many essential roles in the service industry and care economy (IOM 2024b) (See Policy Brief #1). Spain is a great example of this, with a population growth rate higher than both the United States and the Eurozone average that is attributable to the nation's acceptance of foreign workers (ETIAS 2025; Santos 2025). Challenges include the difficulty of matching migrant skills with industry needs across borders. This misalignment of supply and demand can stymie the benefits of labor migration. In addition, many small- and medium-sized companies do not have the resources to hire abroad or are unaware of the opportunities and legal pathways to do so (Alcidi, Laurensyeva, and Yar 2019).

Governments have a plethora of tools for creating labor-based pathways for mixed migrants. These tools are most likely to be effective if countries coordinate their efforts. Recipient nations should consider providing employer incentives, contributing to building the capacity of intermediaries in sending countries, and supporting users of other eligibility pathways in skill acquisition and job preparation (IOM 2024b). Sending countries should establish dedicated policies on emigration including in the areas of cooperation with recipient nations and the diaspora population, as well as the formalization of remittance processes (IOM 2024b).

EU LEGISLATION TO FACILITATE LABOR MIGRANT ADMISSION

▼ SINGLE PERMIT DIRECTIVE

Merged residence and work permits and sets a time limit for application processing. Guarantees equal treatment rights and recognition of diplomas to migrants

▼ SEASONAL WORKERS DIRECTIVE

Designed to provide needed seasonal labor while protecting seasonal workers in the EU. It is the responsibility of member states to designate sectors eligible for seasonal work. Applicants must submit a work contract or job offer specifying conditions of work as well as evidence of housing. Member states fix a maximum period of stay per twelve months.

▼ BLUE CARD DIRECTIVE

Special entry and status for highly skilled individuals. Broader rights provided to recipients and fewer bureaucratic formalities during the application process.

▼ DIRECTIVE ON STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

Harmonized rules for students, researchers, and some other fields. Provides students the option to remain and search for a job after graduation.

▼ MOBILITY PARTNERSHIPS

Formed between the EU, a member state(s), and a third country to manage irregular migration, regular and labor migration, international protection, and migration and development. Non-binding policy frameworks are increasingly used.

Source: Alcidi et al. (2019); EUR-Lex (2014); European Commission (2014)

When skills do not match need, training in the country of origin is considered a preferable form of global skill partnership.

Origin training provides the greatest opportunity for simultaneous development impact on the country of origin and benefit to recipient nations (Clemens 2022; European Commission 2013; IOM 2024b). Compared with skilled migration and training in the destination country, origin training is less expensive and more inclusive. However, nations interested in engaging in such an agreement should carefully balance investments in training with managing expense; these factors are highly affected by sector choice and required skill level (Clemens 2022; Hooper 2019). Ideally, origin training will also include an education or skill-building track for non-migrants in the origin country to contribute to development and prevent “brain-drain” (see Policy Brief #2). It may also be beneficial to involve the private sectors in both sending and receiving nations (Clemens 2022).

Countries should also encourage circular migration, which refers to seasonal, temporary, or repetitive migration. Such mechanisms work well for agricultural and tourism sector labor such as hotels and restaurants. These opportunities reduce incentives for irregular migration, permit the circulation of skills, and fill labor needs in the host country’s economy (Dayton-Johnson 2007; EUR-Lex 2014; European Commission 2014).

Finally, countries should work together to provide clear guidelines for both workers and employers to facilitate use of the programs; enhance information sharing abroad regarding opportunities and options for legal labor migration; and protect potentially vulnerable migrants from worker abuse and exploitation through careful monitoring of private facilitator or employer activities (Hooper 2019; IOM 2024b).

▼ RWANDA

- Skilled Workers Program
- Skilled Workers in Occupations in Demand Program
- Employer Sponsored Skilled Workers Program

Separate and specific categories minimize administrative barriers for eligible labor migrants; here various forms of skilled workers

▼ CARIBBEAN

CARICOM’s Free Movement of Skills Policy and Labour Market Information System

CARICOM is working to develop a regional “Labour Market Information System” to collect, analyze, and disseminate market data for use in national and regional decision-making. This draws on the experience of the Southern African Development Community.

▼ AUSTRALIA AND TUVALU

Falepili Union

Bilateral Agreement to collaborate on climate, *mobility with dignity, and shared security*. The “special mobility pathway” enables 280 Tuvaluan citizens annually the choice to live, work, or study in Australia.

▼ EUROPEAN UNION

Skills Profile Tool

An online tool used by organizations engaged with migrants to map migrant skills, qualifications, and work experience and help to connect migrants with resources

Source: European Commission (2013); IOM (2024b)



Switzerland's **Operation Papyrus** in the canton of Geneva regularized individuals who met residence period, financial, and integration standards set by the public authorities of Geneva as well as had no criminal background. The operation lasted from February 2017 to December 2018.



The Republic of Korea in 2003-4 enacted the **Act concerning the Employment Permit for Migrant Workers** which required the government take measures to legalize the high number of low-skilled migrant workers then living and working in the country. This led to a sharp drop in the number of undocumented migrants in the Republic, as it ultimately implemented a pattern of circular migration which has been adjusted and maintained to the present day.



Spanish **Arraigo** continually permits regularization for migrants who meet certain requirements. The Arraigo system was established after a series of six massive regularization processes from 1986-2005 found public support and significant economic benefits. Criteria include residence period, employment, and social integration levels. The authorization lasts one year, may be renewed, and may be modified to a regular residence permit.



In the United States, **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** is designated on a country by country basis by the Secretary of Homeland Security. This provides nationals of a country in crisis temporary legalization as well as permission to work. It is granted on an individual basis and may also be granted to individuals who last resided in the designated country. Every 18 months, each individual must apply to renew their TPS during a particular, designated period of time to maintain their regularization and work permit.



In 2017 Peru created the **Permiso Temporal de Permanencia** which offers one year of temporary status to Venezuelan migrants. This program required applicants to demonstrate that they entered regularly and before a deadline, as well as to prove their Venezuelan nationality. 460,000 individuals received this status and of them, roughly 315,000 went on to receive permanent resident status. A qualitative study showed that some of the remaining 145,000 individuals felt that the need to renew the status annually was inadequately communicated to them by the government of Peru.

C. REGULARIZATION

Migrants often enter a host nation legally but overstay their visa or fail to renew their residence permit.

Regularization is a process by which a country allows irregular migrants already living within its borders to obtain legal status.

It is also referred to as amnesty or legalization (Sunderhaus 2007). The European Union does not release statistics on visa overstays, but the United States Department of Homeland Security reported a suspected rate of 1.45% of migrants overstaying in fiscal year 2023 or over 500 thousand individuals (CBP 2024).

Regularization allows migrants to more effectively exercise their human rights and contribute economically to host countries while reducing the likelihood of migrant exploitation (Allué 2023; Balcells Group 2018; CCSI 2025; Jan-Erik Refle et al. 2023; Kang Nam Labor Law Firm 2016; Women in Migration Network 2017; Yoo 2005). Furthermore, in nations with overburdened asylum systems that make migrants wait for years or decades for a final decision on their case, regularization is able to relieve some of this burden for eligible individuals (Sunderhaus 2007).

Typically, regularization programs require a combination of (1) minimum length of residence in the host-nation, (2) proof of work and social welfare contributions, (3) a clean criminal record, and (4) the payment of administrative fees to meet eligibility requirements. Although such programs can be expensive, it is important to carefully balance costs incurred by the government with costs incurred by individual migrants who may be dissuaded from applying by unattainable fees (Chaves-González et al. 2025). Successful applicants more fre-

quently receive temporary rather than permanent residence permits, as well as permission to work. Regularization is a useful alternative to mass deportations of undocumented individuals, which most democracies find infeasible for ethical, legal, and practical reasons (Sunderhaus 2007). Furthermore, regularization may be applied on a country of origin basis, as in the United States's Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program or Peru's Permiso Temporal de Permanencia to address particular migration drivers and humanitarian concerns (Chaves-González and Delgado 2023; USCIS 2025). This can work well for nations unaccustomed to large migration flows (Chaves-González et al. 2025). Turkey did so effectively for Syrian migrants by addressing a common lack of documentation and ensuring that the most vulnerable migrants were accounted for in their regularization process specific to Syrians (Chaves-González et al. 2025).

A major challenge for regularization programs is their vulnerability to electoral cycles. Policymakers should therefore try to protect such programs by adopting them early in an administration's term and/or writing them into legislation rather than relying on executive orders. Relatedly, programs that prohibit regularized migrants from moving from temporary to permanent status prolong migrant uncertainty, prevent the host nation from reaping some of the benefits of migration, and increases the likelihood of migrants falling back into irregularity. The same effect occurs if it is unclear to migrants themselves how to make this transition when available (Chaves-González et al. 2025) or if the documentary burden for reapplication puts migrants at risk of falling back into irregular status.

Another impediment more common to migrants in need of international protection is the inability to get documentation from their country of origin or its embassy. A regularization program aiming to, for example, reduce asylum backlog ought to account for this and other needs particular to mixed migrants (Sunderhaus 2007). Likewise, regularization schemes should account for mixed migration by adopting flexible positions in terms of children born in nations different from parents and mixed or informal family units.

D. FAMILY

There are three forms of family-based migration: **(1) family reunification after initial migration, (2) family formation or new marriage, and (3) family member accompaniment of a primary migrant entering at the same time.** Family migration is the largest category of permanent migration to OECD countries (IOM 2024b). Its benefits include increased skill contributions to recipient country labor markets due to spouses who tend to share education levels, increased likelihood of permanence when migrant spouses work, and improved integration capacity (EU 2020; IOM 2024b). However, family migration can create an undue burden when the family member must take on responsibilities assumed by the state when a migrant is resettled via another pathway (Hashimoto 2021).

PERU

In recognition of the prevalence of nontraditional family organizations, Peru permits reunification of spouses, de facto partners, dependent children up to 28 years of age, and parents of the principal migrant

GERMANY

Uses existing family reunification pathways to facilitate the migration of Syrian and Iraqi nationals fleeing conflict. This is done by providing counseling, assistance with visa applications, and pre-departure orientation in recognition of the enhanced needs of individuals from these nations which are likely complex migrants

Sources: IOM (2024b); UNHCR (2019)

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

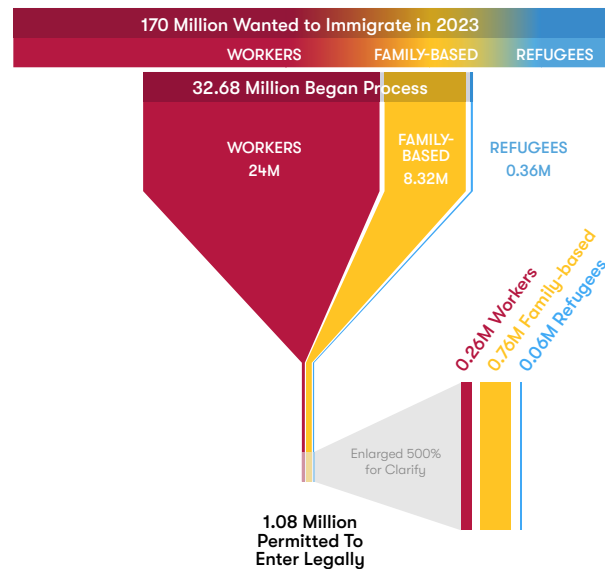
Many existing pathways face design, operation, or other challenges (CCNY 2025). Creating more specific pathways or strengthening existing ones are both effective ways of managing today's mixed migration flows while reaping the benefits of regular migration.

Reforming existing pathways and improving their efficiency can be a more budget-friendly, less public method for reaping the benefits of regular migration than introducing new pathways.

Governments can do so by (1) supporting institutional capacity for coordination of the design, implementation, and scaling of policies, and (2) promoting clear and transparent rules and regulations for regular migration through existing pathways (Alcidi, Laurentsyeva, and Yar 2019). For example, Canada offers a short survey to help potential migrants explore immigration pathway eligibility. Information regarding different pathways ought to be provided to potential migrants for free, in multiple languages, be regularly updated, and be easy to find and share (Alcidi, Laurentsyeva, and Yar 2019; Daniels 2024). One way to encourage regular migration is to enable potential migrants to access solutions independently using publicly available information and processes (UNHCR 2019). For example, online Visa services streamline the process and save costs both for the recipient country and the applicant (Alcidi, Laurentsyeva, and Yar 2019).

Another good practice is to establish an independent, credible government agency to make immigration regulation recommendations in line with national interests. An example of such an agency is the United Kingdom's Migration Advisory Committee (Clemens 2022).

Recipient countries should also consider adjusting existing pathways to meet unique at-risk and mixed migrant needs in accordance with the Refugee Convention. These include protection against refoulement, nondiscrimination and the use of objective criteria in processes, facilitation of access possibly including more flexible procedures, and confidentiality needs (UNHCR 2019). Ideally, all pathways would abide by the Global



Sources: Julie Ray and Anita Pugliese, "Desire to Migrate Remains at Record High," Gallup, December 4, 2024; David J. Bier, "Green Card Approval Rate Reaches Record Lows," Cato Institute, February 15, 2024; Office of Homeland Security Statistics, "Yearbook 2023"; Refugee Processing Center, "Refugee Admissions Report as of December 31, 2024." Notes: Worker counts include diversity visa lottery entrants, the dependents of lottery entrants, and employer-sponsored applicants.

Source: CCNY (2025)

Compact on Refugees' participatory approach in terms of gender, age, (dis)ability, sexuality, etc. (UNHCR 2018)

Furthermore, it is important that new pathways are "...in addition and complementary to—not in place of..." traditional refugee admission. (Hashimoto 2021, 15) This means that, although new pathways may provide much needed additional resources and options, states should not neglect to update and streamline existing pathways. Similarly, international legal instruments relating to migration and migrant protection are old. As nations work to more effectively manage flows into, through, and out of their territory, **collaborative management of international migration should be fostered on a bilateral and multilateral level.**

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