

Webinar: City Involvement in Community-Based Sponsorship Approaches in Northern Europe



Community sponsorship of refugees has gained attention not just as a complementary pathway—but also as a way of supporting resettlement and integration which offers benefits to host communities, sponsors, and refugees themselves. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to refugee sponsorship, and different models may be appropriate in different contexts.

Monday, 14
December,
2020

13:00-17:00 CET

**REGISTER
HERE**

The webinar
will be held
on Bluejeans
in English.

Co-hosted by:



Canada

Global Refugee
Sponsorship Initiative

BACKGROUND

Current global forced displacement remains at unprecedented levels. With opportunities for voluntary repatriation and local integration of refugees in the current global landscape increasingly limited, resettlement is becoming an even more important tool for protection and for finding solutions for some of the world's most vulnerable refugees. Ever increasing needs, now exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, have driven a search for innovative ways to expand solutions for refugees.

According to the UNHCR, the number of refugees in need of resettlement in 2021 will reach nearly 1.45 million, while the number of available opportunities to help is less than 5%. COVID-19 has left refugees in an even more vulnerable position in their countries of asylum. Community sponsorship (CS) offers a way to increase the capacity of resettlement and complementary pathways as called for in the Global Compact on Refugees while sharing responsibility and easing pressure on states who host large numbers of refugees. CS can improve integration by mobilizing local communities to have a hands-on role in the reception and integration of refugees by providing financial, emotional, and practical support.

By empowering citizens to be actively involved in the resettlement and inclusion of refugees in their communities, cities and municipalities can extend already existing resettlement efforts and promote social cohesion by bringing many different members of the community together to create a welcoming and inclusive environment in cooperation with the refugees. Community sponsorship can further strengthen social connections within the local community. The relevance of cities and municipalities in this process is especially important in Northern Europe, due to the responsibility they hold for the integration of refugees and the resulting experience.

OBJECTIVE

This webinar will illustrate the possible ways cities can get involved in community sponsorship programmes. City authorities, sponsors and newcomers will present their experiences and challenges. The webinar will be an opportunity for cities to ask questions, discuss and explore how they can get involved in community sponsorship programmes themselves.

PARTICIPANTS

This webinar is intended for city officials who are interested in community sponsorship approaches to support the integration of refugees in the context of resettlement and complementary pathways.

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is a partnership between:



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AGENDA

- 14:55** Welcome and technical check before official start in waiting room
- 15:00** Official welcome and outline of the webinar by the co-organizers
- 15:10** Video on community sponsorship
- 15:15** Europe's current standing on community sponsorship by Giulio Di Blasi, GRSI
- 15:20** The potential of community sponsorship in the Nordics by Wilfried Buchhorn, UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries
- 15:30** Sponsorship in practice in the United Kingdom by Belinda Gallup, UK Home Office
- 15:35** Sponsorship in practice from a UK city perspective
- 15:40** Peer-to-peer discussion in breakout rooms with sponsors and city officials
Here you can ask your questions concerning community sponsorship
- 16:05** Small break
- 16:10** Experiences with community sponsorship from a beneficiary perspective
- 16:15** Peer-to-peer discussion in two breakout rooms with UNHCR and GRSI
"What do you consider the biggest obstacle or challenge that hinders the implementation of a community sponsorship in your city?"
- 16:40** Reflection and concluding remarks by UNHCR and IRCC (Canada)
- 17:00** Official end of the webinar

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