

Paving the Way

A Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees



International Catholic
Migration Commission
Europe

Endurbúseta. **Relocate** Resettlement **Reínstallation** **Letelepítés** Reasentamiento **Reinsediameto**
Umsiedlung **Reinstalação** Uudelleensijoitaminen **Gjenbsetting** **Genbosætning** Przesiedlenia uchodźców
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ICMC – A Continued Commitment to Resettlement

With a worldwide membership and staff and operations working with migrants and refugees in more than 40 countries around the world, the **International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)** serves and protects uprooted people: refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality. Since its creation in 1951, ICMC has identified and accompanied over one million refugees for resettlement, of which the majority from Indochina (Vietnamese Boatpeople), the former Yugoslavia (Bosnians) and from Iraq. In Turkey, the ICMC Refugee Support Centre (RSC, formerly called OPE) processes refugees for resettlement to the United States, including assistance with security clearances, cultural orientation, medical examinations and follow-up. In the twelve months through October 2010, ICMC's RSC assisted 6,533 refugees for resettlement departure to the US, 4,129 of them Iraqis. Additionally, ICMC provides expert resettlement personnel through the ICMC-UNHCR Resettlement Deployment Scheme to support UNHCR resettlement activities in field offices. These deployees referred more than 55,000 refugees for resettlement consideration in 2010 alone. The ICMC Brussels office has been active in promoting European resettlement through advocacy, capacity building and training and has published "Welcome to Europe: A comparative guide to resettlement in Europe" and the report 10 000 refugees from Iraq – A report on Joint Resettlement in the European Union. During 2010 and 2011, ICMC has been implementing in partnership with IOM and UNHCR, the ERF funded resettlement project 'Promotion of resettlement in the EU through Practical Cooperation by EU Member States and other Stakeholders', under which framework the present Handbook has been produced.

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Foreword

It is with pleasure that we introduce this new Handbook, developed in the framework of a project supported by the European Refugee Fund focusing on practical cooperation in the resettlement of refugees in the European Union.

Successful resettlement depends on strong partnerships to help men, women and children to re-start their lives in a new country. Our three organisations, with their long history of cooperation, are a living example of practical co-operation in the area of refugee resettlement.

The EU – funded project on practical cooperation in resettlement has enabled us to consolidate our experience and to reach out to the authorities in ten European Union countries at national and local levels, as well as to civil society. All participants in the project shared their knowledge and experience in all phases of the resettlement process, from pre-departure arrangements to travel, reception and integration.

There is no doubt that successful resettlement requires close cooperation and coordination among a range of actors in both the country of first asylum and in the country of resettlement. The process begins with UNHCR identifying refugees who are eligible for resettlement, and referring their applications to the governments of countries which implement resettlement programmes. ICMC deployees contribute to this first stage of the process, in more than 40 countries of departure. Once refugees have been selected, IOM takes directly care of pre-departure medical checks and travel arrangements while also facilitating counselling and cultural orientation in cooperation with Governments and other organisations

Along with a range of governmental actors, NGOs and other civil society actors play a vital role in the entire process, providing assistance and services to refugees.

This Handbook, prepared by the European Office of the International Catholic Migration Commission, focuses on the period after refugees have arrived in their country of resettlement. In other words, it concentrates on the integration process which ultimately will result in a durable solution for the individual refugee.

In this context we can rephrase the famous African proverb - it takes a village to raise a child - into “it takes a community to integrate a refugee”. The challenge of helping a resettled refugee to become a fully participating and contributing member of society involves not only central and local authorities but many other actors, such as housing and employment

agencies, schools, health care providers, private companies, sports clubs, religious institutions and countless others in the community. Their contributions, large and small, combine to make a difference for refugees who have lost their community and sense of belonging.

Our organizations are convinced that proper planning for refugee resettlement starts well before the refugee arrives in his or her new country, and should include all those involved in reception and integration. If the receiving communities and all relevant actors are involved from the outset, resettlement will fulfil its potential both as a durable solution for the individual refugee and as an instrument to share the responsibility for hosting refugees with other countries.

We hope that this publication will give a useful insight into the reception and integration of resettled refugees and that it will reinforce and encourage refugee resettlement in the European Union. The many successful practices described in this Handbook provide rich inspiration for all those seeking to engage in refugee resettlement.

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Paving the Way

Europe's share in refugee resettlement stands at a mere 6.5% of the global total. Just a short distance from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East are currently going through profound change, with also a war in Libya, more action should be taken by the European Union whose foundation is based on the principles of solidarity, respect for human rights and protection to those in need.

Although the overall picture is at times discouraging, there have been recent developments that show proof of how protection can be offered to refugees and how communities can become the driving force behind resettlement in Europe. The most significant example of such new approaches came in the context of Europe's joint commitment in November 2008, to resettle 10,000 refugees from Iraq. In the framework of this EU decision, the German government decided to engage in resettlement of Iraqis, resettling 2,500 in 2009/2010. This was in part the result of the campaign –'Save Me' - started by citizens in Munich mobilising support through the internet. As part of the campaign, German citizens – later joined by 56 cities around the country- offered grassroots support to assist the refugees coming to their community. Helping newcomers to learn the language, guide them in their new society, help their children to do their homework and assist them to find apartments.

This is a great example of how citizens of the 21st century can 'think Globally and act Locally' even in times when the political climate overall is hostile to migration.

Resettlement should be about ensuring refugees are welcomed and integrated into communities. ICMC Europe has been privileged to follow-up on this most vital and still under developed area of refugee resettlement. A gap we identified in our earlier work in European resettlement, notably through research for the *Welcome to Europe: A Guide to Resettlement: A Comparative Review of Resettlement in Europe*¹.

As authors of this Handbook, it has been a privilege to interview refugees, NGOs and other actors engaged in receiving resettled refugees, about their experiences and also the challenges. It has been truly inspiring to learn about the great quality and richness of the services offered in refugee integration programmes in Europe. The breadth of all these experiences was hard to summarise, but one thing became apparent. Although there are many

¹ ICMC, (2009) *Welcome to Europe! A guide to resettlement a comparative review of resettlement*, Belgium

different programmes, groups and actors, refugees' needs across Europe are similar and so are the challenges. It is true that when it comes to planning programmes, no one size fits all, but much can be learnt from existing experiences. We are convinced that, by developing programmes, with good coordination between the pre-arrival and post-arrival phases and through good integration programmes and partnerships, resettlement will continue to grow eventually leading to a European community of resettlement cities and municipalities.

We hope this Handbook will assist practitioners starting up or developing resettlement programmes, with useful examples and simple guidance, gathered from experience around the globe. We also hope to inform governmental and non-governmental policy makers of the many diverse practices within the reception and integration of resettled refugees. Ultimately ensuring that refugees are given the tools, to 'Pave their way' towards integration.

The journey towards integration is not always easy, it can be slow at times and the path can be full of cracks and frustrations. What is important though is that refugees are given the opportunity to find their own destination, in their own time.

We wish all refugees safe travels on their journey and offer our support to those accompanying them!

Brussels 2011

Petra Hueck and Hazel Williams

ICMC Europe

Paving the Way: A Handbook on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees

Conclusions and Recommendations to Develop Resettlement

On the basis of the research carried out for this Handbook together with consultations with partners, IOM, UNHCR, refugees and other stakeholders throughout Europe, a range of recommendations have been formulated to guide national, regional and local policy makers and practitioners in resettlement.

ICMC and its NGO partners and other stakeholders including municipalities² hope that the following recommendations will lead to future cooperation and actions at EU, national and local levels, to develop policy and practice to ensure quality reception and integration for resettled refugees. The key recommendations are highlighted below and then broken down into specific areas for action. There are many more detailed ideas and suggestions for practitioners and policy makers throughout the Handbook, which is arranged on a thematic basis.

Key Recommendations

1. Increase support for resettlement and expand the number of resettlement places
2. Build policies for integration and social cohesion
3. Improve stakeholder planning and cooperation in all the phases of resettlement
4. Ensure that strategic decisions about where to place (house) refugees are based on an understanding of refugees' needs
5. Ensure that essential services and support mechanisms are in place before embarking on a resettlement programme

² The following civil society organisations and municipalities contributed at the ICMC organised Resettlement and Integration training in Sintra, Portugal in 2010: British Refugee Council, Bolton at Home, Caritas International, Danish Refugee Council, Dutch Council for Refugees, ETP Slovakia, Forum Refugiés, France Terre d'Asiles, Generatie Tanara, Goodwill Society, Reformed Church - Hungary, Horton Housing Association, Jesuit Refugee Service Romania, Municipality of Lisbon, Municipality of Hallsberg, Municipality of Ljusdal, Municipality of Hudiksvall, Menedék, Municipality of Amersfoort, Portuguese Refugee Council, Polish Humanitarian Action, Refugee Action UK, Save the Children, Sheffield City Council, Slovak Humanitarian Council, Warsaw City Hall - Social Policy, Warsaw Centre for Family Support

1. Increase support for resettlement and expand the number of resettlement places

Experience shows that when local communities understand the realities of refugees' lives there is support for resettlement. To widen this support and increase the number of resettlement places in Europe, more efforts should be invested in raising awareness in local communities about the need to offer protection to refugees, mobilising support through a variety of tools including new social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs.

New partnerships with civil society and municipalities offer opportunities to expand and supplement the range of services and sources of funding for resettlement. Partnerships can be built between national authorities, municipalities, NGOs and other actors in local communities such as associations, churches, private businesses, refugee self-help organisations, volunteer networks, schools, universities, and the media, to develop practical help and financial support for resettlement.

The European Refugee Fund (ERF) can contribute to increasing resettlement places and provide incentives for new countries to engage in resettlement. It is recommended that the ERF funding is made available to fund quality integration programmes and support services at a local level for refugees. ERF funding should also promote networking, knowledge sharing and exchange of practices among civil society and municipalities, at European, national, regional and local levels.

2. Build policies for integration and social cohesion

Governments and other stakeholders, including those at EU level, should coordinate the integration policy framework for refugees with the policies, programmes and plans drawn up for migrants. They should take into account the specific needs of resettled refugees, and reconfirm that integration is a two-way process, which requires efforts of the refugee and the host community.

Developing integration policies in consultation with the relevant national and local stakeholders is fundamental to creating welcoming communities. This should involve a structured collaboration and framework of regional and local actors, including NGOs, city networks and associations of municipalities.

Permanent residence status and family reunification are key to providing 'durable solutions' and security for resettled refugees. Permanent residence must be provided on arrival and

resettled refugees should be given the opportunity to apply for citizenship and naturalisation, without unreasonable barriers. EU and national legislation should further facilitate family reunion and not impose unreasonable financial or administrative restrictions.

Refugees face huge changes when being resettled and may have unrealistic ideas and information about their new country. Pre-departure cultural orientation is an important tool to prepare refugees, although it cannot completely dispel all unrealistic expectations. To be effective cultural orientation must be appropriate (in terms of content and delivery) to the group receiving it.

3. Improve stakeholder planning and cooperation in all phases of resettlement

It is essential to involve municipalities, NGOs and other actors in preparations for the arrival of refugee groups, and provide them with relevant information on the refugees' backgrounds and needs, to properly link the phases of the resettlement process. Extensive planning and information sharing is necessary to ensure that important needs, including language and health needs, are met upon arrival.

Effective resettlement programmes need collaboration between all the stakeholders at both national and local level. From the outset, multi-agency cooperation structures should be established to ensure communication, proper preparation and coordination between all partners.

Municipalities and NGOs have different and complementary roles and functions in the reception and integration process. Strong partnerships between municipalities and NGOs foster quality integration support for refugees, promote social cohesion and ensure the longevity and effectiveness of programmes.

Integration programmes should be accountable to the refugees they seek to support and to the agencies that fund them. Monitoring and evaluation should therefore form an important part of programme delivery and must include ways to gather honest feedback from refugees.

4. Ensure that strategic decisions about where to place (house) refugees are based on an understanding of refugees' needs

When deciding in which part of the country or locality to place refugees, a combination of factors must be weighed to ensure successful integration: local labour market conditions;

employment and educational opportunities; availability of affordable housing; specialist support and health services; interpreters and existing family or other networks in the community.

Where to place refugees and house them, is a crucial decision and major contributing factor in refugee integration. Placing refugees in independent accommodation from day one is preferable to centralised reception. Where reception centres are used these should be situated close to local communities and be used for as short a period as possible.

To ensure direct placement in housing, different lease and housing models must be explored. Financial support mechanisms should be developed to ensure a smooth transition from the country of asylum to the resettlement country. It may be necessary to subsidise rents and help refugees meet the cost of financial deposits to help them access accommodation.

5. Ensure that essential services and support mechanisms are in place before embarking on a resettlement programme

Participating in resettlement is a commitment to provide a durable and dignified solution for refugees. Throughout the EU differences exist in terms of services available. Before engaging in resettlement, countries must review the capacity and quality of available services and providers. There is a need for UNHCR to assist in verifying the availability of such services, to ensure that it is possible to meet refugees' needs in any specific country. Minimum standards should be promoted to achieve a wide consensus around the EU on the conditions necessary before engaging in resettlement. Some basic principles in this area have been proposed in the Charter on Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (annex 1).

Due to their past experiences of persecution, flight and exile, refugees can face particular challenges. During the first phase of resettlement, refugees require intensive and personalised support to navigate the complex systems and services of the resettlement country. This support should be time limited, phased out and address individual needs.

Refugees should be enabled to access mainstream services. However, it is essential that mainstream service providers are given information and guidance to help them meet refugees' needs.

Refugee children should be placed in mainstream schools on arrival. Teachers and other education professionals should be aware of the background issues – disrupted education,

experience of flight, trauma etc - which may affect refugee children's learning, so that they are able to support them to reach their full potential.

Refugees need support to find employment. Resettlement programmes should include partnerships with employers and recruitment and training agencies to provide employment support options such as work placements, mentoring and advice on local employment and job application processes.

Refugees may have lost proof of their qualifications or be unable to have them recognised in the country of resettlement. Countries should recognise this factor, and develop programmes for qualifications to be recognised, enabling refugees to access employment closer to their skills, experience and qualifications.

Knowing the local language is crucial to access employment and training and to integrate into community life. Governments must invest significant funding in providing intensive language classes for refugees on arrival, and options to continue language learning, until they have reached the required level of fluency.

To ensure that refugees receive the healthcare they require, it is essential that they are properly informed about the health services and how to access them. Health service providers must receive additional information about refugee issues and health needs, including psycho-social needs, which may be very different from those of the local population.

Provision of interpreting services is essential, particularly for health and administrative matters it is important that service providers are trained in how to use interpreters.

Volunteers can play an important role in welcoming and supporting refugees; they can help with socialisation, local orientation, befriending, language learning and much more. States and NGOs should reach out to engage citizens in volunteering; recognising or accrediting their contribution and investing in volunteer training and support.

Chapter 1: The Resettlement Framework

1.1 UNHCR Protection and Resettlement

There are 15.4 million refugees worldwide, of whom 4.8 million are Palestinian refugees under the responsibility of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA's) and 10.5 million are under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR's mandate is to provide international protection and seek durable solutions for refugees.

Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in brief defines a refugee as:

- Someone who is outside his/her country of origin
- who has a well- founded fear of persecution
- because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion
- and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution

Of all the countries hosting refugees, the largest populations are in developing countries, with 14 of these classified as least developing³. Whilst in the industrialized world, the number of asylum seekers and refugees has declined considerably since the 1990's. Refugees often live in these host countries for many years, with no possibility of returning home or starting life in a new country. For the first time in history, more refugees now live in urban settings than in camps.



"Overall, it's still the developing world that is carrying the lion's share of responsibility for hosting refugees"

UNHCR High Commissioner António Guterres, 2010



To allow refugees to resume their lives after a period of violence, persecution and insecurity, there are **three durable solutions**. These are:

- 1) **Voluntary repatriation** - where refugees return in safety and with dignity to their country of origin and re-avail themselves of national protection

³ Least developed country (LDC) is the name given to a country which, according to the United Nations, exhibits the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development, with the lowest Human Development Index ratings of all countries in the world.

- 2) **Local integration** - where refugees legally, economically and socially integrate in the host country, availing themselves of the national protection of the host government
- 3) **Resettlement** - where a refugee is selected and transferred from a State in which they have sought protection, to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees with permanent residence status

There are some 7.2 million refugees trapped in refugee camps for many years, in so-called ‘protracted⁴ refugee situations’. For example, some Burmese, Bhutanese and Somali refugees have spent up to thirty years of their lives in refugee camps, in Thailand, Nepal, and Kenya respectively. Unable to return to their home country due to the political situation and denied a legal status in the country of asylum that would allow them to work, send their children to local school, buy property and build a longer term future, resettlement is the only durable solution for these refugees.

Comparatively, a small number of refugees can benefit from resettlement, which is primarily extended to refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or fundamental human rights are at risk in their home country and in the country where they sought asylum. Using resettlement criteria, UNHCR assesses whether resettlement is the most appropriate solution. Normally, refugees will be resettled when the other durable solutions, local integration and repatriation, are not viable options.

UNHCR resettlement criteria as updated in 2011⁵ are:

- **Legal and/or physical protection needs** of the refugee in the country of asylum (this includes a threat of refoulement)
- **Survivors of violence and/or torture**, where repatriation or the conditions of asylum could result in further traumatising and/or heightened risk; or where appropriate treatment is not available
- **Medical needs**, in particular life-saving treatment, that is unavailable in the country of asylum
- **Women and girls at risk**, who have protection problems particular to their gender
- **Family reunification**, when resettlement is the only means to reunite refugee family members who, owing to refugee flight or displacement, are separated by borders or entire continents
- **Children and adolescents at risk** where a best interests determination supports resettlement

4 ‘Protracted refugee situations’ are situations where refugees have been in exile 15 for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions (UNHCR 2009a: preamble)

5 UNHCR (2011), *Resettlement Handbook*, Chapter 6, UNHCR, Geneva.

- **Lack of foreseeable alternative durable solutions**, which is relevant when other solutions are not feasible in the foreseeable future; in those situations when resettlement can be used strategically, and can open possibilities for comprehensive solutions.

Resettlement can also be a vital and **life-saving protection tool**, when there is no other way to guarantee the legal or physical security of the refugee in question. The Eritrean refugees, who escaped persecution and fled from the Libyan war in 2011, are a good example of when resettlement can save lives. Only a few weeks after crossing the Tunisian and Egyptian borders, UNHCR managed to resettle some of these severely traumatised and injured refugees to Sweden and the Netherlands.

In conclusion, resettlement has three equally important functions:

- To offer **refugee protection** to individual refugees or refugee families with specific protection needs
- To provide **durable solutions** to refugees, as an important alternative to voluntary repatriation and local integration
- To express **international solidarity** and share global responsibility for refugees with those countries that receive the highest numbers of the world's refugees, as these are mainly developing countries

“Being a refugee... the only thing I never dreamed of.”

Mohammed Ibrahim,

Regional Refugee Coordinator,

New Zealand

Resettlement can also be used **strategically** to maximize the overall benefits beyond those accruing to refugees being resettled, such as improving conditions for refugees in the country of asylum and ‘unlocking’ protracted refugee situations.

For example, the Syrian government faced serious challenges receiving large numbers of Iraqi refugees⁶. There was a risk that the government would close its borders to Iraqi refugees, limiting the protection and safety that could be offered to them. This was due to pressure on the available education and health services, as well as an increase in the cost of rents and consumer goods affecting the local population. Resettlement of some of the refugees to third countries - such as the United States, Canada and Europe, together with offering humanitarian and development assistance, kept the borders open for Iraqi refugees and improved access to services for both the local Syrian and the Iraqi refugee population.

⁶ According to figures from UNHCR as of January 2011, the Iraqi refugee population in Syria is reported to be around 1,000,000, of whom 151,000 are registered with UNHCR (2011 UNHCR Country Operations profile Syrian Arab Republic).

1.2 Resettlement: Places Available and the Number of People in Need

A refugee does not have a right to resettlement and States are not legally obliged to resettle refugees. Only a comparatively small number of refugees, **less than one percent of the global refugee population, benefit from resettlement**. For example for 2010 the UNHCR estimated that 203,000 persons were in need of resettlement globally. The number of resettlement places offered by resettlement countries for UNHCR submissions stood at some 80,000, in practice 72,914 refugees were actually resettled in 2010. The number of refugees in need of resettlement is thus far greater than the places offered by resettlement states.

Although the number of resettlement countries in the world continues to grow (from 14 in 2006 to 25 in 2010⁷), the increase in the number of refugees resettled is marginal. In 2010, Europe accepted 4707 refugees, which is only 6.5% of the resettled refugees worldwide. In recent years, some governments have invoked the financial crisis and prevailing political climate as a reason not to start or continue with resettlement. However, regardless of the financial crisis, resettlement in the United States, Canada and Australia has continued to grow and local communities there have reaffirmed the need for solidarity with those most in need. Where local communities are helped to understand the plight of refugees through awareness raising, local initiatives can build support for and promote the expansion of refugee resettlement programmes, as seen in the United States and other countries (See Save Me, Chapter 4).

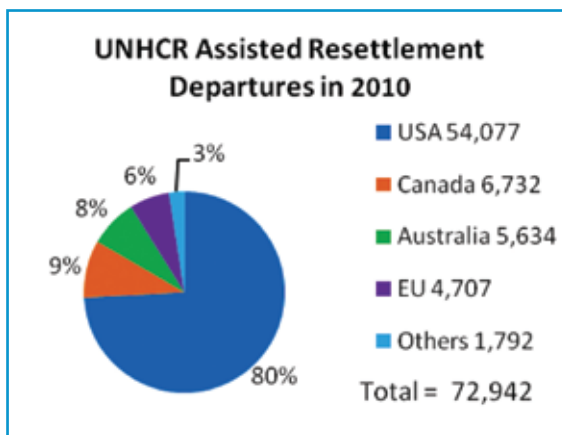


Chart compiled by ICMC based on UNHCR data, 2010

⁷ The implementation of the annual programmes in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain is expected from 2012 onwards.

1.3 Resettlement in Europe: Towards an EU Resettlement Programme

Resettlement is not new to Europe; on the contrary it forms part of its humanitarian tradition. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were resettled to European countries after the Hungarian revolution, the Pinochet coup, the Vietnam crisis and the breakdown of ex-Yugoslavia. During the last five years, the Czech Republic, France, Portugal and Romania have developed resettlement programmes, making the total European countries with established programmes⁸, 12⁹ as of 2011 (see table)

Countries	Start of Official Programme	Number of Resettlement Places in Quota 2010 (per year unless mentioned)	Other Information on Quota
Czech Republic	2008	30	
Denmark	1978	1500	Taken over 3 years
France	2008	100 cases (300 – 400 individuals)	
Finland	1979	750	
Iceland	1996	currently being revised	
Ireland	1998	200	Under review
Netherlands	1977	2000	Taken over 4 years
Norway	1975	1200	5% flexible; 2 first years within 3 year period
Portugal	2007	30	Minimum number
Romania	2009	40	
Sweden	1950	1900	
UK	750	750	

In November 2008 the EU Council¹⁰ called on member states to resettle 10,000 refugees from Iraq¹¹. Belgium, Germany and Italy responded and offered resettlement places on an ad hoc basis. The largest contribution was made by Germany, which resettled 2501 refugees during 2009.

8 Other countries, for example Belgium, Italy and Germany, have implemented ad-hoc resettlement programmes.

9 Iceland and Norway plus EU Member States: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the the United Kingdom.

10 European Union Council, Council Conclusions on the reception of Iraqi refugees , 2987th JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS Council meeting, Brussels, 27-28 November 2008, EU Council, Brussels.

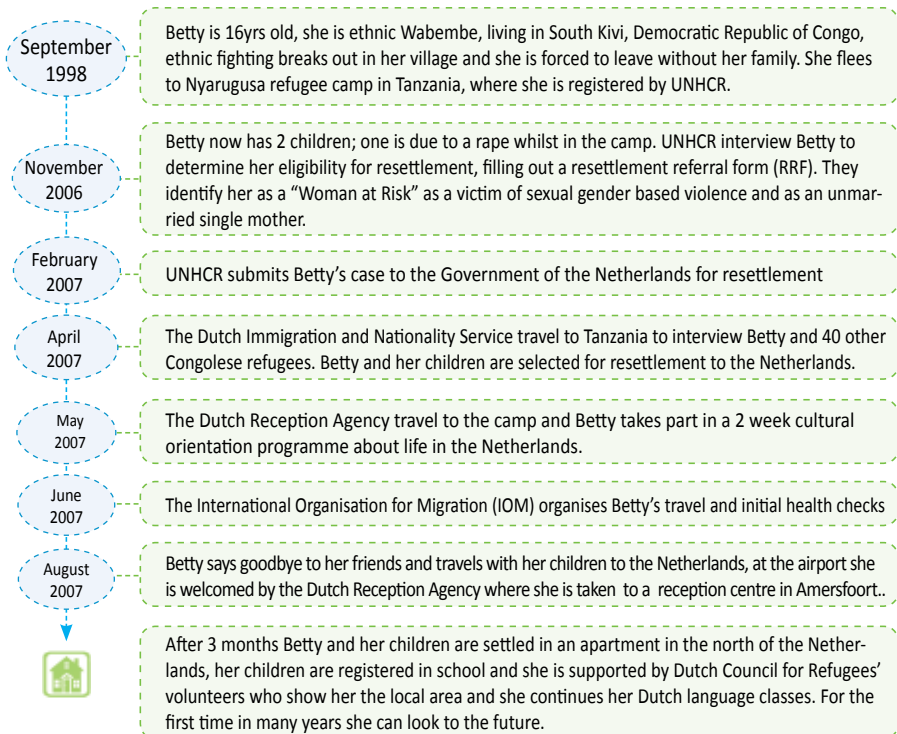
11 ICMC and IRC (2010), *10,000 Refugees from Iraq: A Report on Joint Resettlement in the European Union*, Belgium.

In 2009 the European Commission then proposed A Joint EU Resettlement Programme¹², which aims to coordinate EU member states' resettlement efforts both strategically and operationally.¹³ In brief, the programme's goals are:

- To increase the humanitarian impact of the EU by ensuring that it gives greater and better targeted support to the international protection of refugees through resettlement
- To enhance the strategic use of resettlement by ensuring that it is properly integrated into the EU's external and humanitarian policies generally
- To better streamline the EU's resettlement efforts so as to ensure that the benefits are delivered in the most cost-effective manner

1.4 The Resettlement Process

This diagram shows the timeline of the different phases of a refugee's resettlement. Every resettlement timeline is different, but this hopes to give a straight forward example of the phases. The details of the refugee have been changed.



12 European Commission, Communication 447, Establishment of a Joint EU Resettlement Programme , 2009, European Commission, Brussels.

13 European Commission, Citizens summary: Joint EU Refugee Resettlement Programme , 2009, European Commission, Brussels.

The Resettlement Selection Process

Once the decision has been made to refer a refugee or refugees for resettlement, UNHCR submits the refugee 'case' to a resettlement country. UNHCR emphasizes the importance of family unity and encourages resettlement countries to admit refugees who have relatives, or other personal ties, in that country. Each resettlement country then decides upon submissions on the basis of its own criteria, procedures and regulations. In general, countries consider cases submitted by UNHCR either on a **dossier basis** (on file only with no face to face interview) and/or on the basis of a personal interview, carried out during a **selection mission** in the country of asylum. In addition to selection missions, the face-to-face interview can take place locally with the immigration officers based in their respective Embassies. Most countries in Europe choose refugees during selection missions, with the exception of France and Portugal, whose decision-making is based upon dossier review. Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands select refugees both on a dossier basis and during selection missions.

Selection missions are usually carried out by government officials, often from the ministry of the interior or home affairs. Increasingly other actors are involved, in order to ensure that the information gathered about refugees can benefit preparations for reception in the resettlement country. Therefore selection missions can include the government body responsible for reception and integration, NGOs involved in service provision or representatives of the municipalities where refugees will be resettled.

Most countries incorporate UNHCR resettlement criteria and case submissions as the basis of their selection process, however, some governments shy away from receiving refugees that they think might have less **integration potential** or may require more financial and public services support. Certain countries argue that it is necessary to establish additional criteria that take into account the capacity of the reception and integration services that are already available and the individual's potential to achieve economic self-sufficiency. This 'integration potential' concept is the subject of much debate among actors in resettlement. It introduces a variety of factors like age, education level, foreign language, work experience, networks in the resettlement country and motivation for integration, into the selection process with the hope of 'assessing' a refugee's capacity for successful resettlement.

Many case studies have proven that it is nearly impossible to predict refugees' integration process and that a refugee's resilience - and capacity to adapt -can be remarkable, as the following experience in Belgium demonstrates.

A Palestinian single widow with two children was resettled to Belgium after living in Al Waheed refugee camp in very difficult circumstances. She had recently lost her husband and was devastated. Given the volatile situation she had been living in, coupled with her personal experiences, it was feared that she would not cope with all the changes ahead such as learning the language, moving to a new house and getting the children into school. However, once she left the reception centre, with the support and guidance of a Belgian NGO, she was able to find herself a house. Having survived periods of extreme hardship, her coping skills meant that she was able to engage in a new life, take her two children to school on the bus every day, learn the language and make friends with Belgians, all within one year.

It is important that the needs of the most vulnerable refugees (such as, survivors of torture and violence, women at risk and refugees with medical needs) are evaluated before they are actually resettled, in order to best prepare services in the resettlement country. Yet given the protection imperative of the 1951 Refugee Convention, such vulnerabilities and related assessments should not be used as grounds for excluding refugees from resettlement solutions. Rather, governments must take refugees needs into account and ensure adequate integration services are in place for refugees arriving (see Chapter 3).

Preparing for Departure

Preparing refugees to depart to their new resettlement country can include a variety of different activities such as arranging travel documentation, cultural orientation (see Chapter 5), health checks and preparing refugees for flying. Governments can carry these out by themselves or often they contract some or all of the services out to other organisations. Most often in Europe the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) are contracted to do this work. The US however also contracts these tasks out to NGOs.

IOM plays a vital role when it comes to preparing refugees for their departure; their resettlement assistance covers the following activities:

- **Case processing and management** including thorough case preparation, quality checks, anti-fraud measures, accountability and close coordination with resettlement states, UNHCR and NGOs
- **Medical screening and counselling** to ensure that refugees do not pose a public health risk and meet the health requirements of the resettlement country. Treatment is also provided as needed for travel fitness
- **Cultural orientation** to give refugees basic information on the resettlement country to assist in managing the refugees' expectations

- **Language and skills** training to equip refugees with basic communication and vocational skills to enable their adjustment into receiving societies
- **Pre-embarkation orientation** to introduce air travel, packing requirements, and the importance of safeguarding travel documents
- **Movement assistance** to facilitate safe, orderly and cost-effective travel from point of departure to final destination

IOM's resettlement activities as outlined above are provided in close cooperation with asylum and resettlement countries, UNHCR and NGOs.

Linking Selection to Reception and Integration

The pre and post-arrival phases of resettlement must be properly linked and coordinated. Governments, municipalities and civil society organisations should work together to coordinate and organize appropriate reception and integration services, ensuring refugees needs are efficiently considered, prepared for and addressed.

Do resettled refugees have specific needs in comparison to other refugees and asylum seekers?

As a general rule, all newcomers to a country face similar challenges: learning the local language, finding housing and employment and understanding social codes and the institutional framework. However, because of their particular circumstances and journey of migration and arrival, resettled refugees often face additional challenges. The experiences that are somewhat particular to these refugees, and therefore relevant to resettlement planning and services are:

- Refugees have often lived for extended periods in camp situations with very basic facilities; resettlement is often a sudden move to a technologically advanced and individualised society
- Whether having lived in camp situations or urban settings, refugees may have developed dependency on assistance and aid agencies, and find it difficult to adjust to having to do things for themselves
- Having spent many years without the possibility of planning their future, resettled refugees can have unrealistic expectations about their new home country, especially in terms of employment, housing and social assistance. They are often unaware that life can be tough and challenging even in highly industrialised countries
- Resettled refugees often have no existing community, family or other support networks, which can offer emotional and other orientation support upon arrival and during the first period when everything is new and often complicated



UNHCR / A. Duclos / 28 February 2011

There are some basic standards for ensuring adequate reception and integration, which countries should meet before embarking on resettlement, as covered in Chapter 3. The need for common minimum standards was discussed by practitioners from eleven European countries attending the ICMC resettlement training on the reception and integration of refugees, in Sintra, Portugal in 2010. A draft charter of principles on the reception and integration of resettled refugees (see annex 1. For the draft charter) was also developed. There is an increasing need for UNHCR to verify whether adequate support services can be made available or be developed in resettlement countries. Ideally, a ‘matching’ of refugee needs to available services should be made, particularly in the case of countries that are new to resettlement and have limited experience in receiving refugees.

Chapter 2: Laying the Foundations for Integration

2.1 Introduction to Integration

Integration of third country nationals is high on policy agendas, in political debates and the media. Refugees are generally included in the wider debate about integration of migrants. Defining integration is a difficult task, given that it is often a personal experience. Integration is generally described as a **dynamic and multifaceted two-way process** which requires efforts by all parties concerned, including a preparedness on the part of the newcomer to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity and a corresponding readiness on the part of the host communities and public institutions to welcome the newcomer and meet the needs of a diverse community.

Considering the integration of refugees UNHCR notes¹⁴ that for effective integration refugees need:

- A secure legal status and equal access to rights
- Access to safe, secure and affordable housing
- Active participation in the economic life of the receiving country
- Participation through education, for adults and children
- Language learning as a path to independence and self-reliance

There is no single means of ensuring successful integration. Integration does not happen by itself but necessitates efforts by both the refugee and the receiving community. Every refugee in Europe should have the opportunity to feel at home, enjoying the rights and respecting the laws and cultures of the host countries. To enable refugees to participate fully in society, public institutions and civil society must provide an environment in which integration can take place. Many different stakeholders have a role to play; these include government departments, municipalities, NGOs, employers, trade unions, schools, healthcare providers, housing providers, private businesses, neighbours, classmates and co-workers.

Integration is a multi-faceted process, which involves a variety of actors, in different spheres and at different levels. Measuring integration is thus a complex process. From the refugee perspective, it is generally understood that integration is a process that consists of different stages and changes overtime. For example: during the first weeks after arrival, being able to greet one's neighbour in the local language may feel like an important step in integration. Some months later, applying for a first job can provide a similar sense of integrating.

¹⁴ UNHCR, Agenda for the Integration of Refugees in Central Europe, April 2009, UNHCR.

European Integration Policies

In 2004, the EU adopted a set of **Common Basic Principles** (CBPs) which underlie a coherent framework on integration¹⁵ of third country nationals. There are 11 CBPs, which aim to offer EU member states “a simple non-binding guide of basic principles” against which they can judge their own integration policies (see annex 2. for the CBPs). The CBPs are broad and flexible and do not offer a full definition of integration, but are rather a first attempt to flesh out a definition and interpretation of what integration can mean in the EU context.

The first CBP is the one that is most used and focused upon by member states. Integration is formulated as a “dynamic two-way process” which means the process should involve the participation of the receiving community¹⁶ and the migrant, based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations, to enable full participation¹⁷.

It is debatable whether integration policies as implemented by member states are really a “two-way process”. Generally, the responsibility is placed much more on the refugee to integrate than on the receiving community to accept newcomers. To facilitate a genuine two-way process, efforts must be taken to raise awareness and develop understanding in the receiving community. Actions should be developed which strengthen the involvement of, and partnerships between, local, regional and national actors to develop integration policies that promote welcoming communities, to include city networks, national associations of municipalities and NGOs. Strategies are needed at a local and national level to reflect the prevailing political, legal and financial context and structures.

2.2 Measuring Migrant and Refugee Integration

Integration Indicators

There are different approaches to evaluating integration using various integration indicators. Many national and local policies focus on five core areas of integration; these are community life, housing, employment, health and education.

This handbook focuses around these five pillars of integration, outlining some of the challenges faced and practices developed to facilitate the integration of resettled refugees. As language learning is one of the keys to achieving integration, the handbook also explores this theme.

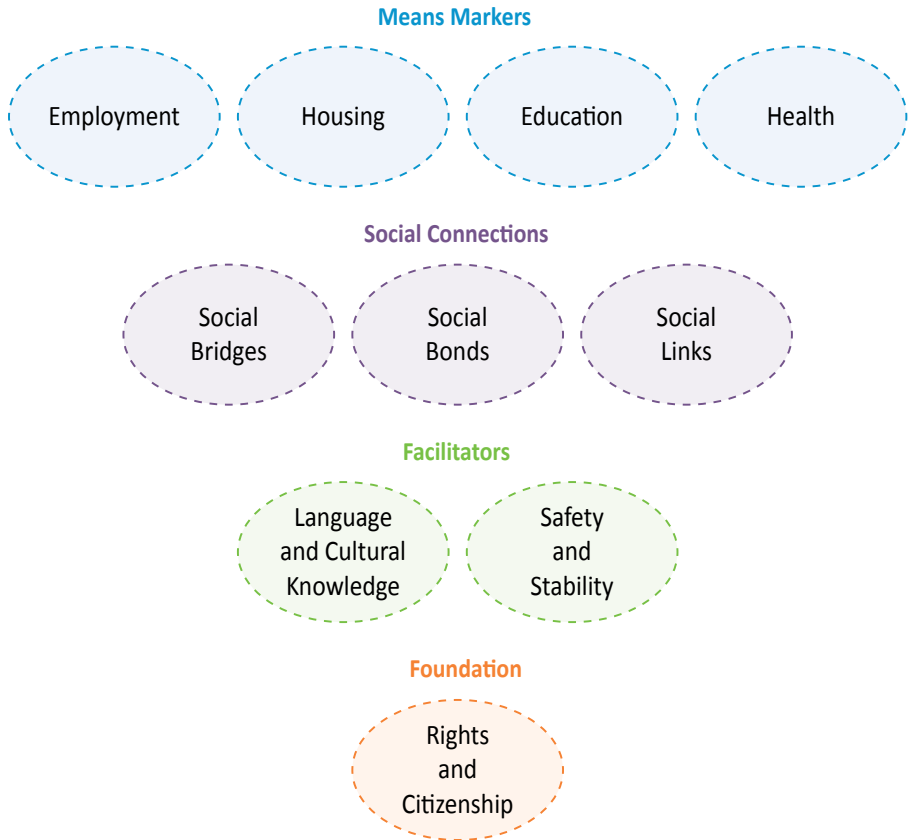
¹⁵ The Hague Programme initially established the Common Basic Principles early in 2004, underlining the need for greater coordination of national integration policies and EU initiatives. The EU Council then adopted them. Following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty and the Stockholm programme, a European Agenda for the Integration of European Citizens will be published in 2011.

¹⁶ Opinion of the European Economic Social Committee of 1997.

¹⁷ European Commission, Communication 336, Immigration, Integration and Employment, 2003, European Commission, Brussels.

Evaluating the UK Resettlement Programme

The UK Border Agency uses integration indicators to measure the outcomes of their resettlement programme (Gateway Protection Programme). In this model, the foundation of integration is rights and citizenship. To monitor integration, service providers are requested to report every three months for up to one year after refugees arrival, on the progress achieved using the following key indicators:¹⁸



For each heading, quantitative (statistics) and qualitative information are gathered by those organisations delivering the direct integration support. For example, under the language heading, the report will include details on which level of exams a refugee has passed, or comments on how individuals can now communicate with neighbours, service providers, etc.

¹⁸ Home Office UK (2004), *Indicators of Integration: final report*, Home Office Development & Practice Report 28, UK.

The Netherlands Integration Barometer

The Dutch Council for Refugees (DCfR) has been carrying out extensive research about the integration of refugees, with a periodic quantitative and qualitative survey, called the Integration Barometer¹⁹. The Integration Barometer 2009 has, for the first time, researched differences between refugees and migrants in relation to integration. The barometer points to a number of findings:

- In general, refugees cherish security as the main factor that promotes their sense of belonging in the Netherlands. The percentage of refugees that apply for naturalisation is significantly higher than that of other groups of third country nationals
- The start of the integration process for refugees is typically characterised as more difficult, due to the painful past experiences of most refugees
- Employment rates of refugees are in general lower than those for third country nationals. This difference disappears after around ten years. The research shows that language knowledge and national (Dutch) diplomas make a vital difference in obtaining employment
- Refugees focus on a future for themselves and their children and are quicker to learn Dutch and make Dutch friends than other migrant groups
- Government placement policy, spreading refugees throughout the country, promotes social cohesion in the Dutch communities

Monitoring Migrant and Refugee Integration at the EU Level

There have been various efforts to assess the integration of migrants on a European and international level. The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a benchmarking initiative to measure the integration policies and practices of 25 EU member states and three non-EU member states, allowing countries to compare “how well they are doing” in terms of best practices to assist integration²⁰. The index uses over 140 different policy indicators, categorised into six areas of a migrant integration: labour market access, family reunion, long-term residence, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination. The MIPEX has been carried out three times, with its most recent assessment published in February 2011.²¹ So far, Sweden has scored highest in all three surveys. During 2010 **UNHCR and the Migration Policy Group (MPG) designed a refugee integration tool to evaluate integration policies** according to the needs and situations of refugees and other beneficiaries of international protection²². UNHCR hopes to pilot the tool in four central European states.

19 Jeanine Klaver and Inge van der Welle (2009), *VluchtelingenWerk IntegartieBarometer 2009- Een onderzoek naar de integratie van vluchtelingen in Nederland*, Dutch Council for Refugees- Vluchtelingen Werk, Rotterdam.

20 Niessen, J., Huddleston, T., Citron, L. (2007), *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, British Council and Migration Policy Group, Brussels.

21 www.mipex.eu

22 Huddleston, T., (2010) *EU support for integration: what about beneficiaries of international protection?: A User's Guide to EU Standards, Funds and Cooperation*. Migration Policy Group. Commissioned by UNHCR Regional Representation for Central Europe: http://www.unhcr-budapest.org/images/stories/news/EU_support_for_integration.pdf

2.3 Permanent Residency and Citizenship

The UNHCR definition of resettlement states that: “The status provided should ensure protection against refoulement and provide a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. It should also carry with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalised citizen of the resettlement country.”²³

After how many years is permanent residency given to refugees?	
Czech Rep	on arrival
Denmark	7yrs
France	on arrival
Finland	4yrs
Ireland	on arrival
Netherlands	5yrs
Norway	3yrs
Portugal	5yrs
Romania	5yrs
Sweden	on arrival
UK	on arrival

The focus on access to citizenship and nationality was developed to protect refugees from the possibility that states would use their discretion to withdraw protection. **Access to citizenship is what makes resettlement a truly durable** solution. In addition, it is proven that naturalisation and ‘active citizenship’ (discussed below), foster a sense of belonging and promote equality, and are therefore important to achieving full integration in the new country. In many EU countries, access to citizenship and nationality is not automatic, but subject to a minimum number of years of residency.

In addition to a minimum period of residency, countries have been introducing language and citizenship tests as a pre-condition for naturalisation, even for refugees and their family members. Countries like France, UK and Netherlands now organise ‘Welcome Ceremonies’ for naturalised citizens, as a platform for active citizenship and interaction between old and new citizens, as has long been the custom in the United States.

²³ UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 2004, p2

Active Citizenship

'Active citizenship' refers to the participation of individuals in civil society, community and political life - at different levels - in ways that build social capital and promote shared values such as human rights, democracy, the rule of law and intercultural understanding. Migrants and refugees who are citizens and feel that they have a future in a country are more likely to be active members of the community, and to participate in the democratic process of these communities. It is in the interest of states to achieve full socio-economic and political inclusion of resettled refugees and migrants by granting citizenship, amongst other things, as a way to promote social cohesion.

2.4 Family Reunification

Being separated from family members can be a significant barrier to the refugee's integration and wellbeing. It is widely acknowledged that worrying about family members left behind can compound feelings of helplessness, and prolong the effects of traumatic events, e.g. depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)²⁴. At the same time, being required to pay fees charged for bringing family members together under reunification provisions can be difficult for refugees, especially in the years soon after their arrival, and for some it is impossible. In some cases when family reunion is refused or otherwise unachievable, refugees return to the country of asylum or origin to be reunited with family members.

“It is hard to concentrate on study when you are separated from your family. I was resettled to Sweden, my wife to Australia; my Mum and Dad are still in Addis Abba.”

Feki Munir Bedru,
Ethiopian refugee resettled to Sweden

Reuniting families is a complex area in terms of refugee resettlement, as states implement a variety of different laws to regulate admission into their country. For many refugees who are resettled possibilities for family reunion can be the main concern.²⁵ Indeed, this was the case for those refugees interviewed in the process of compiling this handbook.

Family Definitions²⁶

1. A group of persons connected by blood, by affinity, or by law especially within two or three generations.
2. A group consisting of parents and their children (i.e. nuclear family).
3. A group of persons who live together and have a shared commitment to a domestic relationship.

²⁴ Refugee Council of Australia (2010), *Family Reunion and Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian program: A discussion paper*, Refugee Council of Australia, Australia, p 9.

²⁵ Lundstrom, J., and Den Uyl, A. (2010), *From the Himalayas to the Lowlands- in search of peace and happiness : Experiences of Bhutanese refugees in the Netherlands*, Global Human Rights Defence League and Dutch Council for Refugees VluchtelingWerk Nederland, Netherlands.

²⁶ Bryan A. Garner, ed., (2004), *Black's Law Dictionary 8th Edition*, Thomson/West, St. Paul, MN.



Photografer: Marnix van der Beek, GHRD

Both the 1951 Convention and UNHCR recognise family reunion as an essential right of the refugee and UNHCR recommends that states apply broad and flexible criteria when defining the family. As well as applying the traditional “nuclear family” definition, UNHCR also applies the principle of dependency, which can mean economically but also socially and emotionally dependent.²⁷ Such a view of the family conforms more to the way that the majority of refugees view family.

At EU level, both the Charter of Fundamental Rights, along with instruments of international law and the **EU Directive on the right to family reunification** of third country nationals recognises the obligation to respect family life.²⁸ The Directive determines the conditions under which family members from outside the EU can come to reside in EU member states.

“A family is those living together sharing the same feelings and aspiration, the same kitchen. We had that in our land, uncle, aunt, grandparents, grandchildren; they are all family”

*Bhutanese refugee
resettled to the Netherlands*

Generally, the Directive applies a limiting definition of a nuclear family²⁹. However, for *refugees*, Chapter V allows for a broader remit stating that EU member states “may” allow family reunion for family members outside of the nuclear family when those family members are dependent on the refugee.

27 UNHCR, Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, Geneva, 30 June – 02 July 2008, Discussion Paper, Challenges and Opportunities in Family Reunification, 2008, UNHCR.p2.

28 Council Directive 2003/86/EC.

29 Council Directive 2003/86/EC, Chapter II, Article 4.

The Directive establishes that generally, to apply for family reunion, family members must provide prior evidence of accommodation, sickness insurance and stable and regular resources. In view of their particular situation, refugees may be exempt from these requirements, but in order to benefit from this exemption, they must submit their application for family reunion within three months of arrival.³⁰ With respect to the many changes refugees go through during the arrival process, this three months period is unrealistic and too short. So in practice, the restrictive nature of the directive makes family reunification broadly unavailable for those family members that fall outside of the nuclear family definition³¹. Resettlement support should include help to facilitate family reunion as quickly as possible. States should use their discretion and apply broad criteria to reflect the realities of refugee families, see annex 3 for a table on the different definitions of family for family reunion as applied by European countries doing resettlement.

2.5 Placement Policies

For most resettled refugees the integration process really begins once they have settled in the community. While policies with respect to **placing refugees over the country (placement policies)** vary widely throughout Europe, resettled refugees generally cannot choose the place of settlement but are assigned to specific areas by the government or designated agency. In most countries the decision to settle refugees in a given municipality depends on the willingness of the municipality in question. In this case the government body responsible for resettlement will need to invest in developing a network of localities willing to receive refugees. In other countries municipalities are obliged by law to receive a certain number of refugees per year, for example in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Key issues for governments planning placement:

- Education, training and employment opportunities
- Family and/or ethnic support networks
- Transport links
- Availability and cost of suitable housing
- Availability of support services
- Available rehabilitation and health services, including torture services and psychosocial counselling
- Availability of interpreters
- Safety

³⁰ Council Directive 2003/86/EC, Chapter V, Article 12.

³¹ Ibid., UNHCR, Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, p3.

Within any given municipality, consideration should be given to these factors on a local level. Building support in municipalities to engage in resettlement is essential to establishing flexible and effective programmes. Therefore financial compensation is an important aspect of placement policies.

Resettled refugees are often placed in smaller communities away from the main economic centres. Research by some countries³², has reported that placement in smaller communities makes connecting with the new community easier and is more conducive to the building of social networks. However, scattering refugees in isolated areas with limited community support and employment opportunities can be problematic and lead to **secondary migration**. However, placement considerations also depend on the circumstances of each refugee. For example, a single mother with young children may prefer living in a smaller community, if she is not immediately concerned with finding employment and her main concern is schooling for the children. On the contrary, someone looking for university education or skilled employment may struggle in a rural area, which can offer limited options for either. Similarly, a person needing specialised medical treatment will need to be placed in a city that has such services. It is also important that refugees are able to settle in one place, and are not forced to keep moving due to poorly planned initial placement. Frequent changes of address or of communities, makes it more difficult to integrate and promotes so-called ‘rootless identities’.

Countries are faced often with the dilemma that where there is available low-cost housing is exactly where there are no jobs, which is why local people have moved away. More research into the diverse integration experiences of refugees placed in different areas is needed³³ to assist governments and municipalities, in developing a more holistic approach in their refugee placement taking account of the aspirations and specific needs of the refugees concerned.



“My daughter particularly suffered from the frequent moving, which negatively impacted on her school results. When she started education she was placed at grammar school level, but after two other changes she was advised to follow technical education. Since we have obtained our own house, things have stabilised and her school results have improved”

Woman from Iraq, living in the Netherlands since 2006,

Netherlands Integration Barometer, p.24



32 Jeanine Klaver and Inge van der Welle (2009), *VluchtelingenWerk IntegartieBarometer 2009- Een onderzoek naar de integratie van vluchtelingen in Nederland*, Dutch Council for Refugees- Vluchtelingen Werk, Rotterdam.p27.

33 Bevelander, P., Hagström, M., Rönnqvist, S., (2009) *Resettled and Included? The employment integration of resettled refugees in Sweden*, Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM), Malmö University, Sweden, p23.



Jo

Jo was arrested, interrogated and detained by the Myanmar regime for his role in the student uprising that shook Yangon in December 1996. He was released from prison in April 1997. In July 1997 he left Burma and travelled to Bangkok where he worked for an NGO until his resettlement to Finland in December 2000.

What were your initial impressions of Finland?

We arrived in the quiet little town of Kuopio in central Finland a day before Christmas 2000. We received a very warm welcome from Kuopio social

services. For each family there was a sizable flat, some good second-hand furniture, complete with beddings, and pots and pans and utensils. Even cooking oil and rice were in the kitchen.

Seeing the snow for the first time was exhilarating, but the cold of -24 C was something we were not really prepared for. For example, we should have been informed about the need for the long johns in the European winter.

What support in Finland was most useful?

In addition to financial allowance, there was an excellent language course that had kept me busy the first 18 months. There was also a job placement programme, which I completed as a research assistant to a professor of sociology at the University in the summer of 2002.

You have been in Finland for 10 years, what have been some of the biggest difficulties?

Socializing in the Finnish society was the biggest challenge but we came to Finland in a small community and were able to assist each other in adapting to our new country.



Personally, I think that Finland has yet to offer me a secure job that suits my interests and aspirations. When feasible, I would like to return to Burma to help improve the conditions there.

What circumstances need to be in place before a country commits to resettlement?

Resettlement is not just offering protection to the refugees. It is also about providing a secure future for them. In that sense, a good infrastructure, in terms of economy (the provision of financial allowance is vital) and education (experienced quality language teaching), should be in place before any country commits itself to resettlement.

What advice would you give to others who are starting resettlement programmes?

- 1) Economic and living conditions in the resettlement country should be better than those of the country of asylum*
- 2) The 'welcome phase (arrival and one month after arrival)' is the most vital for receiving resettled refugees since it has a very long-lasting impression in the minds of the refugees*
- 3) Make the host country's language appealing to the resettled refugees by giving incentives and by means of innovative teaching methods*
- 4) Ideally integration works best when a resettled refugee or a family of refugees is settled directly into the receiving community. This way, like myself, you are forced to learn the way of the community by observation and by making new friends.*

The name in this profile has been changed to keep the refugee featured anonymous

Chapter 3: Essential Support Services for Resettled Refugees

This chapter sets out the key issues and services necessary to support the reception and integration of resettled refugees. It provides simple guidelines, practical tools and examples from countries already carrying out resettlement. Specifically, it covers stakeholder cooperation, staffing, service delivery models, working with volunteers and interpreters and monitoring and evaluation. It offers a simple and straightforward guide for those starting out in resettlement and those looking for new ideas.

3.1 Funding and Management

Crucial to any service delivery and programme planning is **identifying suitable and sustainable funding** and deciding how best to use the available resources. Each country funds its resettlement programme slightly differently. Many European states rely on European Refugee Fund (ERF) financing³⁴. Some programmes, like the Gateway Protection Programme in the UK, are centrally managed and financed through ERF and central government funding. The UK Border Agency is responsible for the selection process and oversees the programme up to one year after the resettled refugees' arrival, contracting local service providers to provide reception and integration services, including housing³⁵. In most countries however, the government body responsible for the selection of refugees is not responsible for their reception and integration. This can lead to unbalanced financing of costs between the selection, travel and subsequent reception and integration phases. A number of countries, for instance France, finance resettlement through the general asylum system using centralised reception facilities. In most countries municipalities cover the costs of resettlement. In some countries, municipalities receive a funded allocation per refugee from central government (Sweden). When municipalities are not compensated for additional costs relating to reception and integration, this may limit their motivation to engage in resettlement. Funding is therefore an issue which requires careful consideration by governments, to ensure adequate finance and services are made available. Certain countries that have recently established resettlement programmes,

³⁴ The ERF for the period 2008 -2013 established by Decision No 573/2007/EC enables the financing programmes and actions related to resettlement under articles 3 (9) and 3 (7). In addition article 13 (3) provides for additional financial allocations of 4000 per refugee in case of the resettlement of certain vulnerable categories or persons from Regional protection programmes (RPPs).

³⁵ Also in New Zealand and the US, the government signs contracts with civil society or public service providers in each province or state for the implementation of a reception and support programme for resettled refugees during a determined period.

for example the Czech Republic and Romania, have relied heavily upon ERF funding for their programmes. Some countries have also received additional support in terms of funding for specific services from UNHCR, for example, Romania.

Resettlement and integration programmes are conceived, managed and implemented in different ways. The involvement of civil society -including NGOs, faith-based organisations and private organisations- and the influence of civil society on programme content and implementation, varies significantly from country to country. In countries like Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, the governments implement the resettlement programmes in close partnership with NGOs, with broad involvement of many different civil society actors, including private business.

Refugee Support in Canada and the USA

In Canada, religious, ethnic, community or service organizations, can get involved in resettlement through the ‘Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program’, which offers an opportunity to such groups to sign sponsorship agreements with the Government and to receive resettled refugees from abroad³⁶. In Canada sponsors that receive refugees in their community, commit to providing financial assistance to refugees for one year or until they can support themselves. Assistance includes accommodation, clothing and food. Sponsors also provide emotional and orientation support to the refugees for the duration of the sponsorship period.

In the United States, civil society is the driving force behind the resettlement programme. The US Resettlement Program is implemented in close partnership with resettlement agencies. The resettlement agencies identify and work with individuals and families in the community who agree to work as sponsors of the refugees being resettled. A sponsor’s overall goal is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient as soon as possible. During a period of 90 days from when the refugees arrive, sponsors serve as guides, advocates, and friends³⁷. The sponsoring group, often a church, usually spends about \$2500 in financial and in-kind contributions, contributing to rent, deposit on an apartment, utilities, and miscellaneous expenses. Other items needed by the family, such as furniture and clothing, are almost always donated.

36 For more information on the Canadian sponsorship programmes see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp>. In addition to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program, Canada has a joint assistance sponsorships programme (JAS) for refugees with special needs -trauma because of violence or torture, medical disabilities, effects of systemic discrimination and gender persecution (women under the Women at Risk programme). Under this programme, government financial support covers, the cost of food, shelter, clothing and essential household goods for up to 24 months. Private sponsors help refugees adjusting to life in Canada, provide for settlement assistance and emotional support.

37 An example of a faith based local resettlement service provider in Kentucky State, is the Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) . See - <http://www.kyrm.org/home.html>

There is no one way to manage and implement a resettlement programme. However, experience shows that involving NGOs and civil society, who are often more involved in integration services within the community than governments, helps create support for the resettlement programme overall and ensures effective services for the local integration of refugees.

Whatever the model, it is essential to **establish clear lines of communication, cooperation and responsibility** between all those involved: central (or federal) government, local authority or municipality and civil society including NGOs, faith-based and private organisations.

3.2 Working Together - Stakeholder Cooperation

Every resettlement programme involves a variety of stakeholders, i.e. people and organisations which will be involved in, or affected by, the programme, both before and after the refugees arrive. These may include governments, UNHCR, IOM, NGOs, municipalities, health services, housing agencies, employment services and education services. It is useful to

establish structures that enable the flow of information and provide opportunities to discuss issues and solve problems. Regular stakeholder meetings and review days and sharing telephone and email contact details are good ways to ensure cooperation, and avoid difficulties. Meetings should be held at key stages. For example, it is good practice for a meeting to take place with all the relevant agencies before the refugees arrive, so that the government agency responsible for the selection can share information, such as language, medical and other specific needs of the refugee group.

“We have a very good relationship with all our stakeholders, which enables us to overcome challenges which present themselves throughout the year.”

*Helen Gray, Head of Resettlement
Unit, UK Borders Agency*

“You can never start organising too soon before arrival. It is good to get everything possible done before the refugees arrive. Also don’t underestimate how intensive the work is and how much there is, especially at the beginning. Making good contacts with mainstream organisations is very useful for ensuring you can carry out your work and support refugees” Femke Hummel, Integration Service Co-ordinator, Dutch Council for Refugees (DCFR), Netherlands, April 2011

If programmes are properly planned in advance this can ensure the smooth running of the reception and integration phases. Good communication in the planning phase can mean difficulties that may arise later on will be dealt with more effectively.

“We had arranged the housing in advance, so the resettled refugees could move in immediately after arrival, however when we went to the airport to meet the refugees, we were rather shocked to see one of our clients hop down the aeroplane stairs with one leg. We had no idea of this disability and had arranged housing in a 3rd floor flat with no lift.”

Anonymous, service provider

The UK Model of Stakeholder Cooperation

The UK programme resettles 750 refugees per year. Before going on a selection mission the UK Borders Agency plans in advance with stakeholders to ensure there are sufficient housing places available in the relevant local authorities. The UK resettlement programme is funded for one year through central government. This pre-planning operates through the following structures:

National Resettlement Steering Group

Chaired by UK Borders Agency

Agenda - set by participants, meets every three months

Participants - Government, UNHCR, IOM, local authorities, NGOs, health services, benefit services and other relevant resettlement stakeholders as needed

Aim – Provides a structure for stakeholders involved in resettlement to come together nationally and discuss groups to be resettled, policy changes, issues/difficulties experienced, funding and other relevant topics as needed

Resettlement Inter Agency Partnership (RIAP)

Chaired by British Refugee Council

Agenda – Set by participants, meets every three months immediately before the national steering group

Participants – NGOs or civil society organisations with a mission of supporting refugees/asylum seekers

Aim – To give updates on operations and agree strategy in relation to UK government policies; the group also provides a forum for exchange of experiences in resettlement

Local Resettlement Partnership Meetings

Chaired – Generally have a rotating chair, meet every two – three months

Participants - attendance generally includes local authorities, NGOs, health and education services and, depending on need, can be flexible to include police services, social services, employment agency and other specialist support services working with resettled refugees

Aim – To ensure adequate local planning, preparation and ongoing coordination

Working with a variety of partners is not always easy and often demands much motivation, flexibility and understanding of different (and sometimes conflicting) priorities. However, the benefits to service providers and refugees are considerable.

What can happen when there is a lack of co-ordination and planning?

When the Romanian government resettled 38 ethnic Kachin refugees in June 2010, there was little coordination and planning between stakeholders carried out pre-arrival. For example, interpreters had not been organised for the refugees' arrival, as it was assumed that the majority would speak English, having lived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, previously. On arrival, it was clear that proper communication could not be ensured, as there were no interpreters or cultural mediators available. This meant there were misunderstandings between the refugee group and those trying to support them. What developed was a refusal by around two-thirds of the group to accept the integration programme offered by the Romanian authorities and also a refusal to remain in Romania. At the time of writing this situation continues.

Guidelines for Stakeholder Cooperation

- ✓ Be open and inclusive by involving the relevant agencies that come into contact with resettled refugees
- ✓ Identify and agree the different roles of the stakeholders in the programme
- ✓ Agree how the group will operate, including how confidential information will be shared between stakeholders
- ✓ Conflict and disagreements are inevitable when a variety of agencies with different priorities work together; accepting differences and referring to the agreed terms of the group should be the approach
- ✓ Establish clear and regular methods of communication e.g. regular stakeholder meetings, visits, accurate contact details, meeting minutes and agendas

3.3 Different Support Models - Mainstream and Specialised Services

Depending on services available in the country of resettlement, and the size of the programme, countries may use the existing (mainstream) services serving all residents or set up specialised, targeted integration support services for resettled refugees. The best approach is generally a combination of the two, with inbuilt flexibility to meet the needs of the refugee.

Accessing Mainstream Services

Enabling refugees to access existing (mainstream) services that are also used by other residents, such as health, employment, education and social services, can facilitate integration. ‘Mainstreaming’ increases the possibilities for interactions with the receiving community, promotes the social inclusion and integration of resettled refugees and increases the wider community’s understanding of the refugee population. For example, when resettled refugee children attend mainstream schools soon after arrival, it facilitates language learning and helps them make new friends in the community.

However, mainstream services are not always sensitive to the needs and experiences of refugees, which may be very different to those of the wider population. Mainstream service providers may not be used to dealing with people who do not speak the local language, do not understand the system or have different cultural norms. Health services may not have any understanding of the health issues affecting refugees, for example the experience and effects of torture. This can lead to serious difficulties for both the service provider and for the refugees. It is imperative that mainstream services are given the tools and information to provide for refugees. A specialised support service (see caseworker role in the following pages) can help to provide this information and build the capacity of mainstream services to work with refugees.

What kind of capacity-building activities can be of value to mainstream services?

- ✓ **Pre-planning** should include mainstream services from the beginning, sharing information with them so that they are part of the process and can highlight potential problems
- ✓ **Offer refugee awareness training** – so that the service providers can understand what refugees may have experienced before arriving, as well as the importance of cultural differences and refugee rights in the country of resettlement
- ✓ **Working with interpreters** – share information on how to access and work with interpreters. For example, make links in advance with local hospitals and doctors so they know where to find interpreters and how they will be paid for
- ✓ **Identify funding** that may be available to mainstream services, to assist with their new refugee client group
- ✓ **Offer a contact person** in your organisation, whom they can get in touch with if they require specific or specialised information

Specialised Services

During the first phase of resettlement, refugees require intensive and personalised support to navigate the complex systems and services of the resettlement country. When working with

resettled refugees it is useful to consider the different phases of adjustment refugees go through, since these may affect the way they respond to guidance and support, (see diagram).

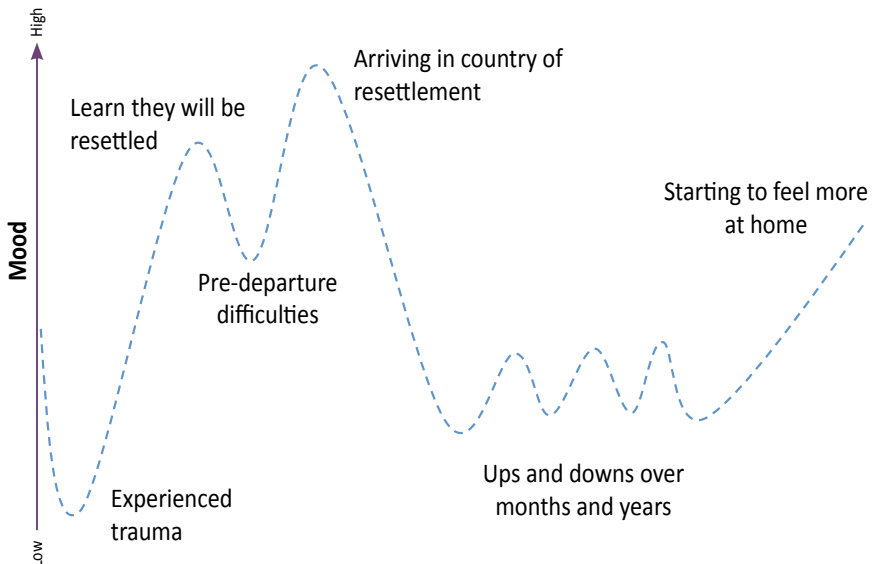
Things to consider working with Resettled Refugees: The Four Stages of Adjustment

The 'honeymoon' stage – This can take place when refugees first arrive and can have the following traits: enthusiasm, fascination, curiosity, excitement and hope for a new life yet also some anxiety regarding the future.

The 'hesitation' stage – This can set in after 4 – 6 months when, in a common mix of homesickness and/or culture shock, refugees hesitate to accept their new resettlement country, specifically its different food, language and cultural ways. They may develop resentment around family reunion and employment expectations, traits can be: isolation, distress, anger/resentment towards support services, sleeplessness and headaches.

The 'overcoming hurdles' stage/coming to terms– Gradually their new country, climate, food and home is accepted and they are starting to make friends and establish contacts; most begin to grasp more of the local language.

The 'home' stage – This is when a refugee begins to feel more at home and more integrated within the local community, speaking the language, accessing education or employment, etc. For some this can take a number of years; unfortunately, a small number may never reach this stage fully.



Based on: 'Count me in! A resource to support ESL students with refugee experience in schools,'
Minister for Education, Literacy Secretariat, Government of South Australia, 2007.

Specialised support services for refugees are normally provided by an NGO or municipality. They are usually time-limited from three months up to three years. While the persons delivering the support have a variety of titles (e.g., caseworkers, support workers, refugee workers, social workers, project workers), for the purposes of this section we will call them caseworkers.

Specialist information and support can be delivered to resettled refugees in a variety of ways, such as one-to-one casework support, using personal integration plans (PIPs), drop-in sessions and group briefings with relevant experts from the community.

It is generally good practice to **phase out the specialised support**, over time, to prevent refugees from becoming dependant. This can be done by reducing the intensiveness of one-to-one support from, for example, once a week to once a month. It is important that refugees understand how, and when, support will end and where they can receive help in the future. Setting a date at which the refugee can no longer call the caseworker is another way to signal the end of special assistance. For more vulnerable cases, it is important to apply flexibility to the phasing out and also be realistic about what can be offered long-term. Appropriate referral to mainstream agencies should be made for follow-up work after the casework support has finished.



Kebebeke, K and Blankevoort, E., (2011) *The Refugee Jackpot A photo book about invited refugees in the Netherlands*, Post Editions, Rotterdam (see bibliography for more information)

3.4 The Role of Caseworkers

Providing support to resettled refugees can include a range of mediation and support roles such as:

- Orientation to the new country
- Acting as a point of reference for other services
- Emotional support
- Referral to relevant agencies
- Advice and information on housing, benefits and other social services
- Mediation between family members and the host community
- Advocacy, support and awareness-raising with mainstream services – see previous page
- Family reunion and legal assistance

Caseworkers need to be aware of cultural differences that may affect the way refugees deal with issues. For example, many refugees come from a cultural background where there is less focus on the individual and more on the family. In such cases it may be the norm for all family members to be involved in decision-making. Accordingly, caseworkers may need to apply a family-centred approach taking into account the needs and experiences of all the family members.

At the heart of every caseworker role is **empowering resettled refugees to be fully independent**. Often tasks are much quicker if completed by the caseworker, such as calling to make doctor's appointments, but it is important that refugees are encouraged to carry out tasks on their own, so they can learn and build confidence for the future. Caseworkers should ask themselves: is it possible for the refugee to do this task themselves? If not, what does the refugee need to learn so that they can do it in the future, and, how can I support their learning?

Defining clear professional boundaries between the refugee and the caseworker is crucial to providing a service that respects and empowers refugees. This can be done by explaining to refugees what a caseworker's role is- and is not -and what is expected of the refugee; a client charter can be a useful tool to assist with this (see annex 4). Clear guidelines should be established for refugees and staff, for example, about contacting the caseworker during working hours, avoiding conversations about the caseworker's family and not accepting gifts, or social invitations, from the refugee.

It is important to establish **clear guidelines for confidentiality** between the caseworker and the client. This could be done through agreeing and signing a confidentiality statement, detailing what information is confidential and also in what instances this confidentiality may be broken e.g. if there is a child protection risk.

Caseworker Profile and Support Needs

Given the variety of roles caseworkers need to perform, the job requires specific skills and experience. This should include experience of working with persons with specific needs and case management, whether in social or educational sectors, (see annex 5 for an example job description). In some countries, such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Sweden, caseworkers are often qualified social workers, with degrees or diplomas in the relevant social work field. In other countries such as the UK and Romania the profession is not subject to specific diplomas, but looks at relevant experience and skills. Training in refugee specific issues should be undertaken by generic staff.

Regular support and supervision is important to maintaining an effective and dedicated staff team. Humanitarian work can be intense and difficult, so helping staff maintain boundaries and deal with problems is critical to the success of any programme. Support can be provided through regular one-to-one supervision meetings, every six to eight weeks, with the manager (see annex 6 for example supervision form) and through regular team meetings, where complex cases can be discussed and possible solutions explored.

Belgium – Experience of Resettlement

Belgium resettled 40 Iraqi and Palestinian refugees from Syria in September 2009, engaging in formal resettlement for the first time and as part of the EU wide joint effort to resettle 10,000 refugees from Iraq³⁸. Since the NGO Caritas was already providing a service to asylum seekers and refugees in Belgium, it developed an integration assistance programme for the resettled refugees.

Interview with Sofie De Mot – Caseworker, Caritas International, Belgium, March 2011

Sofie studied political and social sciences at Leuven University, Belgium, and then went on to take a two year course in social work. She has been working at Caritas since 2007. She began first as an intern and then started paid employment in social assistance, working with asylum seekers and most recently with resettled refugees.

How do you assist the resettled refugees?

When the refugees first arrive we provide intensive guidance and orientation support, by taking them for their appointments so they can become familiar with services in a safe environment. We then assist them to build their own networks in the community in which they live, by acting as a reference linking them to organisations or groups in their local area.

38 ICMC and IRC, (2010), *10,000 Refugees from Iraq: A Report on Joint Resettlement in the European Union*, Belgium.

What are some of the challenges that you have encountered working with resettled refugees?

In the very beginning the expectations of the refugees were very high as some had had very affluent lives in their country with large houses and highly paid jobs. Rather than just ignore the refugees' expectations, we sought to try and understand where their perceptions were coming from, so once we understood we could explain the differences in Belgium and the reality of what it was like.

What advice would you give to other caseworkers taking part in resettlement?

It is really important to properly understand the country in which the refugees have been living and their country of origin, so you can understand their perspective on life. Translators are very important; without them it is very difficult to provide a service, especially when the refugees first arrive. Visiting refugees in their homes is also crucial to supporting them and understanding their environment.

3.5 Different Ways to Provide Support



“Keep in mind in your preparations and work with refugees that not all will have the same skills and experience... You cannot copy and paste the same technique and support will not apply to everyone”

Sabe Amthor Soe, Director, Burma Center, Prague



Personal Integration Plans

Personal Integration Plans (PIP's) are used by many European resettlement countries. A PIP is a plan put together and agreed with the resettled refugee, detailing immediate, mid-range and long-term needs and goals, and a strategy for **becoming independent** (see annex 7 for example PIP). The plan is then reviewed periodically by the refugee and the caseworker to see how these goals are being achieved. A review also helps to identify what further action is needed to achieve the goals. PIP's are a useful tool to show refugees what they have achieved and how far they have come.

PIP's are generally drawn up and agreed between the refugee and the caseworker; however they can be a collaboration between a variety of different organisations. In Finland for example, they are drawn up together with the employment authority, social worker, the refugee and where necessary the health nurse³⁹. In general, they take into account the refugee's educational background, work history and their situation in life. The length of the PIP can depend on how long caseworker support is provided for, this could be anything between

³⁹ *Shaping our Future, A practical guide to the Selection, Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees.*, E.Ekholm, S. Magennis, L. Salmelin (2005) Helsinki, Ministry of Labour, Finland., p 94

one-year (UK) and three years (Sweden). The PIP should provide support for the refugee and can serve as a personal action plan even after casework support has finished.

Group Briefings

Group briefings are an opportunity to deliver the same information to the whole refugee group and for networking with different mainstream services. The topics for group briefings should be guided by the refugees' needs. It may be useful to have some specific briefing sessions for women only, for example on female health issues, or for families. Below is a sample diary of group briefings, based on one developed for a group of Iraqi refugees arriving in the UK:

Group briefing diary		
	Briefing Topic	Briefing Provider
Week One Orientation	Introduction to your NGO – their role – where to go if there is an emergency and your first weeks appointments	NGO providing support service
	Introduction to your housing provider – what to do if you have any problems	Housing agency
	Understanding the health system	Local health nurse
	Understanding your financial benefits	Employment service – providing benefits
Week Two	Accessing education for your children and language classes for you	Education support provider
Week Three	Accessing Employment – part of a series of group workshops on looking for jobs, CV's, interviews	Employment advisor from NGO/ Employment agency
	Understanding the Law and the role of the Police	Police officer plus NGO
Week Four - Eight Week Four - Six	Getting involved in the community – volunteering	Local volunteering agency
	Parenting classes	Local parenting organisation and NGO
	Sexual Health	Health nurse
	Drugs and Alcohol	Drugs and alcohol abuse charity
	Accessing university education	University lecturer

Drop-in Services

Providing a regular ‘drop-in’ location one to three times a week, attended by the caseworker and other relevant services, can provide an opportunity for refugees to seek advice for themselves and to socialise with fellow refugees. Many countries have a drop-in service to pool resources in terms of caseworker time and travel. To enable the participation of single parent families, it is helpful to provide childcare for the drop-ins and group briefings. It is important to use the drop-ins in conjunction with home visits, so that refugees who are unable to leave their accommodation and seek assistance do not miss out.

3.6 Working with Volunteers

In many countries, including Denmark, the Netherlands and the US, volunteers play a vital role in supporting and guiding resettled refugees and assisting them to integrate, by providing a personal link with the host community. Volunteers in the receiving community can offer specialised integration support, often on a one-to-one basis, investing time and an assortment of skills and experience. They can have a variety of backgrounds, such as students, retired teachers, social workers and church parishioners. Employers with social responsibility schemes may also allow employees time off to ‘give back to the community’ through volunteering (see the national centre for volunteering in the UK guide on how to set up employee volunteering schemes⁴⁰).

Denmark – Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

DRC has a network of over 4500 volunteers in 71 out of Denmark’s 98 municipalities. The volunteers receive payment for travel and can attend courses offered by DRC. The volunteers represent a broad spectrum of society from retired persons to students. They carry out a variety of roles including language training, sports and cultural activities, advice to refugees (for those with a legal or social background) and orientation to the new area and the refugees’ homes. The DRC and their volunteers work closely with municipalities before and after arrival to ensure a warm welcome and ongoing support for the refugees.

Volunteers can be used in many different roles, including:

- Language support
- One-to-one mentoring for employment and befriending
- Orientation to the local area
- Social guidance, e.g. accompanying refugees to appointments
- Computer, art, sport classes

⁴⁰ National Centre for Volunteering (2001), *Employee Volunteering the Guide*, National Centre for Volunteering, UK.

Volunteers need proper training, guidance and support, normally by a paid member of staff. Volunteers must be clear on their roles and, as with caseworkers, boundaries and confidentiality are key issues to address.

“There were two young Somali women aged 22 and 26 yrs, their Mother had died early in the year. They were very worried and insecure and calling their volunteer, even in the middle of night with questions that were not urgent. The volunteer became exasperated and did not want to support them. So I spoke to the refugees and asked them to stop calling in the middle of the night and informed them exactly what times they could call and to call the main office. We then increased the support to two visits a week. On one of the visits I attended with the volunteer, and on the other the volunteer went alone. The refugees are starting to call less and gain confidence; the volunteer is also much happier.”

Femke Hummel, Volunteer Coordinator, Dutch Council for Refugees, 2011

Refugees as Volunteers

Refugees who participate in volunteering can gain important experience, a sense of self-worth and opportunities for networking with the local community. Refugees may want to use volunteering as a way to gain work experience in the country of resettlement, make links with other people and organisations and gain an insight into the new country’s ‘way of doing things’ (see Chapter 8). When recruiting refugees as volunteers, it is important to apply the same rules as for other volunteers and caseworkers. However, if they are working with resettled refugees it is imperative to be sensitive to the possibilities of conflict of interest within the refugee community. There is also the risk that working with other refugees could remind them of past traumatic experiences.

‘WANTED: Part Time Hero’

The refugee assisting NGO Dutch Council for Refugees noticed that their volunteer network was ageing (over 55yrs) and it was becoming more difficult to recruit new volunteers. In 2011 they started Wanted: Part Time Hero a campaign to recruit volunteers under the age of 55 and from more ethnically diverse backgrounds. The Council launched a website on which part time heroes (volunteers) could apply on line for volunteering, indicating areas they like to work in (organisation, language coaching, computing, finance) and how much time they can make available.

See www.parttimeheld.nl

An interview with Femke Hummel, Integration Service Co-ordinator, Dutch Council for Refugees (DCFR), Netherlands, April 2011

The Netherlands resettles 500 refugees per year; for many years they have first been housed in a centralised reception centre in Amersfoort for up to six months and then dispersed to housing in municipalities around the Netherlands. In 2011 Amersfoort will close and refugees will be directly housed in the municipalities.

Femke studied a four- year social work course at university; she spent her last year working with Dutch Council for Refugees (DCFR) as an intern. On graduation she started her current job as Integration Service Co-ordinator which she has been doing for two years. She guides and supports 25 volunteers and interns in the municipalities of Emmen and Coeverden, Netherlands, where they are working with 30 resettled refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia and Burundi.

What do the volunteers do in the Netherlands?

The volunteers provide the social guidance for resettled refugees over a period of 24 months, assisting them to understand the local community, applying for support and referring them to activities. The volunteers begin with visiting the refugees in their home twice a week and this is then reduced to once a week and then just to the weekly information drop- ins.

How do you train and support the volunteers?

Volunteers receive a two-day induction training, where they learn about the background of refugees and the method with which DCFR work with. I hold regular volunteer meetings, and I am available for queries and questions from the volunteers. Before the refugees arrive I hold more intensive meetings with volunteers to give them information about the group arriving.

What are some of the challenges encountered, working with volunteers?

The service is very dependent on having enough volunteers to assist the refugees arriving and staying in the municipality. This is an ongoing challenge. Volunteers want to assist refugees to build a new life in the Netherlands and they are very passionate and dedicated. For this reason it has been important to ensure that volunteers do not try and do too much for refugees and wear themselves out. Also volunteers need more guidance than an employee as it is not their job and they do not always know exactly what to do in situations.

3.7 Working with Interpreters

Communication with refugees in a language they understand is paramount. Much distress and many problems can occur without effective communication. It is important to budget

“Considerations for using an interpreter/cultural mediator were only done three months after arrival... a number of women who gave birth in Romania required complex medical assistance and interpreters were not available at the hospital.”

Jesuit - Refugee Service, Romania

appropriately and plan for the provision of interpretation. The effects of refugees not receiving information that they understand can be difficult to repair: trust can be broken through miscommunication; rumours can spread quickly and misunderstandings become fact amongst the refugee group. The provision of interpreting is therefore extremely important- for both the service provider

and the refugee. A lack of interpreting can have a serious impact on important aspects of integration, administrative processes and healthcare in particular.

Fundamental to planning for interpretation is **knowing which language** and dialect the refugee will speak. Some refugees may have acquired other languages if they have been living for long periods outside of their country of origin. The general rule is to avoid making assumptions and work closely with agencies pre-arrival to get accurate information on language.

Finding interpreters for less common languages can be a challenge, so it is important to spread the net wide when trying to locate interpreters. Persons speaking the same language as the refugee may be located by contacting relevant community groups, universities, restaurants and shops owned, or frequented by, people from regions similar to those of the refugees arriving.

Funding Interpretation

Countries in Europe differ widely as to the provision of interpreters in public services. In some countries, such as Sweden, the integration law requires that interpretation services be made available for all public services. Similarly, in the UK and Norway health services are obliged to provide refugees with interpreters, and they are centrally funded for such provision. In France and Romania, funding for interpreters is not provided by the central government, as there is no provision for such.

Training Interpreters

Before using interpreters, especially inexperienced ones, it is essential to carry out a training session with them; this can help to clarify competencies, as well as prevent the escalation of difficulties later on. It is also important to note that being bi-lingual does not necessarily equip someone to interpret. Many other factors come into play, including education and social background. Training should cover the basics on how to interpret (there are different technical approaches) and the key principles of interpreting, including:

- Confidentiality – what it means in practice
- Impartiality – essential boundaries, and what to do if there is a conflict of interest
- The role of an interpreter e.g. interpreting exactly what the person says, not adding words, or telling the refugee what to say
- Preparing for the linguistic context of

interpretation, i.e. speaking both languages can sometimes not be enough; for example, interpreting medical or administrative matters may require that interpreters have knowledge of a specific vocabulary group in both languages

“Interpreters are very important in the process and training them properly in how to do social work is very important. They are not just translating language, but also content and there is a very fine line there”

*Sabe Amthor Soe,
Director Burma Center Prague*

Guidelines for Working with Interpreters

- ✓ Always brief the interpreter about the session
- ✓ Ensure that there is no conflict of interest with the refugee e.g. are they related?
- ✓ Check that they speak the same dialect as the refugee
- ✓ Arrange the seating so that you are facing the refugee and you can talk directly to him or her
- ✓ Introduce the interpreter’s role to the refugee – purely as translator and not an information giver
- ✓ Check that the refugee is comfortable with the interpreter e.g. is there a conflict of interest -is the interpreter a friend or relative? Would the refugee prefer a female interpreter? Remember that it may be difficult for the refugee to express negative feelings about the interpreter in their presence
- ✓ Pause regularly after 2 – 3 short sentences to allow the interpreter to translate
- ✓ If at any point it becomes clear the interpreter is not translating what is being said, stop the session and speak to the interpreter about this
- ✓ It can be disturbing for interpreters to listen to refugees disclosing traumatic events. Therefore it is good practice to have regular de-briefing sessions with interpreters; this could be in one to one or group settings
- ✓ During the session be sensitive to the interpreter’s needs e.g. for long sessions they may need a break
- ✓ Do not use relatives to interpret, especially a child as they should not be placed in such a position of responsibility, and impartiality cannot be guaranteed

3.8 Monitoring and Evaluation of Services

It is important to know whether services are meeting the needs of refugees. One way to find out is to organize forums or group consultations for refugees to provide feedback about their needs and the services available. This is a useful method to identify problems, particularly gaps between policy and practice. Refugees should be at the heart of service planning and ongoing development of the programme. There are a variety of ways in which feedback can be gathered, such as:

- **Feedback forms** – after one-to-one sessions or briefings, using formats suitable to the client group e.g. symbols for refugees who may be illiterate
- **Complaints procedures** – making available a procedure through which refugees can make complaints that will be investigated and acted upon
- **Group consultations with refugees** – half-day group feedback sessions on the programme; these could be held every six months (for agenda example see annex 8)
- **Team and stakeholder meetings** – gathering feedback from different service providers
- **Research and evaluations**

The value of gathering feedback is that it holds service providers accountable to the beneficiaries of the service, thus ensuring quality and a service which meets the needs of refugees.

It is important that refugees giving feedback are told what will be done with the information to avoid unrealistic expectations. It is also important to report back to refugees on the outcomes and actions arising from their comments, so they can see the value of feedback and how it can improve services.



Akoi Bazzie
Age: 33yrs

Akoi was 14 when civil war erupted in Liberia. He fled to Guinea where he lived in a refugee camp for 12 years. In the camp he worked with the UNHCR camp management team, liaising between refugees and the local Guinean communities.

In 2004, Akoi was resettled to Sheffield, UK, as part of the first formal UK resettlement programme. He studied to improve his English and took on various volunteer posts. Since July 2006 he has been working full time for the British Refugee Council as a community development officer for the resettlement programme. In 2007, Akoi established the

Sheffield Resettled Refugees' Community Forum; an umbrella organisation that brings together all resettled refugee communities in Sheffield. He is also a parent governor at a local School and was nominated to the Board of trustees of a community Forum.

REFUGEE PROFILE

Why is community development important in resettlement?

Community Development (CD) is about providing the bridge to link the receiving community with the refugees, with CD workers often acting as mediators. It is about facilitating the independence of refugees and enabling them to work together on their own. CD also enables newly resettled refugees to learn from the experiences of previously resettled refugees, to avoid the more recent arrivals from having to go through the same mistakes.

What are the biggest challenges working in community development?

The biggest recurring challenge is cultural differences. New groups arrive with their own cultural values and the CD worker must facilitate the refugees to both understand and respect the cultural norms of their new

resettlement country whilst appreciating their own cultural differences. Another recurring challenge is the management of expectations. CD workers can approach the challenge of managing expectations by assisting resettled refugees to understand the aspects of their new life in a more practical way, for example educating refugees about the university system by introducing them to lecturers who can explain it.



How do you ensure that refugees are involved with building their own community groups?

It is important to meet with resettled refugees individually and explore what skills they have and what they want to do and get involved with. Many resettled refugees have come from a conflict situation and within the group there may be conflicts that have persisted, so if you put them together without first finding out what people want to do then this conflict can become unmanageable. .

Do you have any advice for others setting up resettlement and community development programmes?

It is wrong when CD (workers) make decisions for refugees. Instead, they should act in consultation with the refugees from the beginning, this is the only way of engaging and empowering refugees.

Part III - Practices in Action

Chapter 4: Building Community Support and Strengthening Refugee Communities

Refugees' experiences and outlook on integration are largely determined by the local communities in which they live. These provide the framework to go to school, look for work and do their daily shopping. It is important that when refugees arrive, interactions with the community are positive. Refugee workers can contribute to this by acting as a bridge to the receiving community and helping local communities understand about their new neighbours⁴¹.

Community development is about empowering people to come together to identify and address collective concerns, foster social support and self-help. Groups can form because of a shared national or ethnic background or simply a common interest. Refugee community groups help to build self-confidence, a sense of belonging and social networks within their new country.

In countries like Canada, the UK and the United States, it is widely acknowledged that community development programmes are an important aspect of integration. Experience shows that community development can promote tolerance and diversity. The existence of refugee community groups can provide an excellent platform for interaction with local groups and service providers. Community development can play an important role in creating opportunities for refugees and local communities to meet and participate in social activities - as peers and equals. The list of potential activities is endless: football, music, dance, drama, art, sewing and cooking. Bringing people together helps to break down barriers and create lasting friendships.

This chapter provides concrete examples of how to work with receiving communities to prepare them for refugee resettlement and develop understanding of refugee issues to combat negative images of refugees. It also shows an example of how to strengthen refugee communities and promote links between refugees and their host communities. Both experienced and new resettlement countries encounter similar challenges in community-building among refugees, raising public awareness and linking refugees and receiving communities.

“Resettlement is a good anchor for building communities”

*Jon Lord,
Bolton at Home, UK*

⁴¹ In some countries this is also referred to as cultural mediation.

Therefore the examples given can be applied in different national contexts and have been chosen from countries dealing with large groups of refugees as well as very small groups.

4.1 Preparing the Community for the Arrival of Refugees

“The ‘welcome’ phase (arrival and one month after arrival) is the most vital for receiving resettled refugees since it has a very long-lasting impression in the minds of the refugees.”
Burmese refugee, Finland

Preparing the receiving community for the arrival of refugees is an important part of resettlement, as it ensures that refugees feel welcome and that communities understand and feel part of the resettlement. There are simple ways to inform communities about groups arriving, such as pre-arrival information sessions. Such sessions are not only low in cost but can develop partnerships and ways for communities to work together in the future.

A Practice in Canada

Pre-Arrival Community Preparedness, Operation Swaagatem-Bhutanese Case Study-Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS of BC)

Project period: 2009 – ongoing

Location: Vancouver, Canada

Funding: Metropolis BC and ISS of BC

In 2008, Canada agreed to resettle 5000 Bhutanese refugees over a four-year- period from camps in Nepal, for the first time. The NGO, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS of BC), decided to organise a pre-arrival community planning forum. The aim of the planning forum was to inform the community and mainstream services about the arrival of the Bhutanese refugees, to involve them in the process and coordinate a welcome for the newly arriving refugees. In preparation, forum organisers consulted the local Nepalese community and gathered information on the Bhutanese group.

Ninety participants from NGOs, local authorities, government, health authorities, schools, former refugees, faith based organisations and churches were involved in the forum. Forum activities included small group discussions on themes such as: where to house the refugees, available youth programmes, strategies to engage the local community and how to ensure a welcoming environment (see annex 9 for the forum agenda).

Identifying the Need

Prior to the Bhutanese group, British Columbia had resettled Karen refugees from Burma/

Myanmar. At that time, there had been a lack of communication with local stakeholders and limited advance notice was given to schools of their arrival. Due to the lack of pre-arrival planning, culturally responsive services were not put in place and there was negative media reporting, in the absence of accurate information being passed to the media.

Achievements

As a result of the forum, welcome signs were put up in schools and the local Mayor wrote a personalised welcome letter to each of the refugees. Public education workshops were held through churches and other faith communities, for the local community to learn more about the Bhutanese refugees, and also to recruit volunteers to support refugees. As part of the forum ISS of BC also developed links with the local media, which published various articles on the Bhutanese arrivals⁴². The media travelled to Nepal to visit a Bhutanese refugee camp and interview a family, which they then followed up during their first year in Vancouver. A survey of outcomes of Bhutanese resettlement experiences has been carried out, documenting the pre-arrival activities and the initial resettlement outcomes⁴³, with an action plan for future use.

4.2 Raising Awareness in the Community and Combating Negative Images

Raising awareness and understanding in the local community about who their new neighbours are, where they have come from and how it is possible to assist them, is important for integration and community relations. Informing the community about the background and needs of refugee groups, and facilitating interactions between refugees and the receiving community can help to dispel myths, break down cultural barriers and motivate people to volunteer to support refugees.

A Practice in the Czech Republic

Awareness Raising in the Community – Burma Center Prague

Project period: 2009 - 2010

Location: Czech Republic

Other partners/actors: Municipalities, government, community churches, schools and refugees

Funding: A grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism intermediated by the Civil Society Development Foundation (NROS) in the Czech Republic.

42 Jane Armstrong, The Bhutanese journey: From refugees to pioneers ,Jul. 17, 2009, Saturday's Globe and Mail, Vancouver

43 Sherrell, K., Friesen, C., Hyndman, J. & Shrestha, S. (2011), *One Nation, One People to Operation Swaagatem: Bhutanese Refugees in Coquitlam*, ISS of BC, Canada.

In 2008 the Czech Republic engaged in a small programme to resettle around 40 Burmese refugees a year, as part of a three-year pilot project⁴⁴. The Czech Burma Center (BCP), an independent NGO located in Prague, ran a series of educational activities to raise awareness in the community and promote better understanding of newly arrived refugees and their needs. They gave lectures to social workers, government officials and other representatives from NGOs, churches, schools and the general public who had contact with the refugees. General information was provided, along with documentaries, discussions and practical exercises to inform participants about the current situation in Burma and its impact on the people living there. They also took part in national and local media activities with radio and television.⁴⁵ Several different broadcasts covered the refugees' arrival with follow-up stories, to give further information to the public about refugees. The NGO also created leaflets in Czech titled 'Do you know your new neighbour?' covering a short background on Burma, the ethnic origins of refugees and resettlement in the Czech Republic, etc. These were then distributed both 'door to door', in community centres and in town halls.

Identifying the Need

The Czech Republic has limited experience of receiving refugees, and the small local communities knew little or nothing about Burma/Myanmar. The public and service providers therefore needed help to understand the refugees' situation, so that they would be more accepting and support their integration. As the Burmese groups had limited knowledge of what to expect in the Czech Republic and were very shy about asking for help and describing their needs, preparing the community was all the more important.

Achievements

The awareness raising activities were well received and assisted in making strong links with the local authorities, service providers and refugees.

Challenges

The Burma Centre did not receive funding from the government and was thus limited in how much it could achieve. However, they demonstrate that with imagination and creativity it is possible to make a difference with even very limited resources.

44 In October 2008 23 Burmese refugees were resettled in the Czech Republic; in February 2009 146 Burmese refugees in July/August 2010 39 Burmese refugees.

45 Radio Praha, Burmese refugees seek to make a home for themselves in the Czech Republic 18-03-2010 10:56, Chris Johnstone, 2010, Prague.

Czech Practice – Working with Churches

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren – Nove Mesto, Morave

Churches can play a vital role in supporting refugees and offering integration assistance. In the Czech Republic, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has been very active in welcoming the newly arrived Burmese refugees. The church heard about refugees from media reports, leaflets and from a session with the Burma Center Prague. Church members decided to get in contact with the refugees to welcome them to their town. They assisted the refugees by giving them material support (clothes, shoes, utensils, furniture, etc.) and also helped them with practical things, such as orientation in the town, shopping, cooking, medical care, and Czech language training.

A Practice in Hungary

Teaching Tolerance in Secondary Schools - Medenék Association

Project period: 2008 – 2009 (1 year)

Location: Budapest, Hungary

Other partners/actors: local schools

Funding: European Refugee Fund (ERF)

Medenék led this project to educate secondary school children about accepting differences in society and promoting tolerance, towards refugees. Medenék teachers delivered classes with refugees, making presentations on the background of refugees, what happens to refugees in Hungary and some of the difficulties they face. Then, the refugee would present his or her personal experience, their journey to Hungary, what they expected and the reality of how it has been for them.

Medenék also set up a web page for the project for students and teachers to use, featuring information about refugees, famous refugees in Hungary and links to different teaching tools to be used in classes.

Identifying the Need

The refugee population in Hungary is relatively small and new. As a result, there is limited understanding of why refugees come to Hungary, which has led to a lack of tolerance towards refugees. Therefore it was important to educate local children about refugees to promote understanding and acceptance, and prevent the manifestation of negative attitudes.

Achievements

Meeting refugees face-to-face helped reduce negativity towards foreigners. The schools involved (eight classes totalling 205 students) noticed a positive difference in students' understanding of

refugees' journeys and reasons for being in Hungary. The value of working with children is that they are receptive to new issues and they can pass on what they have learned to their parents.

Challenges

Initially it was envisaged that there would be 50 interactive classes, however due to some difficulties with the authorities, only eight classes were able to run. In addition, although the project was well-received, funding was limited to one year.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT JOURNEYS FROM AFRICA: DESTINATION HUNTER

*Community Development in Australia*⁴⁶

Aiming to reduce racism towards refugees from Africa, this community development project was directed by the Northern Settlement Service (Ltd.), Newcastle, New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Nineteen refugee ambassadors prepared presentations and developed skills for speaking to community and school audiences. Maps of Africa were distributed, information about refugees' backgrounds/cultures was imparted and the roles of refugee organisations/stakeholders were explained. Each ambassador was accompanied by a volunteer mentor who provided assistance with logistics/material, transportation and encouragement. Journeys from Africa simultaneously launched a multi-media competition entitled Walk in my Shoes that asked children who had seen the refugee ambassadors' presentations, to reflect on what it means to be a refugee. The competition allowed students to become involved and attracted other schools' interest in hosting a presentation. Entries came in the form of CDs, PowerPoint presentations, posters, stories, poems and worksheets. The media was used to draw attention to the competition.

Support

The Journeys from Africa: Destination Hunter project received funding from the Department of Immigration's Living in Harmony programme allowing for a part-time project coordinator. It also partnered with the city council, department of education, Sudanese community and the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Results

The local media became interested in refugee backgrounds, refugees gained confidence and useful skills, presentations were given to 2,617 people in schools and 500 people from community organisations.

⁴⁶ Australian Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2008), *Empowering Refugees, A Good Practice Guide to Humanitarian Resettlement*, Barton, Australia, p107-110.

Feedback

'Newcastle community member, Michael Sims, said that hearing about the refugees' experiences had resulted in him not only understanding much more about their cultures and the difficulties they have undergone, it even resulted in him examining his own identity and what he represented... The presenters felt this project had brought much joy, awareness and understanding to both themselves and the wider community. They agreed that the building of mutual respect through this positive exposure was lasting, and was something people would not forget.'⁴⁷

A Practice in Germany

Save Me Campaign - Bavarian Refugee Council, Munich Refugee Council, Refugio, Muncher Kammerspiele (Munich Intimate Theatre)

Project Period: 2008 - ongoing

Location: Munich, Germany

Other partners/actors: City of Munich and the Green Party

Funding: Munich municipality

In 2009 the German government decided to accept 2,500 Iraqi refugees for resettlement under an ad-hoc agreement with UNHCR, as part of a joint EU response to the Iraqi refugee situation⁴⁸.

This resettlement, the first such programme in Germany, was partly the result of the 'Save Me' campaign which began in 2008. The campaign, which coincided with Munich's 850th anniversary, aimed to persuade the city council to resettle 850 refugees. The campaign grew from a theatre play about winning a ticket to Europe. The campaigners used Facebook and set up an easy to use website with a petition for members of the public to sign, with a photo of themselves and a comment⁴⁹ showing their solidarity with the *Save Me campaign* and the resettlement of refugees to Germany. Those who joined the campaign were ordinary people including students, hairdressers, businessmen and retired persons. To counter arguments from the city that there was not enough financial and/or human support for resettlement, those who signed up expressed their willingness to assist the refugees with their reception and integration. On the day the 850th volunteer registered, the Green Party submitted a supporting resolution to Munich City Council, which was approved unanimously. Linked to the resolution, the City of Munich committed to provide housing and social assistance for the refugees.

47 Ibid. Australian Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship, p110.

48 CL08-228EN 28 November 2008, Brussels - Council of the European Union 2987th JUSTICE and HOME AFFAIRS Council meeting, Conclusions on the reception of Iraqi refugees.

49 www.save-me-kampagne.de. See also ICMC and IRC, (2010), *10,000 Refugees from Iraq: A Report on Joint Resettlement in the European Union*, Belgium.

In March 2009, 127 Iraqi refugees were welcomed to Munich. The campaign had attracted wide media attention, which motivated volunteers to assist with the refugees' settlement. To date, approximately 100 volunteers have been involved in the

They (Save Me volunteers) brought us flowers at the airport when we arrived and said welcome. They give us a hand to find apartments and found people who tutor my children for school... it isn't just us, they have helped all the families in Munich.

Waleed Al-Sabbagh, Iraqi refugee, Germany

project in Munich, 30 of which assist families who moved out of the reception centre.⁵⁰ The city granted the *Save Me campaign* a part-time volunteer manager to coordinate volunteers and match them with Iraqi refugees. Volunteers assisted refugees in several ways: help in finding housing, tutoring refugee children after-school and teaching German to adults.

Achievements

The campaign has been so successful in raising awareness of resettlement in the community, that it is now active in 56 different cities nationwide and over 62 groups and 1015 individual supporters signed up to the campaign.

Challenges

Although refugees arrived in 2009, finding adequate housing continues to be a major challenge. The housing market in Munich is especially difficult and volunteers have had to invest

considerable time in finding property owners willing to rent to refugees. As in other European countries, some of the Iraqi refugees have found adjusting to their new life difficult, coming to terms with what they have lost and their new standard of living, often below that which they were accustomed too. As a result some have refused the housing proposed to them. Being confronted with the dissatisfaction of some of the refugees has at times been difficult for the volunteers who had made great efforts. Providing refugees with realistic information about the German housing market and its limitations before they arrived might have reduced such experiences.



© Münchner Flüchtlingsrat, 2009

⁵⁰ Iraqis resettled to Germany through the ad-hoc resettlement programme in 2009 and 2010 initially stayed at a reception centre in Friedland called Grenzdurchgangslager für Spätaussiedler which was originally designed to receive Jewish and Eastern European refugees.

A Practice in Finland

SPiRiT – Finnish Red Cross

Project period: 2010 - 2011

Location: Satakunta District, Finland

Other partners/actors: FRC Häme & Varsinais-Suomi Districts, Regional Centres for Economic Development, the Department of Transport and Environment in Satakunta, Pirkanmaa, Häme and Varsinais-Suomi

Funding: European Refugee Fund (ERF), Regional Councils and Finnish Red Cross

The Spirit project, led by the Finnish Red Cross, encourages municipalities to be more open to receiving refugees by confronting negative attitudes towards foreigners and raising community awareness about refugees. To do this the project has developed civic participation through volunteering activities related to refugee reception and integration; promoted cooperation between local NGOs and authorities and clarified stakeholders' mandates and responsibilities.

The project has developed guidelines for volunteer activities in reception centres, established a volunteer network and developed support activities for refugees. The project has attracted media attention through awareness-raising events in schools and information seminars on resettlement for municipalities. They have developed a training package to raise awareness about the issues refugees face and how to best respond to refugees' needs.

Identifying the Need

In Finland, there is no obligation for municipalities to receive resettled refugees. Satakunta, a Finnish District, noticed that, as a reaction to an increase in asylum-seekers, fewer localities seemed willing to take part in resettling refugees. This created a backlog in the resettlement process, with refugees staying up to two years longer in the country of asylum⁵¹ and, upon arrival, spending longer periods in a reception centre waiting to be housed. These delays hinder the integration of those refugees when they finally arrive and, in the meantime, increase their exposure to risks in the country of asylum. It was also important to combat the negative media and public perceptions about refugees and other foreigners in Finland.

Challenges

Working with cities was challenging due to the highly politicised arena, especially in the run-up to elections (Spring 2011), especially with a right wing party with anti-immigration policies gaining support. In addition, the project covered a large geographical area requiring extensive travel. There were also major delays of an administrative nature at the municipal level.

⁵¹ In November 2010 there was a backlog of 200 cases of refugees awaiting resettlement to Finland out of Rwanda.

A Practice in Australia

Living Spirit: Muslim Women and Human Rights Forum: the right to participate in social change - Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Project Period: September 2006

Location: Preston, Victoria, Australia

Other partners/actors: Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria and was officially supported by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia, the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Islamic Girls' and Women's Group, the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, the Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition and Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE.

Funding: Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship, under the National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security.

Over 140 women and girls from a variety of different cultural backgrounds attended this one-day interactive forum⁵², aiming to:

- Promote harmony and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims
- Develop strategies to combat religious and racial discrimination and vilification against women
- Provide an effective way of making Muslim women's voices heard and for them to express their concerns, needs and aspirations
- Increase understanding of legal protections against discrimination and vilification in Australia

Identifying the Need

The forum was a response to findings of the Commission's Ismaḫ Report⁵³, which stated that women, especially those wearing forms of religious dress, most acutely feel the impact of racial and religious discrimination against Arab and Muslim Australians. They also found in their consultations with women that most incidents of racism raised were not reported to the police or other government authorities, due to fear of victimisation, lack of trust in the authorities, and a lack of knowledge about the law and complaints procedures.

Achievements

Through the forum participants developed a number of strategies. These included educating the Muslim community about anti-discrimination laws, e.g., where to go to make complaints and report crimes, and improving the access to complaints procedures through the provision of interpreters and checklists to support complaints.

⁵² A full report on the project is available on the Commission's website at: www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/livingspirit.

⁵³ http://www.hreoc.gov.au/racial_discrimination/isma/report/index.html

Extracts from the Living Spirit Forum Agenda - Workshop titles

'How I can, NOT why I can't?'

Why should I make a complaint and how to cope with crisis

What are the complaints procedures/mechanisms available? Where can you go for help? How can the complaints process be improved? Why is it important to report incidents?

'I'm not racist but...' Confronting negative stereotypes and misconceptions

'Image vs. Reality – how to answer the hard questions'

How can you combat negative stereotyping? What are the FAQs that you need to know the answers to? How do you respond to basic questions, e.g. 'why do you wear the hijab?' 'Why are Muslim women oppressed?' 'Why are all terrorists Muslim?' 'What does Islam say about terrorism?'

'Educate a woman, educate a nation'

The importance of combating negative stereotypes

Using a role play and examples of existing stereotypes of Muslims and non-Muslims; how accurate are these stereotypes? Have you ever used these stereotypes? Confronting your own prejudices and how can you combat negative stereotypes?

4.3 Working With the Media

The media can be very significant in shaping public opinion towards refugees. Radio, television and newspapers can help inform and educate, or can reinforce prejudice and create fear and hostility. Those planning and implementing resettlement programmes should consider how best to engage with the media given local circumstances. It is also important to consider how to take advantage of the internet and the new social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

When engaged directly and, given the correct information, the media can be a crucial ally for informing communities about refugees so that they are properly welcomed. When used against newcomers, the media can spread false information and promote prejudice.

Some municipalities decide not to promote refugee resettlement in the media due to fears of arousing negative public opinions. For example, when the city of Bradford, UK, first resettled a group of Rohingya refugees, the municipality requested that there be no media

reporting. Conversely, in the Czech Republic and Portugal there was much media reporting through television and radio interviews when they first resettled refugees.

Resettlement often provides an ideal opportunity to engage with the media to promote a positive image of migration, which allows people to feel proud that their countries are offering protection to refugees.

Below are some useful tips on how to engage with the media:

- ✓ The local press is highly influential and relationships should be cultivated, remember that the national press often picks up on local stories
- ✓ Build relationships with journalists; ensure that you are seen as a reliable and credible source of information
- ✓ Identify case studies and human-interest stories, which are attractive to the media
- ✓ Develop key messages and brief reporters on these and the background context of the refugees arriving
- ✓ Identify a media spokesperson
- ✓ Refugees can be powerful advocates; provide support and training to refugees to enable them to speak for themselves
- ✓ Make sure that refugees consent to any personal information being shared with the media

4.4 Strengthening Refugee Communities

Assisting refugees to build their own community groups, networks and organisations can promote longer-term integration. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) not only offer a rich source of support for newly arrived refugees, but also can be useful to build links with the local community. RCOs are often organised along national or ethnic lines. Some groups are open to refugees of all nationalities, the refugee experience being the uniting factor. Some groups may be for women only; providing an important opportunity for women to speak for themselves, create support networks and address their own needs as women who are also refugees. Community development work with refugee women is particularly important as women are often very isolated, caring for children on their own and without the social and community support networks that existed in their countries of origin. RCOs can also be organised around particular activities and interests. For example, they can include singing or dance groups, homework clubs, language classes and campaigns. Given the diversity of refugee communities, establishing such groups does not come without its challenges. However, if common goals can be identified, any differences can be overcome and such groups can play a vital role in integration.

A Practice in the UK

The Gateway Protection Refugees' Community Forum –

“When we are together we are one”

Project period: September 2007 - ongoing

Location: Sheffield, UK

Other partners/actors: Local organisations, local authorities, Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs), tenant groups, schools, churches, morgues, community centres and forums, sports/leisure clubs.

Funding: Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS), Sheffield City Council and British Refugee Council

The Gateway Protection Refugees' Community Forum was set up to bring together the cross-section of resettled refugees living in Sheffield, UK. Liberian, Congolese, Karen, Burmese, Somali and Iraqi refugees all contribute to the Forum to share their experiences, address common issues, find support, and build relationships across cultural divides. The Forum meets every month in facilities offered by a local community association. The forum has over 400 members and a management committee, which reflects the diverse demographic of the resettled refugee community in Sheffield. They have a formal constitution and a bank account and have developed an equal opportunities and child protection policy.

Achievements

Sixteen community groups have been formed in Sheffield through the forum. They are established under three umbrella community organisations: the Karen Community Association (KCA), the Liberian Organization of Sheffield (LOS) and the Iraqi Community in Sheffield. One of these groups is the very successful Zeela women's choir, made up of resettled Liberian refugees, who have performed around the UK at various events.



Zeela Choir, Sheffield © Bazzie, UK

Over the past four years the Forum has organised various Refugee Week celebratory events, including a very successful football tournament with refugee and local community teams, a five year anniversary event for the UK's Resettlement Programme and a women's international cooking event; including publishing a recipe book. The Forum officially supported Sheffield as the UK's first City of

Sanctuary⁵⁴. It produces regular newsletters and has been successful in a number of funding applications, and fundraising activities to support homeless people and Burma's cyclone victims.

Challenges

Funding is always a challenge for the forum; it relies on small community funders which are under pressure. Inevitably there are sometimes differences of opinion and disagreements as to how to move forward, given the diversity of the group. However, members of the forum work together to resolve such disagreements.

Top Tips for Building Community Support and Strengthening Refugee Communities

- ✓ It is important to consult service providers and other stakeholders and inform receiving communities before refugees arrive, giving background information on the refugee group and opportunities to explore ways of welcoming refugees.
- ✓ Support and develop the skills of refugees to speak to groups, in schools and the media. If refugees agree to share their stories, it is important to ensure that the audience is prepared, boundaries are set, the session is guided and that both the refugee(s) and the audience are properly supported through what can be an emotional process.
- ✓ Use a variety of different media tools, including television, radio, newspaper, Facebook and leaflets to raise awareness about refugee groups' experiences.
- ✓ Find and create opportunities for refugees and local people to meet and take part in shared social activities such as sport, music, dance or cooking.
- ✓ Encourage refugees to take part in volunteering activities in their new communities.
- ✓ Find ways to support the development of refugee community groups, as a means of promoting self-help, social networks and as a platform for interaction with local groups and organisations.
- ✓ Help refugee groups to identify and agree their own aims and purpose and a constitution, to set a framework to develop the group.

⁵⁴ City of Sanctuary is a movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Its goal is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the country which are proud to be places of safety, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities, refer to their website for more information <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/>



Florence Jessey
Myklebust; Age: 34yrs

During the civil war in Liberia, Florence was forced to flee to neighbouring Ghana. She lived near Accra in the Buduburam refugee camp for 14 years where living conditions were difficult, however she was able to complete her secondary and university education. With her life on standstill and no hope for the future, she was selected for resettlement with her father, four sisters and son and was resettled to Norway. For her, it was a “dream come true”.

Florence now works as a teacher in a secondary school in Norway, which she really enjoys as it makes her feel part of the social environment.

REFUGEE PROFILE

How was your arrival in Norway?

When we finally arrived in Norway, the transition was smooth. A few days after arrival, we started learning the Norwegian language. That was the greatest challenge because language is the key that opens many doors and I was determined to do my best because of my desire to further my education. Another challenge was getting to know people to enable me to practice the language. Norwegians are shy and a bit reserved so it took a while before I made friends and had the opportunity to practice the language and learn more about the Norwegian culture.

Was pre-departure cultural orientation useful?

Cultural orientation was very important and I am fortunate to have had cultural orientation for Norway delivered by IOM in Ghana in 2004. It helped me a lot and has made it easier to adapt to the way of life of Norwegians. There were so many things I did not know about this country. I learnt about the differences

in climate, the educational opportunities, our rights and responsibilities, employment opportunities, certain cultural differences and culture shock.

This really gave me an overview of the Norwegian people's way of life; certain practices, values and norms they hold dear. This was important; although culture is universal it is also relative; every society has their peculiar way of doing things and knowing this prevented a lot of problems and misunderstandings. I learnt to value my own culture and at the same time respect other people's culture. I gained the awareness that though I had rights in the new society, I also had responsibilities, and this was an important part of my integration process. Pre-departure cultural orientation is a must because it prepares refugees for the challenges awaiting them in the new country.

What is your advice to refugee workers?

First of all, listen to the plights of refugees and have a dialogue with them about their problems and challenges and how they see their integration process. Find out what they themselves can do to become active members of the new society.

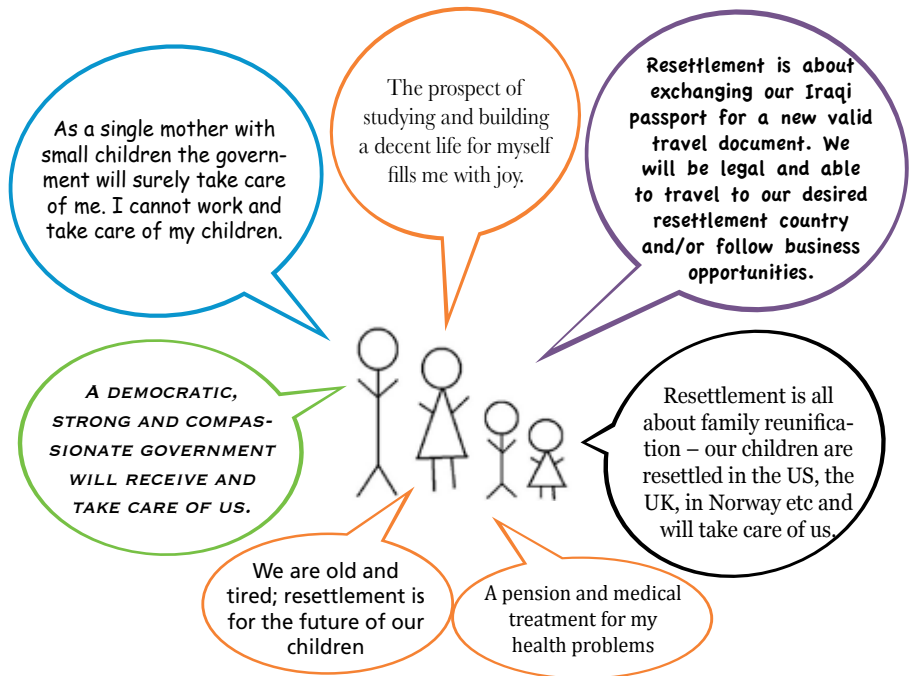


Chapter 5: Understanding Differences, Preparing for Change: Cultural Orientation

Refugees selected for resettlement have endured great hardship and, in most cases, years of profound uncertainty about their future. Anticipating the move to the resettlement country, basic information and advice about the journey and life ahead is of paramount importance. Cultural orientation programmes provided before refugees' departure to their new resettlement country should answer many of their questions, foster more realistic expectations and help to reduce anxiety and avoid disappointment. Cultural orientation therefore benefits both the refugee and the receiving community and authorities. Pre-departure orientation activities are also important for gathering information about the backgrounds and specific needs of individual refugees and refugee groups, to inform and help prepare receiving communities and support organisations in the country of resettlement.

The following diagram illustrates a range of common expectations among refugees awaiting resettlement.

Some expectations of Iraqi refugees *vis a vis* resettlement⁵⁵



⁵⁵ Frauke Riller, ICMC Resettlement Deployee, Observations and recommendations On the resettlement expectations of Iraqi refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria , 2009, ICMC & UNHCR, Beirut, Lebanon.

Pre-departure Cultural Orientation for Refugees

Pre-departure cultural orientation **cannot manage all refugees' expectations**, nor can it completely prepare refugees for the changes ahead, but it can be an important part of the resettlement process, especially when linked with reception and integration services. It is a first step in the integration process and an area that is continually developing. New approaches to delivering cultural orientation programmes are being explored incorporating multi-media tools and involving new actors including NGOs and representatives from the municipalities where refugees will be living. Evaluations show that the involvement of former refugees is a particularly useful way to improve the credibility of information, as refugees often give greater weight to the comments of their fellow countrymen than to officials.

As shown in the table below, numerous models are applied in European resettlement countries.

Country	Length of Pre – Departure Cultural Orientation (as of 2011)	Body Delivering Cultural Orientation
Czech Republic	30 hours	Government
Denmark	1 week	Government (sometimes municipalities)
France	½ day	IOM
Finland	3 days	IOM
Iceland	1 – 2 hours	Icelandic Red Cross
Ireland	2 days	Government
Netherlands	10.5 days	Central Agency for Reception of Asylum Seekers
Norway	4 days	IOM
Portugal	Cultural Orientation Leaflet	Portuguese Refugee Council, Government
Romania	3 days	Government , Romanian Red Cross
Sweden	0.5-1.5 days	Government, Municipalities
UK	1 day – 2.5 weeks	IOM

Cultural orientation programmes range from a few hours to more than two weeks. In some cases only a written leaflet is given. These differences reflect the approaches and experiences of different resettlement countries. Cultural orientation programmes should be tailor

made to specific refugee groups taking into consideration factors such as:

- Country of origin
- The context of their life in an asylum country for example whether living in an isolated refugee camp or urban setting
- Age, gender and education level
- Religion
- Cultural behaviours and customs

Content, length, tools, actors and delivery methods are all important considerations when creating a programme.

Regular **reviews and evaluations** of any cultural orientation programme are necessary to maintain and develop their effectiveness⁵⁶. It should be remembered that stress, anxiety and unfamiliarity with the issues being discussed will affect the ability of refugees to retain information. Some information will only make sense once the refugee arrives in the resettlement country. Pre-departure orientation is therefore an important part of resettlement support, which should be built on throughout the arrival and integration phases.

Pre-departure cultural orientation sessions are delivered in the country of asylum once refugees have been identified and selected for resettlement by the government of the resettlement country. Refugees that are selected on an individual dossier basis normally do not receive cultural orientation.⁵⁷ Cultural orientation sessions can be organised by either government representatives from the resettlement country or by a national or international organisation.

Common Themes for Cultural Orientation

Whilst the content of each course depends on the requirements of the receiving country and the context of the resettlement programme, the following topics are often included in cultural orientation:

- Travel to the resettlement country, pre-departure and post-arrival formalities, in-flight safety, security and administrative procedures
- Introduction to the agencies and support structures that will be involved in the resettlement process



“One session popular with refugees involves drawing a tree, its roots, trunk and branches symbolising aspects of their lives. We want them to remember their identities, the good things...who you are, where you come from, what made you strong, your achievements and your dreams.”

Nuttakarn Sumon, AUSCO (Australian CO Programme) IOM, CO Trainer in Thailand



⁵⁶ MOST Project publication (2008), *Promoting Independence in Resettlement*, MOST, Finland.

⁵⁷ The Netherlands has recently started a project to pilot CO to refugees that have been selected on a dossier basis, for more information see their website: <http://www.nlco.iom.int/>

- Accommodation – an overview of the type and cost of housing which will be available and information about leases and tenant responsibilities
- Employment - finding a job, skills accreditation, the writing of curriculum vitae and job applications, and interviewing skills
- Education (for children and adults)
- The healthcare system
- Public transportation
- Rights and responsibilities, including legal status
- Survival language training
- Using local currency and managing money
- Discussing and comparing socio-cultural customs in the country of asylum - and/or country of origin - and those in the resettlement country

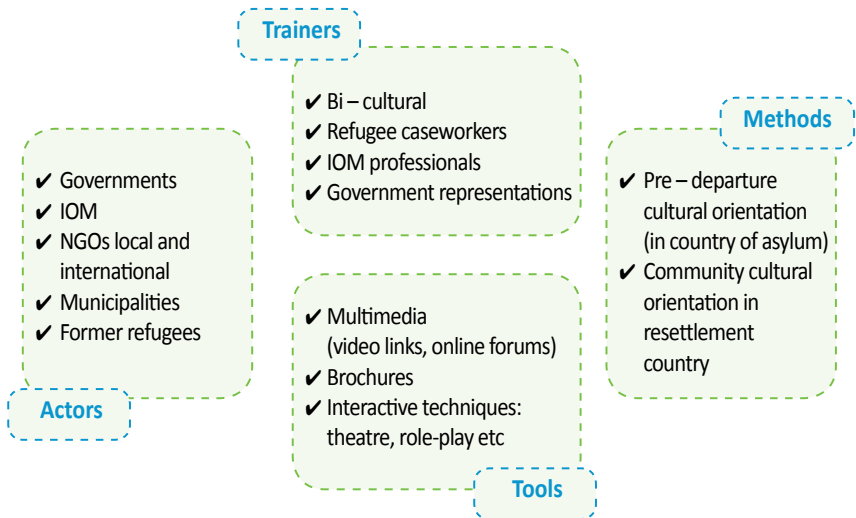
Trainers recruited to deliver the cultural orientation sessions may be government officials, trainers from IOM, international NGOs e.g. ICMC, or caseworkers from national NGOs. Some countries provide informative brochures on the resettlement country, though used on their own these have serious limitations, for example, refugees may not be literate and without explanation may not understand the concepts referred to.

Examples of Informative Brochures

France	Portugal
<i>'Information Guide for Persons being resettled to France', Forum Réfugiés, 2009, currently updating</i>	<i>'Cultural Orientation Leaflet for Resettled Refugees in Portugal', Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR), 2008, revised 2010</i>
Printed in French, English and Arabic	Printed in English
Content: travelling to France (pre-departure, post-arrival), administrative asylum processes, reception conditions (accommodations, the rights, access to healthcare & education), life (practical information) & integration in France (finding a job, learning French), emergency numbers, list of main actors.	Content: presentation of refugee/asylum actors, financial information, transportation, social support, documentation, family reunification info, access to education, work & healthcare, housing, rights and duties, historical & socio-economic information.
Number of pages: 23	Number of pages: 17

It is not only refugees that need to be informed about what to expect in their new home country. Reception and integration is improved if the receiving communities in the country of resettlement are given general information about refugees' backgrounds, cultures and needs before resettlement begins. Receiving municipalities need cultural orientation and other detailed information to enable them to provide appropriate services. For example, the Danish Ministry for Migration meets after each selection mission with the municipalities that will be receiving a particular group of refugees, to ensure adequate preparations for their reception.

Internet forums and video links and interactive teaching through theatre, role-plays, discussions and debates may also be used in cultural orientation. **The basic methods, actors, trainers and tools for cultural orientation are summarised in the diagram below.**



5.1 Cultural Orientation in Practice

A Practice in Norway

Cultural Orientation for Norway Bound Refugees (NORCO)-IOM

Project period: 2003-ongoing

Location: Oslo, Norway

Other partners/actors: Directorate of Immigration and Diversity (IMDI), IOM, municipalities

Funding: IMDI

NORCO is innovative in three ways:

- It was the first European country cultural orientation programme to adopt the exclusive use of bi-cultural trainers for pre-departure cultural orientation. Sessions are delivered to two target groups: four days for adults (16 years and above) and two days for children (8-14 years).
- NORCO also delivers a community cultural orientation in the form of one-day information seminars which give information on the refugee group's country, cultural backgrounds and specific needs to the municipalities, schools, health institutions, and refugee workers in the community in which the refugees are being resettled.
- Three times a year, NORCO organises community consultations helping IOM and the community assess and improve cultural orientation sessions. Consultations are centred on the feedback and evaluations given by refugees attending the informal meetings.

Bi-cultural trainers:

- preferably speak the refugee group's language plus Norwegian plus English
- have worked and lived in Norway.
- have a cross-cultural understanding
- have the ability to present or teach.

Pindie Stephen, Senior Migrant Training Specialist, IOM

Identifying the Need

Prior to 2003, the Norwegian government conducted a 1-2 day pre-departure cultural orientation programme. Following a study carried out by the government, municipalities reported that resettled refugees had more problems integrating than other migrants, and

thus needed more information and support about their new community. In consultation with IOM, enhanced cultural orientation was developed and is delivered by bi-cultural trainers.

“Thanks to the community consultations, we realised that we should put more time into our sessions targeting elderly refugees.”

William Paintsil, NORCO Coordinator

Challenges

Finding the right trainers is an ongoing challenge. Qualified bi-cultural trainers are difficult to find and as they are hired only on a short-term contractual basis, they often have to request time off from their regular job, and rely on the goodwill of their employers.

‘As a trainer you need to have a balanced discussion. You cannot give only negative or only positive information.... When I interview potential trainers they must be able to describe the differences between Norwegian culture and their own and the challenges that come with the differences.’ William Paintsil

A Practice in Sweden

LANDA : Leaving, Landing, Living -

Swedish Migration Board (SMB) and County Board of Gävleborg

Project period: 2009-2010(renewable)

Location: Gävleborg, Sweden

Other partners/actors: Ten municipalities in County of Gävleborg, Gävle University and public health, education and employment services

Funding: SMB, European Refugee Fund (ERF)

The LANDA project is a cultural orientation programme implemented by a group of municipalities in one Swedish county, Gävleborg. It enables them to pool their resources to create useful content, delivered at the right time. It is summarised in three words: leaving, landing and living.

Leaving → Representatives from the SMB, the receiving municipality, the County Board and a bi-cultural trainer organise and deliver a pre-departure cultural orientation lasting one week. A video made by resettled refugees already living in Sweden is shown to the refugees about to be resettled. In this manner refugees receive testimonies in their own language about the previous experiences of their countrymen and about what the newcomers can expect. Age-appropriate classes are also provided for children.

Landing → The cultural orientation programme continues after refugees have arrived in Gävleborg County with the same team that delivered the pre-departure cultural orientation. Several municipalities are involved at this point and the programme provides more information about Swedish society, its geography, economy and refugees' rights and responsibilities in Sweden. Five such sessions are held during the first 1-2 weeks post-arrival. Follow-up sessions on this phase are carried out after 3-4 months.

Living → This final stage consists of continued education and training mainly for adults. LANDA uses a wide range of teaching methods: family workshops, information delivered in the refugees' language and using former refugees to share their experiences and advice.



SMB delivering cultural orientation in Sudan as part of LANDA

Identifying the Need

The project arose from an evaluation of existing orientation programmes conducted under the MOST project⁵⁸, concluding in part that those working closest with resettled refugees' such as Swedish municipalities are well placed to deliver the cultural orientation.

'We (municipality) already had a lot of knowledge on how to work with the reception of resettled refugees...we wanted to find a model for getting more involved in the pre-arrival planning and to improve cultural orientation methods. The methods of delivering the cultural orientation are very important to consider for refugees who have never been in a traditional classroom setting...DVD's are a good way to show people, as well as lots of photos.' Lars Blomqvist, Municipality of Hudiksvall

A Practice in the UK

Gateway Online Forum (GOLF)

Project period: 2010-ongoing

Location: UK, Worldwide Web

Partners/actors: Refugee Action UK, British Refugee Council, resettled refugees and the Gateway Protection Refugees Community Forum in Sheffield

Funding: Through existing Government funding for Refugee Action

The Gateway Online Forum is an internet based resource enabling the exchange of experiences and knowledge between people at different stages of the resettlement process. It aims to give refugees a realistic idea of life in the UK and to exchange useful tips and information about the UK as a country of resettlement. Refugees' in the country of asylum, waiting to be resettled, who have access to the internet, can ask questions of already resettled refugees. They can also refer to relevant information placed on the Forum by NGO staff, volunteers and refugees themselves.

The Forum contains information under different headings including: - education, employment and volunteering, benefits and finance, health, housing, social and leisure, law, politics, economy and general information on travelling to the UK. Photos are used so that persons who do not read English can still benefit.

Access to the Forum is secure and password limited to refugees who have been accepted onto the programme and are waiting to be resettled, those currently being supported or who have been in the past, NGO staff members and designated Forum volunteers.

⁵⁸ MOST Project publication (2008), *Promoting Independence in Resettlement*, MOST, Finland.

The Forum was created by a Steering Group of resettled refugees and NGO support staff and volunteers and is still being developed. The Forum is also being used by resettled refugees within the UK, sharing information and tips, for example, on where to buy certain foods. It was recently used by Bhutanese refugees who logged on from their camp to look at the area to which they would be resettled.

Identifying the Need

Many Iraqi refugees who arrived in 2008 came with unrealistic expectations of life in the UK and what the resettlement programme could offer. This was often due to incorrect, incomplete or misinterpreted information they had received pre-arrival and rumours amongst their peers. These unrealistic expectations caused dissatisfaction and in many ways delayed some people's ability to begin integrating into their communities.

Challenges

In general the Forum has required significant investment of staff time and it has been very important to be realistic about resources available, particularly in relation to staff and the capacity of partners to engage fully. There are often out-of-date or no email addresses for refugees on the pre-arrival case information, even though many refugees do have email addresses. This has made it difficult to make contact with people prior to arrival.

Some refugees are not computer literate, do not understand English or simply do not have access to the internet before they arrive, therefore it is important that such a resource is not the only source of information for refugees.

Lessons Learned for Setting up an Online Forum

- ✓ Recruit ambassadors' from each nationality group who have good English and IT and can develop the forum.
- ✓ Encourage refugees who have been resettled for a while to exchange information on topics at regular events. This will make the forum more attractive for people to interact with as people will see it is being used.
- ✓ Hold an interactive online forum launch event for each arrival group and assist refugees to access the forum once in the country of resettlement, e.g. at their local library
- ✓ Have as much content as possible on the forum for those with limited English, e.g. photographs and video. A forum can be a useful resource for practicing and learning English.

Top Tips for Cultural Orientation

- ✓ Develop cultural orientation programmes that have a two-fold purpose: To prepare refugees before their departure as well as to provide information to receiving communities prior to their arrival; this can promote two-way integration
- ✓ Less is more: choose quality over quantity, consider refugees' ability to absorb information prior to their departure - excitement, fear and uncertainty all affect absorption and retention
- ✓ Always deliver the cultural orientation session in refugees' native language; if interpreters must be used, ensure that they are properly trained and briefed on the goals and content of sessions
- ✓ Link resettlement phases by involving NGOs and municipalities in cultural orientation planning and implementation
- ✓ Involve refugees in content and delivery decisions; they often know best
- ✓ Recruit trainers that are open to a variety of teaching methods, including the use of interactive teaching tools
- ✓ Streamline the process by recruiting cultural orientation trainers that are service providers in the country of resettlement, allowing refugees to make a connection between departure and arrival by seeing familiar faces
- ✓ Take a flexible approach to teaching to accommodate learner needs and educational backgrounds
- ✓ Encourage refugees to talk about what they feel their identity is and what they bring with them to their new country
- ✓ Children need cultural orientation too; they can learn about school, the socialization process, what children their age do for fun in the resettlement country, and even what challenges they may face as they adapt to a new culture and language
- ✓ Regularly evaluate effectiveness by drawing on input from all stakeholders
- ✓ Accept that cultural orientation will never completely prepare refugees nor dispel all unrealistic expectations, but is nevertheless an important tool to prepare refugees



Hamida Shaikh Mohamad
Age: 31yrs

Kakebeeke, K and Blankevoort, E., (2011) *The Refugee Jackpot* A photo book about invited refugees in the Netherlands, Post Editions, Rotterdam (see biography for more information)

Hamida and her family fled to Nairobi, Kenya in 1995 due to the violent civil war in Somalia. When she fell in love and married an Ethiopian man, her family disowned her and threatened her husband who consequently left. Three years later, Hamida could no longer provide for her children alone and she sought help from UNHCR. She relocated to the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, a camp accommodating over 75,000 refugees (as of 2010) known for being a dangerous place for single women. Following UNHCR's referral, Hamida and her five children were eventually resettled to the Netherlands in 2009.

What is your life like in the Netherlands?

I am very tired. I wake up very early every day, get the kids ready for school and then take the bus to go to school myself. You have to speak Dutch for everything here, writing letters, speaking with teachers at school, reading the mail, going to the doctor and doing the shopping. When I get home, I pick up the kids, cook dinner and after they go to bed at 20h, I begin my homework.

How have you managed to integrate into the community?

Where I live in the North of the Netherlands (Kollum) is a very small town, around 5,000 people. I don't judge people; they are all the same, even in Africa. I had a bad experience with a young man who attacked me because of my colour. He kicked me down, told me to go back to Africa and even threatened I would soon be dead. I was very scared and surprised. This community isn't used to dark people. Luckily, a neighbour saw the whole thing and called the police. The boy was taken to jail. After that, I was very afraid to leave my home but



now I am not worried, I have nice neighbours and friends. They come over for coffee almost every day and our kids play together and call each other 'best friends'.

What challenges do you face in the Netherlands?

My life is tough but it is good. It is so much better than if I would have stayed in the camp in Kenya. My children go to school for free, I can pay for the things they need and I can give them enough to eat. I get money from the government but I like to work, I don't like to just get money. I am learning Dutch now and I also have a big vegetable garden.

I learn to do everything myself but I often ask for help along the way, I even learnt how to do internet banking in just three days.

Even with all of this, my life is half full because I do not have my husband with me. We lost touch for many years. We are now in contact but I have no idea how to get him here with me. It is very hard raising five children all alone, I need him and so do my children. When I see that my children are sad because they think of their father, I tell them to stop thinking and to have hope.

What is the key to integration?

There are many differences and you have to get used to that. Sometimes I see children in the Netherlands disrespect their parents, I even saw a young boy push his mother! You don't see that in Africa. I was also surprised to see that some children smoke and drink when they are 14 years old.

To integrate just talk, you have to talk. Refugees cannot stay in their homes scared to come out. I talk to everyone in the neighbourhood. You have to do activities to integrate, take your kids to the park or to the zoo. I take them to football and swimming too, it is good to be active.

Chapter 6: A Place to Call Home: Housing

Housing for resettled refugees should provide safety, stability and an anchor to build a future in a new community. Locating and contracting suitable housing for resettled refugees is one of the biggest challenges for countries participating in resettlement. There is often high demand and competition for social or affordable housing, particularly in the big cities. The pressure on housing providers to accommodate multiple demands can intensify existing conflicts between the indigenous population and migrants. Housing, for both reception and the longer term, has become a major factor in determining whether countries want to take part in resettlement.

The locality where refugees are housed has a big impact on aspects of social integration, such as employment, social interaction and studies, as discussed in Chapter 2. Placement of refugees into municipalities and access to social housing depends in some countries (UK and Finland) on the prior agreement of municipalities to host refugees and to make housing available. In Finland some municipalities are currently refusing to house resettled refugees. In the context of a political climate which is hostile to migration and asylum in general, municipalities point to limited funding and compensation for additional costs (education, housing, and healthcare). This problem is now creating a backlog of refugees waiting to depart, as no accommodation has been secured in the country of resettlement. In contrast, municipalities in the UK receive funding from central government to house resettled refugees in their localities and are more enthusiastic about housing refugees, in view of recent budget cuts (2011). In Denmark, municipalities are required by law to accept a quota of resettled refugees each year. Similarly, in the Netherlands all cities and municipalities have to house a proportional share of the country's asylum seekers and refugees. It is clear that in every country municipalities play a key role in the provision of housing.

When deciding where to place refugees to provide for suitable integration prospects the following factors should be taken into account:

- Education, training and employment opportunities
- Family and/or ethnic support networks
- Transport links
- Availability and cost of suitable housing
- Availability of support services
- Available rehabilitation and health services, including torture services and psychosocial counselling
- Availability of interpreters
- Safety

In Bolton, UK, 90 -100% of resettled refugees remain in the area in which they are resettled. This is thought to be due to Bolton's good transport links and easy accessibility to Manchester, which is a large city with good employment opportunities.

Some of the common challenges faced in locating housing for refugees

- Shortage of low cost housing, in areas that are not too isolated
- Family size -refugees often have larger families than the local population
- Competition for the available low-cost housing
- Unrealistic expectations of refugees in relation to housing, e.g. some refugees may be accustomed to large houses with gardens, whereas the local accommodation is mainly small apartments
- Demands for references and/or significant financial deposits, which for resettled refugees -without existing networks and cash reserves - particularly in the first period, are difficult to meet
- Discriminatory housing practices due to prejudice and stereotypes about refugees, typically relating to paying rent, maintenance and hygiene

"People make too big a deal of the challenge of housing, it's just an excuse. Lots of countries have available housing for resettled refugees... with a bit of creativity you could get these properties, especially with so much new housing going un-occupied. ... People need to free up their thinking and Governments needs to be more flexible and challenge how the housing stock is being used." - Jon Lord, Chief Executive, Bolton at Home, 2011

Housing Providers - Important Partners in Resettlement

Creative solutions and innovative partnerships are required to resolve the problems of finding adequate accommodation for refugees. All those with a potential to provide or help access housing, such as housing associations, private agencies, local authorities, NGOs, church groups and others should be consulted at an early stage in the planning of a resettlement programme. In view of the multiple demands on the housing sector, it is essential to raise awareness and advocate on behalf of refugees, to ensure that housing providers understand the resettlement programme and the particular issues affecting refugees.

Different Models for Housing Refugees

There are generally two models used to provide accommodation for refugees in the initial phase of resettlement: the centralised reception model in which refugees first live together for up to 12 months, and are then moved to individual housing in the community; the direct housing model in which refugees are housed directly into the municipalities and local community upon arrival. Below is a table showing the models which different countries in Europe use.

Different Countries Models of Reception Housing as of 2011

Centralised Reception Centres	Direct to Municipalities
Czech republic (6 -8 months)	Denmark
France (3-6months)	Finland
Ireland (8 -12weeks)	Iceland
Portugal (3 – 6months)	Netherlands
Romania (6 months – 1year)	Norway
	Sweden
	UK

Centralised Reception

Centralised reception can be organised in a variety of ways, depending on the length of time refugees stay in the reception centre, the facilities available on site, the opportunities to engage with the local community and the location of the centre. Some reception centres house resettled refugees and asylum seekers together. This model is often used by countries to give them time to locate suitable housing for resettled refugees. Centralised reception can also enable the delivery of equal services for example language classes, employment advice and cultural orientation.

The major criticism of the centralised model is that it can delay the integration of resettled refugees. It can also be unsettling for refugees who have to adjust twice, first settling in the reception centre, and then forced to go through the process again, when they are moved into the community. Reception centres may also lead to stigmatisation and targeting of refugees and reinforce dependencies that may already have developed in refugee camp settings.

Direct Housing in the Municipality

Housing resettled refugees in the community directly upon arrival has been selected for this handbook as the preferred model for assisting a refugee's integration. The learning curve may be steeper and the initial culture shock greater, but this model gives refugees more opportunities to integrate directly into the community and facilitates independent living. This model is often cheaper to implement than a centralised reception centre.

There are a variety of different ways individual housing can be supplied, depending on the context of the resettlement country: properties may be owned privately or by the local authority, a housing association or other social landlord. In the case of private rented

housing rents may be subsidised by government funding. NGOs and church groups may be able to take an active role by renting private properties in their name and subletting these to the resettled refugees. In this model, housing must be available upon arrival; however, there are frequent delays in departures of refugees due to bureaucratic procedures and red tape, or insufficient communication. This poses a challenge for housing providers and support agencies to ensure that housing is available at the right time and not left empty for long periods.

Changing from Centralised to Direct Housing in the Netherlands

Since 2005 all resettled refugees in The Netherlands were received, during a period of 4-6 months, in one single reception centre for resettled refugees located in Amersfoort. The center was managed by the Central Agency for Reception of Asylum seekers and Refugees (COA) who provided language and integration courses during that period. The Dutch government has recently decided to change policies and house resettled refugees directly in municipalities upon arrival. The plan, expected to be implemented from mid 2011 onwards, has the objective to cut spending in reception but also to contribute to early integration. Reacting to the plans, municipalities have reconfirmed their commitment to resettlement. However, since the plan does not foresee any additional funding to contribute to housing nor any additional costs relating to integration programmes, municipalities are still hesitant to engage in the new set up. The Dutch Council for Refugees has stated that it is very important that the conditions for a good reception by municipalities are fulfilled before the first group will be placed directly in a municipality

6.1 Housing in Practice

A Practice in Portugal

Centralised Reception Centre: sharing facilities with the local community - Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR)

Project Period: 2006 - ongoing

Location: Loures, Near Lisbon, Portugal

Other partners/actors: Municipality of Loures, Residents' Association, asylum seekers and refugees, local schools and kindergartens

Funding: EQUAL – European Social Fund Programme and Land donated by Municipality of Loures

The Portuguese Refugee Council's reception centre can accommodate up to 42 asylum seekers, resettled refugees and unaccompanied minors

“In the centre you go round the world”
a refugee living in Portugal

for a maximum of six months. Residents are provided with shared rooms and bathrooms, with separate areas for men, women, families and unaccompanied minors plus one room adapted for disabled access. For the first five days residents receive their meals in a nearby restaurant. After this they receive a weekly allowance of €40 and are able to buy and cook for themselves in the shared kitchen. Residents also benefit from telephone cards, internet access and transportation cards valid in Lisbon City and around the centre.

In the reception centre, there is a multidisciplinary team which provides services. Refugees have access to:

- Legal, employment and educational advice
- Interpreters on site and volunteer cultural mediators
- Portuguese language course – an initial 100 hours
- Visits to museums, historical monuments, companies and sports competitions
- Internet Point
- Clothes Distribution
- Laundry Services

The centre does not provide healthcare in-house, but residents are registered with the National Health Service and receive healthcare from public and private health services. Refugees suffering from psychological problems have access to CAVITOP, an NGO that provides psychological and psychiatric support.

Achievements

In the light of needs identified within the community – by a development committee – the reception centre includes the following amenities which are used by both the residents of the centre and the local community: a kindergarten run by CPR and attended by

“The idea is to create an intercultural dynamic, based on the relations between asylum seekers and refugees and the local community, re-enforcing the community ties, values and the sense of belonging to a cohesive community.”

Tito Matos, CPR, 2011

77 children, from the local and refugee community; an auditorium and a library (featuring information related to refugee issues) and employment support services.

Local residents have become more welcoming to the refugees, since they have direct contact with them and enjoy the benefits that the centre has brought them. This support is evidenced in the growing donations of clothes and food.

Challenges

Finding housing for those leaving the reception centre is very difficult, with little suitable low-cost housing available. Resettled refugees usually stay in Lisbon, as it is close to the centre. Some refugees would prefer to live in a rural area but have found the move too difficult. It has also been difficult to promote the participation of municipalities and employers outside of the Lisbon area.



CPR, Reception centre © CPR, 2010

A Practice in France

Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés –

Network for the Integration of Resettled Refugees - France Terre d'Asile (FTdA)

Project Period: 2010 - ongoing

Location: France

Other partners/actors: FTdA, OFII (French Office for Immigrant Integration), PACT de Saint Denis (a not-for-profit housing network), Interassurances (an insurance company that has offered to finance one year of rental insurance to landlords who are willing to rent to a refugee). Integration partnerships depending on location: Alliance Française (language school), Secours Catholique, Emmaus (both charities working for improved housing conditions).

Funding: 50% European Refugee Fund (ERF), 50% French Government

In France newly arrived refugees being resettled are normally housed in reception centres with asylum seekers. Under a new programme starting in 2010 called *Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés*, refugees have the opportunity to be referred by the government French Office for Immigrant Integration (OFII) for a housing placement and accompanying integration support programme after three months in the centre. *Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés* has a housing capacity of 80 persons, in about 17 apartments, 76% of the housing is in Paris, its suburbs and the surrounding area and the remaining 14% elsewhere in France. This housing is provided for six months initially and can be renewed for a further six months, with apartments then 'recycled' for new resettled refugees residing in the centres. The majority of the housing is rented through private owners and not the public housing structure. Within *Réseau pour l'intégration des réinstallés*, refugees are able to access a special integration programme including ten workshops covering orientation to life in France and employment advice, plus

more intensive language courses. Refugees are also visited once a month by a France Terre d'Asile case worker and attend a weekly appointment in the office of the caseworker, who assists them to reach the goals set out in an agreed individual integration plan.

Identifying the Need

The capacity of reception centres in which persons with refugee status are accommodated is hugely insufficient, with only 1,020 places available for over 11,000 persons a year. Many of the refugees want to live in Paris, although housing in the Paris area is rarely affordable, employment opportunities are inadequate and services can be difficult to access. Therefore there has been a need to move refugees directly from the transit centre to independent housing and inform refugees more about living in other areas in France.

Achievements

Some of the pressures of overcrowding in the reception centres have been relieved, and refugees are able to move into independent housing sooner, rather than spending extended periods in the reception centres. The refugee orientation programme has also been helping refugees to see the possibilities of living outside of the capital.

Challenges

Finding suitable and low-cost housing for refugees continues to be a challenge. It was difficult to get refugees to move out of the highly urban areas like Lyon and Paris that they initially lived in. They were frightened of the move; among other things it was important to ensure that the areas they were moving to had good transportation links to avoid refugees feeling too isolated.

Working in partnership to house resettled refugees – Bolton, UK

In Bolton, UK, the NGO Refugee Action works together with the Bolton at Home housing agency to ensure that resettled refugees are housed directly upon arrival. Bolton at Home ensures that a stock of housing is reserved for newly arriving refugees, where they are able to stay for 12–18 months until suitable social or private rented housing is found for them. The properties are then 'recycled' for the next group of refugees being resettled.

The housing used is a mixture of public and private housing, with the rent being subsidised initially by the UK Government, funded partly from the European Refugee Fund (ERF). Refugee Action provides six months intensive integration support for the resettled refugees. After this, general housing and tenancy support is provided by Bolton at Home housing agency.

Top Tips for Housing

For both reception models

- ✓ Maintain and develop partnerships with housing agencies, private sector links and mainstream housing services
- ✓ Identify refugees' housing needs prior to arrival and be clear about any specific health issues affecting the accommodation
- ✓ Raise awareness and educate mainstream housing providers about the arrival of refugees and their rights in relation to housing
- ✓ Avoid isolation – housing should allow easy access to a community and public amenities such as hospitals, transport, schools and suitable places of worship
- ✓ Help refugees to understand the housing market and procedures for locating housing; enable them to be involved in locating their permanent housing
- ✓ Consider providing rental subsidies or deposits for refugees

For centralised model

- ✓ Limit the time in any centre to as short a period as possible
- ✓ Promote independent living by providing refugees with an allowance and making provision for them to cook for themselves
- ✓ Ensure facilities can be adapted for refugees with specific needs e.g. a disability
- ✓ Provide refugees with freedom of movement and access to transport links
- ✓ Ensure access to recreational facilities, activities, language classes and interpreters
- ✓ Provide employment advice to get refugees 'job ready' for when they leave the centre



Waleed Al-Sabbagh, age 45yrs,
with his family

Waleed and his family fled Iraq in 2005 and lived in Syria for the next four years. Finding legal and steady work was very complicated. In addition, his wife's father and mother were sick and needed constant care. When Waleed was identified for resettlement to the US, he didn't want to go because he had no contacts there. UNHCR helped his family apply for resettlement to Germany where they have relatives. They were eventually accepted in April 2009 and Waleed and his family arrived

two months later at the Friedland reception centre (south of Hanover) where they stayed for a few weeks before moving to Munich. The Al-Sabbagh family found housing after six months of searching. 'German people refuse to rent to someone who doesn't have a job. The first thing they ask you is -do you have a job? - and when you say no, you are refused.'

How is your German coming along?

My eldest daughter and I took German classes to start with. A social worker helped us find the courses. We were given 600 hours (1 classroom hour=45 minutes) in six months. The classes were very good but we need more hours, especially for those of us who are older. We must practice German too, I practice in the street but it is not enough. I have entered into a programme through a private company where there will be a self-learning language programme that is designed for professional use. The programme says it will help me continue language courses and possibly get an internship in the company.



Are your children adjusting to school in Germany?

My eldest daughter who is 18 years old completed secondary school in Syria but in Germany no one recognises her certificate, so she had to redo a year of school in Germany. Now she would like to continue her studies in a preparatory school, to go to university one day, but you have to be 16 years or younger. The only alternative now is a private preparatory school but this would be too expensive. Her marks were good enough to go to preparatory school. The alternative route would be to go to a trade school to be an assistant. My younger children have needed help with homework so luckily the volunteers from the NGO "Save Me" (see Chapter 4) come to tutor them after school.

What are your thoughts on integration in Germany?

It is too early to talk about integration. I don't have a job yet and that is very hard. I'm used to working. I am a mechanical engineer and I worked for 18 years in Iraq, for four years in Syria and now, nothing. I have experience and when I arrived I wanted a job with the German government. I said to the social worker, let me start with any company, I don't care. If they see that they like my work then they keep me and if not, then I understand that they let me go. The social worker told me I have to search for a job but I think that the government should give us a chance to work in a company. Today, I just take German courses and take my kids to school. My children will surely integrate but for my wife and me, it is hard.

Chapter 7: Learning for Living: Education and Language Learning

Education and language learning programmes for refugee adults and children help pave the path to independence and integration.

Refugees' education has often been disrupted by the experiences of persecution, flight and prolonged stays in refugee camps. Nonetheless, many refugees have university diplomas and/or high skill levels. In some cases refugees have lost the evidence of their qualifications or their qualifications are not recognised in the receiving country. Some refugees have skills that were not acquired through formal education. Some are illiterate, even if skilled in a particular trade or field of work, e.g. carpentry or farming. Approaches to refugee education and training should take account of the fact that every refugee has a unique background and perspective on the future.

Regardless of the particular background of refugees, language acquisition and appropriate educational/training opportunities in the receiving country can facilitate integration into the community and labour market. Language and employment are two of the principal drivers of integration. Collaboration between actors in these areas can help to support young refugees in school and help adult refugees gain access to education while linking them to housing, social and employment services. Refugees may have some specific educational needs, due to previous circumstances, but they can also be very determined and motivated to learn and make important contributions to the resettlement country, if given the chance.

“In Canada, one remains a refugee for only a few weeks. After that, you become a neighbour, a colleague, a co-student, in short, a member of the community.”

*Fariborz Birjandian,
Executive Director, Calgary Catholic
Immigration Society (Canada)*

Children and Young People

A refugee child's educational experience in a new country can open or close doors for the future.

Refugee children arriving in a new school are immediately immersed in a social environment that can be both challenging and stimulating. If properly supported, school can provide a safe environment for socialising and children can make new friends. However, refugee children can also experience bullying and harassment by other children. Local children will be more welcoming and can play an important support role, if they are taught about refugee issues and

shown how to be welcoming. Teachers need to be **aware of the backgrounds and emotional and educational needs** of refugee students to help them progress and meet their potential.

In the school setting alone, refugee students face a number of issues⁵⁹:

- Language barriers
- Identity and self-esteem problems
- Differing cultural and family value systems
- Inter-generational conflicts
- Shifts in disciplinary techniques
- Emotional and physical health problems arising from the refugee experience
- Changes in socio-economic status
- Loss of control; feeling like a ‘victim of circumstance’
- Difficulties in adjusting to changes in learning environment, school codes of conduct and expectations

Teachers need support from a wide range of professionals, including school staff, language instructors, guidance counsellors, health practitioners and refugee caseworkers. Welcome events, peer support, homework clubs, after-school play activities and parental involvement are just some of the ways that communities, school staff and refugee workers can work together to support the education and integration of refugee students.⁶⁰

In a Finnish classroom: “Refugee students were going to join our classroom for the first time so before their arrival I gave some lessons on refugees to my students with the help of material from UNICEF. Then, we planned an evening event where I asked a refugee caseworker to come with a refugee and speak to the parents of my 8th grade class. The best way to create tolerance is to face differences openly, talk to pupils and have refugees who can already speak Finnish tell about their background. Children can change their attitudes when they get more information and hear personal experiences.”
-Sanniella Luukkainen, Student Counsellor, Turengin yhteiskoulu (Turenki Secondary School), Janakkala, Finland

Language Learning

Many refugee children achieve language fluency rapidly; for adults, learning the language can take longer for a number of reasons, including a lack of social contact. Language skills

59 British Columbia Ministry of Education (2009), *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools*, Ministry of Education, Canada, p 9.

60 Numerous resources have been published to assist schools and teachers in welcoming refugee students, for example: Save the Children (2003), *Home from Home: A Guidance Resource Pack for the Welcome and Inclusion of Refugee Children and Families in School*, Save the Children, London.

are important to finding employment, understanding administrative processes, communicating with school and health professionals, gaining access to resources and making friends or developing contacts within the community.

Not all language learners will have the same needs and experiences. A **comprehensive evaluation of refugees' level**, first in their native language and then in the language of the resettlement country, can help caseworkers and introductory programme providers develop a practical approach to education, including initial language lessons, civic education courses etc., as shown in the Danish example below.

“If the government truly wants people to integrate and be part of the ‘big society’, then language is the key.”

Spokeswoman from the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages, UK

Refugees can also benefit from the social interaction in the classroom. In the first months, language courses may be the predominant—or even the only—opportunity for adult refugees to socialise. Language classes are generally provided for by the government for a defined period of time, ranging from 100 hours to three years. After this period, most refugees wishing to continue language classes have to pay tuition fees. Some integration programmes do not provide enough language training for refugees, despite the increasing emphasis put on language acquisition as a path to citizenship. Government funding and collaboration with implementing partners, in particular language schools, NGOs, refugee workers and municipalities, is needed to ensure that language acquisition is prioritised both in policy and in practice.

Flexibility in language course times and structure is another important consideration. Provision should be made for women who are often unable to participate due to family and childcare responsibilities. Similarly, refugees who have found jobs or are undergoing medical treatment may find it difficult to attend day time courses. Evening or weekend classes can enable participation in the courses, as can the provision of neighbourhood language courses, childcare and subsidized transport to and from class.

Work-based Language Learning

Different structural models have been explored by projects in several resettlement countries, including workplace-related language instruction as seen in the Swedish Experience below. As part of the MOST Project⁶¹, a pilot project was carried out to address refugee isolation from the host community and loss of motivation to learn the language. A **‘Work-**

61 MOST Project publication (2008), *Promoting Independence in Resettlement*, MOST, Finland.

Based Training Model' was carried out in Finland where the project matched refugees with employers for on-the-job training. Refugees alternated between attending language classes and on-the job training in the same week. Project evaluations found this approach to be an effective combination of immersing adult refugees in society, the language and the labour market while also maintaining their motivation to continue attending language classes.

Language Learning Provision for Resettled Refugees Shown by Country

Country	Language Class provision in Order of Maximum length (2011)	Other Information
Denmark	3 years	at least 20 hours per week
Finland	3 years	depends on need
Sweden	2 years	
Portugal	100-150 hours initially then 2 – 3 years	depending on need
Ireland	1 year	20 hours per week can be extended for vulnerable cases
Iceland	9 months	4 lessons, 5 times a day
Czech Republic	6 – 8 months	
Romania	6 months initially then 6 hours per week for 1 year	
Netherlands	500 hours	
France	400 hours	depends on need
Norway	250 hours	
UK	Differs on area – no standard entitlement	

7.1 Education and Language Learning in Practice

A Practice in the Netherlands

UAF- Stichting voor Vluchteling-Studenten (Foundation for Refugee Students)

Project Period: 1948-ongoing

Location: Utrecht, Netherlands

Other partners/actors: Universities, training and educational institutions and ministries

Funding: Individuals, educational institutions, foundations, corporations, the national lottery and specified government funding

UAF is the oldest refugee organisation in the Netherlands, providing financial, social and academic support to refugees and asylum seekers who want to further their education or have their previous education and skills recognised. Support is concentrated in three areas: financial aid for studies, advice and guidance and employment assistance.

To qualify for UAF support candidates must fulfil three requirements:

1) be either recognised refugees or asylum seekers with open applications, who have a well-founded fear of persecution as assessed by UAF 2) have completed at least 12 years of formal education and 3) have sufficient language skills in Dutch, French, English or German. Education counsellor's help refugees make informed decisions about their future and can refer them to other social service providers depending on their needs. Refugees may register for a preparatory year where UAF will provide information on the education system, Dutch classes and initial coursework required for their future course of study. Externally, UAF negotiates affordable education and training fees with institutions and local governments.

UAF's job support department provides information and guidance, including training for refugees who are highly educated and seek employment or would like to start their own business.

UAF evaluates the impact of its services by recording outcomes and carrying out studies and evaluations. These studies have shown that refugees have a higher drop-out rate during the first preparatory phase when compared to other students, yet once they officially begin a course of studies refugees progress faster than their classmates.

Identifying the Need

As in many countries, refugees' former qualifications and experience often go unrecognised by Dutch employers. Diplomas are generally undervalued and even when they are fully recognised, most employers seem to prefer Dutch or Western qualifications. Given these obstacles, UAF supports the idea that the key to suitable and long-term employment is to re-qualify through the Dutch higher education system.

Achievements

Since UAF's creation, some 3000 refugees from 77 different countries have been assisted with the preparation and completion of studies and the job seeking process. Over 300 refugees have found suitable jobs each year as a result and around 200 have taken up internships or voluntary positions.

Challenges

The demand for UAF's services is very high, with a long waiting list of refugees wishing to access them (around 500 waiting in 2011). Mediating with local councils to ensure that refugees are able to study without losing their benefits and working with employers to ensure they see refugees' potential and will consider adapting their recruitment procedures, are both ongoing challenges.

A Practice in Sweden

Labour Market Training Programme and Swedish for Immigrants - Swedish Ministry of Labour, Swedish for Immigrants and Gävleborg County Administrative Board

Project Period: 2009- ongoing

Location: Gävleborg County

Other partners/actors: Swedish Ministry of Integration, municipalities and corresponding refugee & social services, schools and employers

Funding: Swedish Ministry of Labour, the project was partially sponsored by the European Refugee Fund (ERF) in 2009

'Swedish for Immigrants' (SFI) is the national language learning course offered for a minimum of two years to all immigrants in Sweden. The programme is compulsory for resettled refugees and their financial benefits can depend on attendance.

In 2009, SFI added a vocational training component to the language training. The programme is the first of its kind in Sweden and is currently carried out in ten municipalities across Gävleborg. The Labour Market Training courses amount to 25 hours per week and are taken in addition to the required 15 hours of Swedish.

Labour Market Training courses last from 20 to 60 weeks, depending on the profession. Courses include welding, bus driving, personal assistance/care, gardening and cleaning. A language teacher is present during vocational training to provide work-related language instruction and classroom communication skills.

Unemployed refugees who have been in Sweden for less than three years and are registered at the employment office may apply for the Labour Market Training Programme. Generally, refugees participating in the vocational training

“Language classes can be very dry and difficult for newcomers. When you take language classes together with courses to be a bus driver, for example, language becomes useful and more interesting.”

Maria Berg, Coordinator for
Labour Market Training & SF

component have an intermediate to advanced level of Swedish; however, two new training groups (cleaning and gardening) have been added for refugees with beginner's level Swedish and low literacy skills.

Upon completion of vocational training, refugees receive an official certificate of their professional, accredited training. The employment office liaises with employers in order to introduce both the programme and the refugees looking for vocational placements.

Identifying the Need

A government-sponsored study completed several years ago in Sweden expressed concern that some refugees were only finding steady work after seven or eight years in the country. This project was initiated to address the dual challenge of integration into the job market and language acquisition. Connecting language and vocational training was proposed as a way to focus language training and speed up labour market integration. By adding a 'real-world' employment focus to language training, the programme aimed to help refugees both avoid isolation and develop their skills.

Achievements

In 2011, approximately 200 places (10 different training groups) were made available. Companies and training centres alike have been very satisfied with refugee participants due to their strong motivation to work and learn.



"In Sweden we have an image of refugees as helpless so we were pleasantly surprised to see that participants have been very enthusiastic and competent."



Maria Berg, Coordinator for Labour Market Training & SFI

Challenges

Refugees may have to travel long distances to attend classes; some travel up to 200 km per day on public transport. This reflects the fact that some small towns in Sweden take in significant numbers of refugees but do not have enough vocational training or job opportunities. Consequently, refugees must be willing to travel in order to train or work. Maintaining effective communication and cooperation amongst the various partners throughout the country is also a constant challenge.

A Practice in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic resettled 78 Burmese refugees between 2008 and 2010 as part of a three-year pilot programme. Upon arrival, refugees stay for 6 – 8 months in an ‘integration and asylum centre’, a block of housing where refugees live together in Northern Bohemia. After this phase, the first group was successfully welcomed into accommodation in nine different municipalities, mostly in Southern Moravia.

Czech is a complicated language to learn, especially for many of the Burmese refugees, who had received little prior education due to extended periods in camps. The Czech government arranged 600 hours of intensive language classes with specialist language teachers whilst they resided in the centre. Even if the focus of the first six months was very much on learning the language, some refugees felt it was insufficient.



Czech Language Class © UNHCR, L. Taylor

“Since moving to the municipalities we have only received language classes once or twice a month at first and now not at all, no exams and we have forgotten everything we learned.”

Biak Huin, Burmese refugee

A Practice in Wales

PoliceESOL Language course - South Wales Police and Cardiff Council ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) Services

Project Period: 2003 - ongoing

Location: Cardiff, Wales

Funding: Central Government (ESOL) and the Police department.

Working together, South Wales’ Police and Cardiff Council ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) service developed the PoliceESOL language course. The course aims to develop English language skills and provide participants with an understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities. It also aims to build a relationship of trust with the

police. The course consists of a number of training sessions, each designed specifically to provide knowledge and understanding of how to live safely in the UK and abide by the law.

Participation in the course is entirely voluntary, and usually takes place in separate classes for men and women. The course was designed as a series of ten independent two-hour sessions, including a number of topics: introduction to UK police; dealing with an emergency; personal safety in the community; child safety in the UK; dealing with domestic abuse; racial incidents; drug and alcohol related abuse and driving in the UK.

Identifying the Need

The South Wales Police and Cardiff ESOL identified particular community safety-related issues affecting new arrivals to Cardiff. These included non-reporting of racial harassment, leaving children alone, driving without documents and domestic violence. In addition, the police in Cardiff also identified a number of issues regarding their own response to new arrivals: language barriers, the availability and integrity of interpreters, a lack of cultural knowledge and not having prior information about an individual's background.

Achievements

Approximately 2,500 learners attend ESOL courses in Cardiff each year, representing 100 different nationalities. Most will benefit from the PolicESOL course. Feedback has shown that the classes have succeeded in strengthening participants' confidence in the police, making them feel more comfortable in the UK and improving their listening skills and spoken English. The success of the project has been acknowledged with a national award and its adoption and use in other areas of the UK⁶².

Challenges

ESOL teachers were nervous about delivering the PolicESOL material as they were concerned that participants would be uncomfortable with the content. The topic "Introduction to the Police" caused participants to be noticeably quieter and tense. However, as students developed more of an understanding and were able to ask questions they welcomed the opportunity to find out more.

62 Sheffield College has adopted the ESOL course for students who might be considering a career in the police, adding a work placement and volunteer component to the programme.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ It is important to focus solely on the police service in the community and country of resettlement, rather than encouraging participants to compare the police service in the country of origin as this may bring up traumatic memories.
- ✓ Police officer and staff attendance is a key part of building relationships between members of the community and the police. However, it is crucial that learners are given the opportunity to invite the police to attend, rather than having a pre-arranged visit.

New Citizen in Denmark:

'Adult refugees and other immigrants with legal residence in Denmark have access to three years of free language instruction. Municipal authorities are responsible for organising language courses. Language courses are just one part of the integration contract that is signed by the municipality and the refugee. Refugees first take a proficiency test that is used to determine the level of language and literacy. The language centre then chooses the best language course for each individual based on their level and availability. All courses are designed to help refugees and other immigrants learn the language in order to find work as quickly as possible, so they can become 'active citizens'.

Three Language Programmes

- **Programme I** is designed for persons who are illiterate in their mother tongue. The aim is to help students find unskilled work and develop basic skills to facilitate their job search.
- **Programme II** is designed for persons who have some formal education and basic skills. The aim is to understand, speak & read Danish for employment. After successfully finishing Programme II, students can access mainstream training programmes taught in Danish.
- **Programme III** is designed for students who have a medium or long-term education background (high secondary and/or tertiary education). Classes progress quickly and include high-level exercises. Once students have finished the programme, they should be prepared to pursue further education or access employment.

Complements to the programme 'Danish Here and Now'

'Danish Here and Now' is a free online course for beginners that was developed and sponsored by the Ministry for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs. Along with grammar, listening, text and dialogue exercises, the site contains a section called 'Denmark and the Danes' that gives cultural and practical information for living in Denmark (local traditions, holidays, opening hours, courtesies etc).

Top Tips for Education and Language Learning

- ✓ Plan ahead (pre-arrival) for refugee education by using information gathered during selection missions and cultural orientation sessions
- ✓ Link education and language learning to other refugee integration services, e.g. employment, housing and social integration

Children and Young People

- ✓ Create partnerships between schools and refugee support services/caseworkers
- ✓ Provide training for school staff and teachers on refugee issues and addressing refugee children's needs
- ✓ Incorporate strategies to combat racism and xenophobia in the classroom
- ✓ Involve refugee parents and provide for interpreters/translators to facilitate communication
- ✓ Encourage and plan for play time, socialising and other extra-curricular activities

Language Learning

- ✓ Incorporate practical information into language lessons (e.g. how to use public transport) and allow time for refugees to network
- ✓ Volunteers can provide an important cultural and language introduction for refugees
- ✓ Explore different programmes, such as combining language courses with on-the-job training
- ✓ Offer flexible course times for adults, especially for parents and those employed (e.g. evening or weekend courses)
- ✓ Provide childcare to enable greater participation and inclusiveness



Boknetsion Tsegay
Age: 57yrs

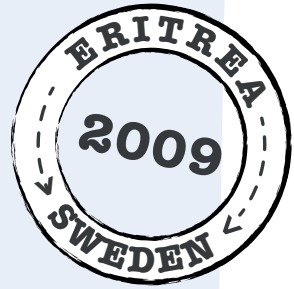
Boknetsion left Eritrea in 1981 when it was occupied by Ethiopia and joined the revolution to try and bring peace to his country. Boknetsion had been training in the medical college for seven years but he had to flee before he was able to complete his training. From 1981 to 2008 he lived in Wad Sherrife refugee camp followed by one year in the Kilo 26 camp, also in Sudan. Though the people of Sudan were kind and welcoming, conditions were unsafe in Sudan and he was imprisoned many times. In November 2009 Boknetsion, his wife and their six children - aged 29, 26, 22, 21, 19 and 2 - were resettled to Sweden, just a few months after being told they would be going.

What were your first impressions upon arrival in Sweden?

When I found out I was moving to Sweden I felt "born again" as I would have the opportunity to live my life with freedom. My arrival to Sweden was very good. The furniture was all ready and I could move in straight away after a night flight. The municipality has been very helpful, they were always asking me "Is there anything we said we would do which we have not?" The support was really honest and upfront and whatever I asked for I got - in accordance with the law. I found the explanation of the laws in Sweden very useful; it was good to know what was expected of me. It was also very important to learn that under Swedish law both refugees and Swedish persons are equal, as this had not been the case where we had lived previously and it made me feel much safer.

What is your outlook on life in Sweden?

In Sweden I feel very safe; on a scale of 0 to 100 the security in Sweden is 200. Here I can speak freely, and my children are very happy. After one month of living in Sweden I started language classes along with a medical course at the hospital, so I can continue my medical studies whilst learning Swedish. In my medical course there are seventeen persons, all migrants from different backgrounds; European, American and refugee. In Sweden it is difficult to learn the language, it's hard to practice because the Swedish people want to live alone and you have to go to them. I think it is better to spread refugees around the country as it forces them to learn Swedish rather than just staying together and speaking their own language.



Chapter 8: The Route to Economic Self Sufficiency: Employment and Training

Employment is one of the main indicators of integration, it allows refugees to contribute economically, interact with the receiving community and improve their overall wellbeing. However, resettled refugees must overcome various hurdles in order to gain employment. The recent economic crisis experienced in many European countries has led to increased unemployment and growing competition for jobs that are available. Governments should consider how they can make provision for services that promote the employment of refugees, given the many barriers they face. In countries like the US, for example, the lack of available low-skilled jobs in some areas has led to a new focus on improving the qualifications of refugees; through training, language learning and validation of diplomas. In certain European countries, like the Czech Republic, the government has made extra efforts

“I have left a very dark place; now I want to learn, get a job and a salary”

Boknetsion Tsegay,

Eritrean refugee resettled to Sweden

to create employment possibilities in the public service sector. Employment should become an integrated part of the planning and coordination of any resettlement programme.

Refugees must balance the need to enter into any employment (normally low-skilled) for financial reasons against the desire to retrain or study to find employment reflecting their skills, credentials and prior experience. NGOs, refugee community organisations, employers and mainstream employment services can play an important role in assisting resettled refugees to identify and develop their skills and experience, which can be harnessed to the benefit of the receiving community. Unlocking the door to employment is beneficial to refugees and employers (who gain a diverse and dedicated workforce), and helps to achieve integration and community cohesion.

Refugees have come to European countries for safety, not to look for employment specifically. Some may have skills that are not immediately marketable in the societies in which they are being resettled. Research in the Netherlands has shown that refugees need more time to get into employment than other third country nationals who have come for migration purposes.

Refugees face major challenges in having their prior educational achievements, qualifications and skills recognised. This has a serious impact on their employment prospects and on the ability of the resettlement country to benefit from the skills they bring. **Recognition of previous studies and qualifications is often a long and complex process.** Some refugees

may be required to go back to university or college due to curriculum differences in their field, or to sit professional examinations to meet the requirements of the receiving country. Some refugees find that their studies are not recognised at all and may be faced with having to start again, or accept that they will not be able to follow their previous profession. Many refugees find it hard to accept that they will have to return to study and many will be unable to do so, due to financial constraints. Refugees unable to obtain prompt recognition of their credentials quickly may have to take low-paying, entry-level jobs, often in posts or sectors far below their actual skill level and prior employment.⁶³ Even when qualifications are recognised there are many barriers to employment.

Barriers to Finding Work

- Acquiring adequate language skills, including technical language
- Qualifications and prior experience are not recognised in the country of resettlement
- Lack of references
- No proof of qualifications, due to lost or damaged official documents
- Discrimination from employers and employment agencies
- Difficulty understanding job search and recruitment procedures, including application procedures, and interviews
- Shortage of jobs
- Unrealistic expectations, in relation to the level of jobs they may be able to get
- Cultural differences in the working environment or professional codes
- Limited access to childcare
- Access to appropriate clothing, transport, work tools

Refugees may need specialist guidance and support

to help them find the best path to re-qualify or have their skills recognised. They need a solid understanding of the labour market and the specific demands for the sector or profession in which they wish to work, otherwise they may embark on lengthy and expensive studies which do not help them to find employment in the end. To make informed decisions about which educational or training opportunities are right for them, refugees need to have information about the costs and time commitment of study and the availability of other options including technical, vocational and on-the-job training. Partnerships with

“Refugees are strong people if they prove they can exercise their profession again. Sympathy is nice, but a job is better!”

Ruud Lubbers, Former UNHCR High Commissioner and former Dutch Prime Minister

⁶³ This mismatching of talent and opportunity a loss for the receiving country as well as the refugee is referred to as de-skilling and brain-waste, a phenomenon that is both recognised and criticised universally.

employment services, professional bodies and universities can help identify the best ways to support refugees to use their skills, talents and qualifications.

Working with Employers and Mainstream Employment Services

Sweden – Employment office responsible for integration

From December 2010, the employment office in Sweden will be responsible for resettled refugees' integration starting around one month after their arrival, using funding that was previously assigned to municipalities. Refugee support workers employed by the municipalities will now only be responsible for integration for the first month after arrival, housing and the Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language training programme. The municipalities will continue to support the integration of refugees who are not yet able to work, such as new mothers and people with health problems.

It remains to be seen how this change will impact on refugee integration; however, it reflects the importance placed on employment as an indicator of integration.

Any resettlement programme should consider employment issues and include services relating to job counselling and work placement. **Establishing links with employers and mainstream employment services** is a good way to help refugees get jobs. The establishment of personal contacts and networking with employers should be given a high priority. Many employers have fears and misconceptions about refugees. It is important to improve employers' understanding of refugees and raise their awareness of the skills they have to offer. This can be done through personal visits and/or group briefing sessions.

Employers with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes may be particularly receptive. **Trade and labour unions**, with an ethic of solidarity, can be important partners.

Their local and national networks can advocate against discrimination and for equal access to employment for refugees.

Attention should be paid to how **refugees are portrayed to employers**. Experience has shown that it is important to

One approach from UK Market Research concluded that portraying "refugees as ordinary people in extraordinary settings" was preferable instead of:

- "As if they were all Einstein's via an unrepresentative and elitist use of famous figures
 - Through shock tactics causing a national guilt trip
 - As not here through choice, however true that may be
 - As if they were the only problem in the world
 - As purely the result of distant dictatorship in far off lands"
- Market Research 1998, Rainey Kelley Campbell Roalfe

recognise and present refugees as workers first, while still considering the fact that some may need initial support as refugees. Voluntary sector support services and refugees themselves can assist employers and mainstream service providers in understanding the cultural backgrounds and needs of refugees, for example by providing practical training, information and advice.

A certain amount of creativity may be needed to locate employment in the community and to establish networks, as the following example from Slovakia shows.

Resettlement of Cuban refugees to Slovakia – Partners to facilitate employment

The NGO Goodwill Society supported the resettlement of eight Cuban refugees to Slovakia. They helped the refugees to find employment by making contact with various employers, including the owner of a ranch and local salsa dance schools (LOBO, Salsa Y Candela, Chose Garcia), who were able to offer employment and also excellent opportunities for social networking with the receiving community.

Tomas Democko, Project Manager, Goodwill Society, Kosice, Slovakia

Training

Training, or re-training, is an effective way of learning a skill or trade that is in demand in the host country. Refugees may possess skills such as farming, weaving or welding but are unsure how to apply them in the resettlement country's economic and cultural context. Training can help refugees to learn about the differences in the trade from one country to another; including demand, approach, regulations and techniques. Retraining involves honing existing skills and gaining a deeper insight into the local labour market requirements, as shown by the US example below. Time spent in training/retraining is also an opportunity to create valuable professional and social networks. Refugee professionals may find retraining a way to enter a field related to their own, when there is no possibility of resuming their former career. For these reasons, it is important that resettlement countries offer affordable, or grant-funded, education and training opportunities to refugees.



Refugee in Bradford © Horton Housing, 2010

Training resettled refugees with the skills that correspond to EU needs can be a response to labour and skills shortages in certain sectors. For example, the European Commission's Agenda⁶⁴ for new skills and jobs estimates that by 2020 there will be a shortage of about one million professionals in the health sector – and up to two million taking into account ancillary healthcare professions. More work is needed to anticipate labour and skills shortages and to identify the role that migration could play in filling such shortages (see the US example on training healthcare professionals as an innovative solution to skills shortages).

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Massachusetts, USA

A renewed interest in locally-produced foods in Massachusetts has created a need for local small-scale farmers. Many immigrants and refugees would like to pursue careers in agriculture, however they lack the information needed to begin farming in a different climate and economy and have limited resources to train or retrain. Beginning in 1998, New Entry was one of the first projects in the US to assist refugees (and other economically disadvantaged persons) to develop commercial farming opportunities. More than training in small-scale, sustainable agriculture, the project offers a range of services for farmers starting out. It helps them to locate farmland, find employment, develop their business and manage production.

The programme is implemented by university staff and students who work as interns. While staff develop the training curriculum, interns prepare and conduct the training classes. Interns have also developed tools such as plain language guides which provide easily understandable instructions for trainees with low-literacy levels or limited English. Refugees participating in the New Entry programme can take a six-week 'Explore Farming' course on agriculture and commercial farming. Those who wish to continue can enter a three-year transition program in which they farm small plots (training farms).

Many trainees enter the programme with experience of, or exposure to, agriculture in their home country. For immigrants and refugees, the programme provides an opportunity to train/retrain in agriculture in a new climate, with different crops, tools and markets. Trainees bring knowledge and know-how that enriches New Entry training and helps expose university interns to a variety of different techniques and crops. 150 refugees have gone through training with New Entry and 60 farmers, primarily Hmong, Khmer, African, and Latino, have graduated from the New Entry Farm Business Training Course since 2005.

⁶⁴ European Commission, Communication 682, A contribution towards new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment, 2010, European Commission.

Refugee Entrepreneurship

Self-employment or enterprise is one way for refugees to integrate into the labour market. Refugees may have previous business experience - formal or informal - and can put their skills to use and provide services or products that contribute to economic growth. Other refugees may be first-time entrepreneurs, but with guidance, can develop a solid business plan. Refugee businesses can also generate jobs for refugees in the community helping to reduce unemployment. There are bureaucratic hurdles and financial risks involved in starting a business. To ensure that refugees have up-to-date information and support, partnerships are needed with small **business networks, banks and social enterprise groups**.

Not all refugee organisations have expertise in business creation. However, some basic knowledge will help the refugee get the most out of a meeting with a professional business adviser. The following example shows the questions a caseworker should ask before making a referral to a business adviser.

The checklist below, created by the 'Refugees Into Business' project, aims to help case-workers refer refugees to a business adviser with enough information to get appropriate advice and develop an initial business plan.

- ✓ How are the client's English language abilities? How is their written and spoken English? Do they need English lessons?
- ✓ Will the client need an interpreter to work with a business adviser? Who will provide one?
- ✓ What cultural background is the client from? Is there anything business advisers need to be aware of?
- ✓ What does the client need to know about starting a business in the UK?
- ✓ Where should advice start?
- ✓ Does the client have any other pressing issues such as housing, health, education or finances?
- ✓ Does the client have a business idea? What is the basis of the idea? Is it open to mainstream or based in the community?
- ✓ Does the client have a written business plan? Do they know about business plans?

Refugees Enterprise Partnership, *Refugee Business Advice: A Toolkit for Refugee Community Organisations: Working with Refugees*, 2006, UK.

8.1 Employment and Training in Practice

A Practice in the UK

Manpower Inc Work Placements - Refugee Action UK and Manpower Inc

Project Period: 2009 - ongoing

Location: Manchester, UK

Funding: Refugee Action UK support is funded by the UK Border Agency, who are partially funded through the European Refugee Fund (ERF).

“Now I can really see the difference between a good job application form and a bad application form!”

Refugee on a Manpower Placement

Refugee Action, a UK charity, and Manpower Inc, an international employment agency, set up a work placement programme to give refugees an opportunity to get work experience in the UK and to develop their skills and knowledge for future employment. After

applying to advertised placements, refugees can then be offered a real work context to use their reading, writing, verbal and listening skills. The unpaid placement is full-time, Monday to Friday for two weeks. Refugees are involved in basic entry-level administration tasks, and gain the additional experience of learning how people apply for jobs and are recruited.

The role of Refugee Action in the partnership is to give refugees a one-to-one pre-placement briefing about what will be expected from them and how to get the most out of the placement. At the end of their first day Refugee Action contacts the refugee and Manpower to find out how the placement is going. After the placement, Manpower provides refugees with a reference and personal feedback about their performance.

A refugee with a high level of English, from previous studies in the UK and a PhD, talked of how nervous he was when asked if he would like to make some phone calls on behalf of Manpower. He described that, although he struggled at first, he felt much more confident after a morning of telephone work and identified that this had made a real difference in his telephone manner.

Refugee Action, 2010

As an international employment agency, Manpower has a vast network of clients in a

wide range of sectors. This was helpful for refugee professionals who were having difficulties developing their professional contacts, especially in unregulated professions. The Manpower team found it interesting and rewarding to meet refugees from different countries. As part of the partnership, Refugee Action provided Manpower staff with Refugee and Asylum Seeker Awareness Training.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Ensure refugees are clear on the work placement requirements such as arriving on time and wearing appropriate clothes
- ✓ Make the experience as close to the real job application process to maximise learning

World of Work programme (WOW) is a pre-employment work orientation course involving a series of six different modules. They are funded by the US government and delivered by Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) a Louisville, Kentucky (USA) based non-governmental organisation. Each refugee arriving is enrolled on the course, and can complete each module in 1-3 weeks. Classes meet once a week for approximately 1-1.5 hrs, for the following modules:

- 1. Introduction and Basics of the American Work Culture:** Basic employer expectations and terminology are addressed
- 2. Application Process:** Looking at sample pre-employment skill tests, application forms, employment tax documentation, personal background checks, drug or alcohol screening and release forms, harassment policies, etc.
- 3. Interviews:** Mock interviews are compulsory, complete with evaluation and critique. Dress policies, workplace communication, and maximizing personal appearance are also covered
- 4. Job Retention:** This module addresses how to retain your job, as well as reviewing workplace safety, typical company policies, common employer/employee problems, sick day procedures
- 5. Understanding Your Paycheck:** KRM staff give a line by line explanation of a typical paycheck
- 6. Benefits, Insurance, and Review:** KRM explain basic employee benefits and qualifications as well as benefit compliance, worker's compensation Insurance and accident/injury reporting is discussed in detail

As a result, 70% of KRM clients completing the WOW program successfully find employment.

A Practice in the Netherlands

EMPLOOI - Dutch Council for Refugees

Project Period: 1989 - ongoing

Location: The Netherlands

Other partners/actors: University Assistance Fund (UAF)

Funding: Contracts from municipalities.

Emplooi was set up by the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCfR) in response to the high unemployment among refugees. In 2000 Emplooi became an independent foundation; with mentors spread throughout the Netherlands. Since its creation it has helped 11,000 refugees enter the Dutch labour market.

To help refugees get into jobs, Emplooi carries out various activities:

- Co-ordinates a network of 100 mainly retired volunteer advisers/mentors, the majority of whom are entrepreneurs and business persons who support refugees into employment
- Holds a database of jobs and details of refugees available for work, to match them much like a job agency
- Helps refugees who wish to set up their own business
- Sets up internships and work placements for refugees

“I am very satisfied... through (Emplooi’s) good contacts in the business world I could find a job relatively quickly. On my own it would have taken considerably more time to find the nice administrative job I currently have.”

Refugee client of Emplooi

Emplooi mentors work voluntarily for a minimum of two days per week and are matched to refugees depending on their experience and employment background. Mentors help by first discussing, at length, the employment possibilities with the refugee. Mentors may then assist the refugees to find vacancies, write job applications, accompany them to interviews and introduce them to employers. Once the refugees are employed, mentors can continue to support the refugees and their employers in their new working relationship.

Identifying Mentors

Most of the volunteer mentors are recently retired, aged 55 years or over. They are recruited through word of mouth and positive promotion of the project, in addition to focused advertising.

A Practice in the USA

Career Paths in the Health Sector in Minnesota - International Institute of Minnesota (IIM)

Project Period: 1990 - ongoing

Location: Minnesota, USA

Other partners/actors: Employers (long-term care staff and hospital staff), funders, Community agencies (other resettlement programs) and International Institute staff

Funding: The Greater Twin Cities United Way, The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, and The Resettlement Programs Office (Minnesota Department of Human Services)

The NGO 'International Institute of Minnesota (IIM)' developed and implemented a nationally recognised programme offering a career path for refugees and other third country nationals interested in employment in the medical field. The three-step programme includes:

- Nursing assistant training: 8 and 11 week training programs to qualify nursing assistants to work in nursing homes and other healthcare facilities
- Academic skills training for medical professionals and an English language programme for the medical field
- Assistance of a Medical Career Advancement Coordinator

The fully accredited national curriculum and training programme for nursing assistants combines theory with practical hospital training, in a mock hospital room. It also includes a medical vocabulary language training programme and a cultural orientation component, related to healthcare and hygiene requirements in the United States.

Identifying the Need

In the United States resettled refugees need to find employment as soon as possible after arrival and thus normally start with low skilled jobs, such as food processing or manufacturing. With an ongoing financial crisis and needs for skilled labour in the technology industry, such low skilled jobs requiring limited recognized qualifications and language skills are becoming sparse. In addition new methods needed to be developed to respond to the need for staff in the healthcare sector to serve an increasingly ageing population in Minnesota.

Achievements

Since it started the programme has helped 350 persons to qualify as nurses and more than 1700 to qualify as nursing assistants. People from more than 30 different countries have benefitted from the IIM services. The pass rates of those who attend the programme is higher than that of the public community colleges.

Challenges

The assessment of applicants to the programme is key. When students have not been assessed at the right level in terms of their language and academic readiness, the programme has not worked for them. It has also been a challenge ensuring that the programme is really supported by health sector employers, to ensure access to employment and further training.

Top Tips for Employment and Training

- ✓ Ensure there is accurate identification of the refugee's employment needs and set realistic goals and expectations
- ✓ Ensure the availability of expert support to have refugees' qualifications recognised or re-certified
- ✓ Work with universities, training institutions and professional bodies to provide programmes to support refugees to re-qualify or develop existing skills to meet local labour market needs
- ✓ Provide refugees with advice on job search, application procedures and workplace cultures
- ✓ Establish mentoring programmes to support refugees into employment
- ✓ Work with employers to set up internships or work placements
- ✓ Provide access to business start-up support such as micro credits, advice and information on tax, accountancy, human resources
- ✓ Create and strengthen links with trade unions, employers and mainstream employment services
- ✓ Be supportive of employers and mainstream employment services to empower them with facts about refugees e.g. through training sessions on status documentation and cultural backgrounds



Basma Abdulkareem
age: 61 yrs

Basma had to leave Baghdad because of the war. She travelled with her daughter, her son-in-law and their children to Syria where she received social support from UNHCR. In Iraq, Basma had studied for a BA in Psychology and Social Work and was employed as a social worker and later as a factory owner however, in Syria, she was not allowed to work. When her son-in-law died, her daughter went to Belgium where she claimed asylum and was subsequently granted refugee status. Basma was offered resettlement to the US, but she refused in order to be with her daughter and grandchildren in Belgium. After seven years in Syria, Basma was resettled to Belgium in September 2009.

What did you think of Belgium prior to your arrival?

I thought Belgium was going to be very beautiful and I would be able to work and study, but due to my bad health I have not been able to. I am diabetic and also have problems with my heart and eyes. Before arriving in Belgium, I received information from the person from the reception agency who explained the health system, how much things cost and what services there were. When I asked about work in factories, I was told there were only chocolate factories!

How was it when you arrived in Belgium?

When we arrived at the airport it was really nice as the same person from the reception agency, who had been with us in Syria, was there to meet us at the airport, this made us feel very welcome. I was then housed for six months in the asylum seeker centre in Sint-Truiden – this place was so beautiful and I really wanted to stay there. I was together initially with the 37 persons who had travelled with me from Syria, they felt like family and I was not afraid

anymore. In the centre I received a three week orientation to Belgium, this was in Arabic and it was really helpful, I also received three weeks of language classes in Dutch.



How are you getting along now?

At the moment I receive social benefits of €740 a month, this is dependent on my health needs and my age as I am over 60. I must go for reviews every six months, to ensure I can receive this. I currently live close to my daughter who lives in Brussels. Due to my health problems I need a ground floor flat, yet this is difficult to find for the budget I have as Brussels is more expensive. For the last year I have been living in a flat rented to me by a local NGO which I pay for with my social allowance.

What challenges have you experienced in Belgium?

Initially I found using the metro difficult, but now I can use it well and it's free as I am over 60. It has been a problem for me trying to find an apartment to live in. Also it is strange as in Iraq when you are older you are looked after by the community, yet in Belgium this does not happen the same, you are more alone as an old person.

What would you like to do in the future?

My apartment is a very small studio. I think it will be better to move to the Flemish part of Brussels as I will be able to get a better apartment with rent subsidised by the commune. First my daughter and her children will try to find a place there, then I will follow. I also want to learn a language. I am trying to improve my English at the moment, but because of my health I cannot access the orientation and language classes –once my health is better I will also go to these.

Chapter 9: Healthcare: Needs and Services

Physical and mental healthcare are vital to the well-being of refugees and critical to their ability to adjust and integrate into a new community. Refugees' healthcare needs can include both common ailments and specific health



“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”

*World Health Organisation's
definition of health*



problems that are the result of their past experiences. Governments, refugee workers and health workers can enable refugees to understand and use the healthcare system to meet their needs. Among common challenges for resettled refugees are long waiting lists for the provision of specialised care services, including counselling, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation services for victims of torture. A lack of provision for interpretation also causes difficulties both for health practitioners and the refugees themselves. When refugees are required to pay for healthcare, cost is a significant barrier; many simply cannot afford it, especially in the period closely following their arrival. This chapter gives a brief overview of some of these issues and examples of innovative ways in which refugees can be assisted on the road to recovery.

The right to health is defined, in Article 12 of the widely ratified **International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights**, as the right of everyone, regardless of their migration status, to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In order to achieve the full realization of this right, State Parties to the Covenant are bound to take the necessary steps to ensure access to timely and appropriate healthcare.

See IRCT discussion paper, 'Torture victims right to rehabilitation' 2011 and the 'International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights', Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1966.

In most cases, refugees' access to healthcare has been severely disrupted in their flight from persecution and subsequent period of displacement. Often this compounds existing health problems and can create new ones. In the case of torture victims, a failure to identify their needs and provide appropriate healthcare promptly in the country of resettlement can lead to chronic health problems, particularly in relation to mental health.

Some of the Health Problems Experienced by Refugees

Health Concern	Key Issues
Mental health, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post traumatic stress disorder symptoms • Depression, anxiety, grief, guilt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated with exposure to torture or other traumatic events and other incidents in the course of the refugee experience • May persist long after arrival in a safe country • Can be exacerbated by stress in the period of resettlement
Nutritional deficiencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron, Folate, Vitamin A • Vitamin D – persons with dark skin where climate or lifestyle in country of resettlement lead to reduced exposure to sunlight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May result from prolonged food deprivation and/or sub-optimal diet; whether in detention or elsewhere • Potentially serious health implications (e.g. maternal Vitamin D deficiency associated with bony rickets in offspring)
Intestinal parasitic disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endemic in developing countries, often asymptomatic • May be associated with iron deficiency, can be life threatening if immune-suppressed
Infectious diseases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIDS/HIV • Tuberculosis • Hepatitis B and C 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some infectious diseases endemic in developing countries • Identification of infectious disease is important for both public and individual patient care purposes
Injuries sustained in the course of trauma and torture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be untreated, poorly managed and create long-term physical and mental health problems needing to be addressed
Childhood development	Relatively high incidence of childhood developmental problems due variously to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation and trauma, poor antenatal and birth care; • Prior exposure to infectious disease
Dental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The result of poor diet, damage through torture and limited access to the resources required for dental hygiene in the course of the refugee experience
Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of hearing impairment, e.g., from exposure to explosive activity in conflict zones or repeated beating
Immunisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low rates or disrupted immunisation against vaccine-preventable disease in many countries • Acceptance of immunisation in resettlement countries may be affected by past negative experiences of immunisation programs
Women's healthcare (e.g. breast and cervical screening)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accorded a low priority in countries struggling to meet acute healthcare needs • Female genital mutilation prevalent in some countries of origin has serious implications for women's health and gynaecological care

Based on: UNHCR (2002), *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*, UNHCR, Geneva, p195

Planning for Healthcare

Appropriate healthcare should be planned for and considered throughout the resettlement process. This should begin with the receiving organisations being informed of refugees' health needs before they arrive. This information is vital to ensure appropriate health services and suitable housing is in place. For example, if a refugee is in a wheelchair, the receiving organisation may need to arrange a wheelchair to meet them at the airport, a vehicle that can hold wheelchairs and accommodation that has wheelchair access. It is also useful for receiving health services to have an idea about the experiences of the refugee group in advance e.g. experiences of trauma or gender-based violence. In that case, housing should be organised in a place where specialised services are available and an early orientation to these services should be made. However, being informed in advance should not lead to rigid assumptions about refugees' health. It is important to **conduct an individual assessment** as soon as possible following arrival. A person's wellbeing is dependent on a multitude of factors, including changes in his or her living environment and safety situation. In addition, health assessments and information about refugees' health received before they arrive may be out of date.

Healthcare professionals may need additional information, training and support for working with resettled refugees, as it is likely that refugees' past experiences and health needs will be very different to those of the local community. Staff may also be unfamiliar with working through interpreters and unsure how to access them (see Chapter 3).

Refugees may not share the same perspectives on health and healthcare as providers in resettlement countries. For example, refugees who may have turned previously to traditional healers or natural medicines may not be used to the prescribing of medication, or may be used to buying the drugs they need, i.e. without a prescription or medical consultation. Some refugees may be very reluctant to accept any medicines. A number of refugees may hesitate to communicate health concerns, due to past experiences, fear of authority or shame in the case of torture and/or sexual violence. Refugees may also have culturally specific ways of describing their pain and symptoms. It is important that health professionals are aware of such issues, and are given the correct information so that they can understand refugees' perceptions and experiences, as this will assist in providing appropriate care.

Informing Refugees about Health

Refugees also need to have the healthcare system carefully explained to them, so they can understand how to access it and what their entitlements are. This can be done through group briefings (see Basics Chapter 3), information leaflets in their own language and one-to-one orientation.

It is important that the refugees understand where to go in an emergency and how to visit a doctor. Preventative healthcare is also crucial; refugees need information about dental healthcare, sexual health and HIV. It may be useful to run specialised information sessions, or to advise refugees on how to access specialised clinics, being sensitive to gender.

9.1 Healthcare in Practice

A Practice in Finland

HAAPA – Ministry of Interior

Project Period: February 2010 -2011

Location: Helsinki, Finland

Other partners/actors: Municipalities, Finnish National ERF Board, trauma training and professional counselling outfits, SOS Services

Funding: European Refugee Fund (ERF)

HAAPA⁶⁵, Finnish for aspen tree, is a project that enhances the placement of highly vulnerable resettled refugees in local municipalities. The project supports the work of local municipalities by granting them funding (from ERF) to facilitate the reception of vulnerable refugees and to develop special services directed to them in the areas of health, psycho-social and educational support. There is one HAAPA coordinator and one secretary who work at the Ministry and with the municipalities. The project targets vulnerable resettled refugees defined as: children and women who are at-risk or are victims (particularly of mental, physical or sexual abuse), people with serious medical needs and children and young people who may be regarded as being vulnerable because of their family position. HAAPA also helps municipalities by training refugee workers in how to give psycho-social support and trauma therapy, as well as giving an overview presentation about specific forms of trauma and forms of sexual abuse.

Municipalities that receive funding focus their work on the development of a range of healthcare services e.g. mental health, trauma and rehabilitation, psycho-social support, and methods of training for specific groups including women, people with disabilities and those who cannot read or write.

Identifying the Need

HAAPA was created in response to the lack of local resettlement places and special service models for especially vulnerable resettled refugees. It was also created in order to help

65 In Finnish HAAPA stands for Haavoittuvassa asemassa olevien kiintiöpakolaisten kuntiin sijoittamisen edistämishanke

municipalities apply for and run ERF projects, as they were not used to dealing with this particular funding and it was therefore underexploited.

Achievements

Since the project started in February 2010, eleven municipalities, i.e. a third of all municipalities in Finland that accept refugees, are active with HAAPA. Approximately 30 of the 53 urgent resettlement cases accepted in Finland have been placed into HAAPA assisted municipalities.

Challenges

The main challenge is to get new and more municipalities into the resettlement process. At the same time, negative attitudes towards refugees have been growing and the right wing anti-immigrant party in Finland has had an increase in popularity.

A Practice in the Netherlands

Mind-Spring

Project Period: 2002 – ongoing

Location: Netherlands

Partners/actors: municipalities, Context GGZ (mental health prevention), Dutch Council for Refugees (DCfR), Central Agency for Refugees (COA), HealthNet TPO International, local mental health providers

Funding: Menzis insurance company within the framework of Regeling Zorg Asielzoekers RZA funding the national work, and the European Refugee Fund (ERF) funding international projects

Mind-Spring's overall aim is to improve the mental health along with the social, economical and cultural integration of asylum seekers and refugees. It is an intervention programme in which trained asylum seekers and refugees volunteer to give psycho-social support and education to groups of fellow asylum seekers and refugees. Psycho-education and parenting support is provided in refugees' own language, taking into account their culture and customs. The trained asylum seeker or refugee works in partnership with and is coached by a Municipal Health Services professional. Both parties work with the *Mind-Spring* training guide.

The methodology adopted by *Mind-Spring* centres on giving asylum seekers and refugees greater insight into their problems, the tools to handle these problems better and, if required, referring them for specific professional

“*Mind-Spring* empowers refugees and gives them a stronger sense of identity in their new country”

Paul Sterk

help. In addition, participants are informed about the structure of the healthcare system in the Netherlands and the people who are employed in that system. A major component of the training programme is empowerment: strengthening the individual's problem-solving abilities and sense of identity.

Identifying the Need

Paul Sterk originally started the *Mind-Spring* methodology working with internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Sierra Leone. Upon returning to the Netherlands, he met with the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCfR), which was looking for a new way to approach the recurring mental health problems of refugees and asylum seekers. Collaborating with them and with the NGO PHAROS (a knowledge and advisory centre on migrants, refugees and health) together they carried out a study to identify refugee and asylum seeker needs in the area. The results, combined with consultations with a group of highly educated refugees, assisted in forming the Netherlands *Mind-Spring* methodology

Achievements

Since starting the programme, 180 trainers, from ten different countries, have been trained, among whom 56 are still working with *Mind-Spring*. By sharing and adapting the methodology, the programme now runs in Belgium and Denmark.

Challenges

At first the training manual was too complicated, scientific and theory-based. *Mind-Spring* simplified it with more practical exercises and experiences, especially for implementation with the changing asylum seeker and refugee population, where some are uneducated or illiterate. As the work is voluntary, it is hard to keep *Mind-Spring* trainers committed. Commitment has improved through developing the idea that *Mind-Spring* is the trainers' programme, i.e., for the trainers and for people who need mental health support, with *Mind-Spring* administrators only supporting the trainers' programme.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ As trainers do not always have a mental health background, it is important to have a cooperative relationship with the local mental health institute
- ✓ When transferring the programme to other contexts and countries, solid information is needed about the possibilities that refugees have in those contexts and countries. For example, what are the opportunities for a refugee in Greece and what in Sweden? It is essential to be realistic about what is possible in the country where refugees and asylum seekers live all the while considering their experience and background
- ✓ Some subjects are taboo or very hard to talk about, and methodology must be adjusted

constantly. Among Somali groups for example, sexual harassment has been a difficult issue that no one is very willing to discuss. In response, the trainers and Somalis developed cards that have helped in the expression of feelings about certain issues .

A Practice in the UK

The Natural Growth Project - Freedom From Torture (formerly the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture)

Project Period: 1992 - ongoing

Location: London, UK

Other partners/actors: Colindale Allotment Association; Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve

Funding: Grants from Ecominds (Big Lottery Fund), 'Edible Islington' (Local Government), and donations from individuals.

Freedom from Torture provides survivors of torture and their families with medical and social care, practical assistance and psychological and physical therapies. The organisation also provides documentation of torture through medico-legal reports, seeks to influence the public and decision makers to ensure the rights of survivors are upheld and conducts multidisciplinary training and capacity building work for organisations working with survivors of torture around the world. Taking a holistic approach to rehabilitation, the Natural Growth Project is one of a range of creative therapeutic programmes offered, including art and music therapy.



“Out here I feel calm, I feel I am in tune with the water, with the sky.
I can see birds flying freely; maybe one day I too will fly
This place is like my home; these are my brothers and sisters
I can wait for these seeds to grow; they will come when they are ready,
I cannot hurry them. Our corn will grow big and strong; it is safer here than
it was in Africa”



A survivor from Freedom from Torture's Natural Growth Project

Freedom from Torture's Natural Growth Project combines horticulture and psychotherapy, taking as its fundamental premise that everyone, everywhere, whatever their experiences, has a continuing relationship with nature. It is designed to address the challenges many torture survivors find in verbally communicating past experiences and present problems. For some of their most physically and mentally damaged clients, being in the open and in touch with the elements can bring instant relief, and open the path to extraordinary change. The psychotherapeutic aim of the project is to facilitate growth and healthy development

within the individual, allowing nature to do its work, while at times reflecting on clients' experiences.

The project is currently staffed by three psychotherapists and a project worker, the latter also dealing with all aspects of horticulture. Some of the work takes place in a small, fenced-off garden section at the London centre, whilst the rest is located on allotments in Colindale.

After an initial assessment for the project, clients are placed according to their needs in one of several options: for extremely fragile clients, the enclosed garden provides a secure space for individual and group psychotherapeutic work. On the allotments, one group meets weekly for two hours on a communal plot, together with a psychotherapist and the project worker. Another group with similar staff support meets either weekly or fortnightly for a day; some of these clients, being more robust, hold their own keys and can visit the allotments whenever they wish. A weekly men's gardening group also offers the opportunity of working together on outdoor horticultural activities rather than psychotherapy. In winter, some of the groups meet indoors, engaging in projects usually with a nature-related theme, such as producing mosaic paving stones destined for the garden, each representing an aspect of their experience.



© Freedom From Torture, 2011

Identifying the Need

For torture survivors who have experienced the extreme limits of inhumanity, it is often necessary to introduce a different way of working, where traditional talking therapy is not considered helpful or accessible to the individual. This may be appropriate for those who are too traumatised to access language at all and others who need some form of interim medium. A combination of talking and practical work is enormously helpful; here communication can begin to address the most difficult of topics, while one is seemingly engaged in mundane gardening tasks.

For some individuals, simply being enclosed in a room with a therapist can echo prison experiences. When one works outdoors in nature, immediately a different dynamic is established. In nature we are connected with a wider world; the torture experience becomes a part of life, rather than the only thing a client is thinking about. The healing process can begin.

For survivors participating in the project, the reduction of nightmares, flashbacks, terror and other symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are typically monitored. Equally importantly, members of the group have moved from a position of being unable to express themselves, and feeling extremely isolated, to one of being part of a robust social structure, making and valuing their own and others' contributions. A sense of ownership and belonging to this garden evolves; a small kind of homeland is created, from which clients can venture forth emboldened in their lives. The possibility for a client to plant a memorial shrub, and tend it as part of their process of grieving, has also proved enormously helpful.

Challenges

Sustaining a client's interest in the project when they are dealing with difficult circumstances in their lives can be very challenging. However, the cyclical aspect of nature helps individuals understand that these experiences too will pass. Working outdoors in winter can be difficult; hence the development of different indoor winter projects for this season. Sourcing continuation funding for the project is an ongoing challenge.

Top Tips for Healthcare

- ✓ Be sensitive to gender issues in medicine, especially when dealing with women's health including gynaecological and prenatal health. In some cultures it is unacceptable for women to be seen by a male doctor or gynaecologist.
- ✓ Interpreters should be trained in medical interpretation, confidentiality issues and cultural sensitivity
- ✓ Medical professionals should be briefed on the backgrounds of refugee groups and on the healthcare approach in refugees' country of origin or asylum
- ✓ Clear and effective communication is essential pre-departure and post-arrival, including transmitting health documents, medical histories and information about specific needs
- ✓ A full health assessment should be carried out pre-departure and post-arrival with the help of an interpreter if needed
- ✓ Healthcare professionals should receive information and training in relation to specific refugee health issues, such as the effects of torture
- ✓ Refugees should be given information about how the health system works and how to access it in the country of resettlement through group briefings, written information and orientation

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Annex 1: The Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees: A Charter of Principles

The key principles were the product of workshops from the ICMC Resettlement training on the reception and integration of refugees, from 14 – 16th June 2010, in Sintra, Portugal, which gathered 45 participants and facilitators from civil society and municipalities working with refugees from 11 European countries¹

For those refugees who are unable to return home to their country of origin and have no prospect of locally integrating into their country of asylum, the only durable solution open to them is refugee resettlement². The numbers of those in need of resettlement continues to far outweigh the actual number of resettlement places offered by states. Even though in many cases resettlement can be life saving, by taking refugees out of often dangerous and perilous situations. But what happens when refugees arrive in their new country? In order to rebuild their lives, it is important that refugees are given the support to be independent and integrate with dignity into their new society.

This charter outlines guiding principles for the delivery of services in relation to the reception and integration of resettled refugees. The charter focuses around four core principles, which are applicable to various stages of the resettlement process. It is by no means exhaustive but captures the key principles as developed by practitioners from Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, The Netherlands, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the UK.

The signatories to this charter agree to the guiding principles within it, and where possible to implement or advocate for the implementation of them in the delivery of services to refugees.

¹ For more information visit <http://www.icmc.net/>

² Refugee resettlement is the transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them. Department of International Protection, UNHCR. (November 2004) Resettlement Handbook. Geneva, UNHCR. Chapter 1, page 2

1 Empowering refugees, fostering independence

Resettlement programmes should have the refugee at the centre and focus on empowering refugees to do it for themselves.

- ✓ Cultural and other diversities should be taken into account in the design of integration support programmes and the delivery of information.
- ✓ To improve service provision resettled refugees experiences should be regularly sought, through a variety of methods, which are culturally sensitive, take into account gender and age, and encourage honest feedback.
- ✓ Where possible previously resettled or recognised refugees should be involved in service provision.

2 Enabling integration

Refugees should be provided with the tools and support to enable them to integrate.

- ✓ Pre-departure information should be timely, provide a realistic picture of the resettlement country and appropriate to the refugees needs. It should be communicated to relevant actors involved in the resettlement process, especially those receiving refugees.
- ✓ Specialist integration support should be time limited, targeted to promote independence, phased out and lead into mainstream services.
- ✓ Individual integration plans should be in place to enable refugees to identify personal aims and goals for integration and what is needed to achieve these goals.
- ✓ Refugees should have access to timely information on key topics in a language they understand, e.g. rights and responsibilities, employment, education, housing and health.
- ✓ Housing should be secure, stable and offer opportunities for refugees to integrate with the local community.
- ✓ Family reunification and permanent residence status for resettled refugees is a key factor in enabling a refugees integration, where possible appropriate legislation should be in place to provide for this.

3 Enhancing partnerships, planning together

Planning in advance and ongoing collaboration with a variety of partners is crucial to enabling refugees to integrate. These partnerships can be on a variety of levels, for example working in partnership with the refugees themselves, the local community and mainstream service providers such as health service, housing, employment agencies, schools, adult education providers and the police.

- ✓ Stakeholder planning and communication is key to enabling the integration of refugees. Regular stakeholder meetings should be established early on and be flexible to involve all actors involved with the resettlement of refugees.
- ✓ Communication between actors in the country of resettlement and those in the country of asylum is important to link the resettlement phases and ensure information on refugees' specific needs is passed on. This information should be used to plan for the refugees' arrival and ongoing support to make sure appropriate services are in place e.g. interpreters, specific housing and health requirements.
- ✓ Mainstream services should be informed on the issues facing refugees and their rights, to enable better understanding and informed and effective service provision for refugees and the wider community.

4 Strengthening receiving communities

Receiving communities play an important role in creating an environment to facilitate refugees' integration, they should be given the information and opportunity to enable them to do this.

- ✓ The local community should be engaged and informed about the refugees arrival from the beginning through a variety of appropriate and effective methods e.g. information sessions and dispersing of leaflets around refugee groups.
- ✓ A warm welcome to the country of resettlement is crucial and should be simple and culturally appropriate.
- ✓ Where possible local volunteers should be involved in supporting refugees, as they can play a vital role in providing important social bridges linking refugees with the local community.

Annex 2: The Common Basic Principles (CBPs) in Integration

1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States
2. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union
3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible
4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration
5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society
6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration
7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens
8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law
9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration
10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public-policy formation and implementation
11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective

Annex 3: Definition of a Family for Family Reunion in European Countries Resettling Refugees

Definition of Family ✓ = yes * = yes with conditions	Nuclear family (Mother, Father, children under 18yrs)	Includes unmarried partners	Includes children over 18yrs	Include married children	Include dependant family members (if so who?)
Czech Rep	✓			* ¹	
Denmark	* ²	* ³			
France	✓ ⁴				
Finland	✓		* ⁵		* ⁶
Iceland	✓	✓	* ⁷		
Ireland	✓		* ⁸		* ⁹
Netherlands	✓	* ¹⁰	* ¹¹		* ¹²
Norway	✓	* ¹³	* ¹⁴		* ¹⁵
Portugal	✓	✓	* ¹⁶	* ¹⁷	* ¹⁸
Romania					
Sweden	✓				* ¹⁹
UK	✓	✓	* ²⁰	* ²¹	* ²²

1. Yes if under 18years.
2. Spouses and children under the age of 15. Children between 15-18 are dealt with on a case to case basis.
3. Must prove co-habitation.
4. Children under the age of 19.
5. No as the main rule, but exceptions possible they are fully dependant.
6. Only if fully dependent and there was previous family life – include any relative of a refugee.
7. Only if there are compassionate and compelling reasons.
8. Yes, if included at time of selection for resettlement
9. Grandparent, Parents, brother, sister, child, grandchild, ward or guardian of the refugee who is dependent on the refugee or is suffering from mental or physical disability to such an extent that he cannot maintain him/herself.
10. Only if the unmarried partner is dependant.
11. Only if they are dependant.
12. Dependant unmarried partners, children over 18years and parents.
13. Only if they have been cohabiting for at least two years or are expecting a child.
14. Yes if they are a single dependent child.
15. Single parent over 60 years with no family in home country.
16. Yes, if legally incapable of caring for themselves, or if single, attending a Portuguese educational institution and dependant on parents.
17. Yes, if under 18 years.
18. Parents and parents- in- law of adult legal residents.
19. Special circumstances, persons who have lived close together may be included.
20. Only if there are compassionate and compelling reasons.
21. Only if there are compassionate and compelling reasons (if still dependent).
22. Only if there are compassionate and compelling reasons.

Annex 4: Client Charter

The service will provide:

- A named caseworker to support, inform and advise you.
- A Personal Integration Plan (PIP) (for clients aged 16 and over) that lists what you want to achieve.
- Help and assistance with finding and using services.
- a fair service to all our clients.

Our service:

- We normally work during office hours: 9.30am – 5.30pm, Monday – Friday.
- Our staff cannot look after children.
- We can give you different choices, but we cannot make them for you. Our role is to help you to do things for yourself.

Your rights:

- A free and confidential service
- Impartial advice and information delivered during home visits, drop-ins and group sessions
- Information concerning UK Government policy changes to Gateway
- To read case notes and PIPs and change if necessary
- To take part in regular PIP reviews with your caseworker
- To take part in an end of programme evaluation.
- The services of an interpreter if needed.
- To work with a Refugee Action volunteer if needed.
- To complain if we do not meet the standards of service

The Refugee Action team will:

- Be on time
- Return telephone calls within 24 hours (except week-ends and public holidays)
- Give you a named contact if your caseworker is on holiday.
- Rearrange appointments as soon as possible if we need to cancel the previously arranged appointment.
- The Refugee Action team would like to hear your views about our service and has a complaints procedure.

If you have a comment about our service:

- Speak to your caseworker and discuss it with them

*Reference: Gateway Protection Programme:
Good Practice Guide., British Refugee Council and Refugee Action (2008) p62*

Annex 5: Job Description Refugee Resettlement caseworker – IRC Texas

Responsibilities

Responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the best possible resettlement experience for each client, from pre-arrival preparations and point of entry to successful acculturation. This may include assurance that appropriate pre-arrival services are in place (locating and securing suitable housing, purchasing housing essentials, furniture and basic food supplies, setting up utilities etc).
- Providing individualized and group orientations and supporting clients through social service referrals, medical access and advocacy services by assessing and evaluating each client's distinct needs.
- Independently developing reasonable resettlement and/or self-sufficiency plans and timelines for each client and managing client expectations.
- Ensuring that clients are provided the basic tools necessary to meet their established short-term goals and objectives.
- Assessing and monitoring client progress at regular intervals to ensure progress on goals is made, designated resources are maximized; modifying initial resettlement plans and other case file documents as required.
- Ensuring compliance with case file management and reporting requirements.

Requirements

- Undergraduate degree preferred, ideally in Social Work or an equivalent field of study
- Minimum of 1-2 years relevant work experience in human services field.
- Demonstrated success working and communicating effectively in a multi-cultural environment.
- Proven ability to contribute both independently and as a key team member.
- Self- starter with excellent problem solving skills combined with the proven ability to multi-task, prioritize duties, and manage time effectively.
- Fluent in English, both spoken and written; bilingual ability in one of the predominant languages of the local client base is desired.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, Outlook)
- Valid driver's license, reliable vehicle with current insurance, and the ability to travel regularly throughout the service delivery area (home visits, agency visits, service provider visits etc).

Annex 6: Supervision Form

Name and Date

Work Performance

This could include:

- Comments from previous supervision
 - Progress on current actions/objectives
 - Feedback: what's gone well, what's gone less well
 - New actions and objectives
-

Team Working

Discuss any information or issues relating to team working

Support and Development Needs

Staff Member's Comment

I confirm this to be an accurate record of our supervision meeting

Job Holder:

Line Manager:

Annex 7: Personal Integration Plan (PIP)

Headings:

Housing

Legal

Benefits & finance

Education & Training

Employment & Volunteering

Health & Well Being

Social & Leisure

Then under each heading:

Background	
Hopes and Aspirations	Timescale
1st Review: What has happened since the last meeting?	
Have hopes and aspirations changed? Comments if yes:	
Further action agreed? Y N	
See action sheet (<i>fill in action agreed on actions sheet</i>)	
Then repeated as above for 2nd, 3rd and 4th review and so on.	

PIP Action sheet

What action do we need to take?

Who is responsible for this action?

What information do we need?

When will this happen?

When will this action be reviewed?

Reference: Gateway Protection Programme: Good Practice Guide., British Refugee Council and Refugee Action (2008) p58

Annex 8: Group Evaluation Agenda

(for literate refugees, or to be carried out with a few interpreters, ideal group size 5 - 20, separate men and women)

Introductions

Introduce yourself and say one thing you like about the country you are now living in.

Experiences

Break into groups, flip chart paper and coloured post it notes, red and blue.

What has gone well about the resettlement process?

Write these onto blue post it notes and put onto the wall

What has not gone well about the resettlement process?

Write these onto red post it notes and place on the wall.

As a group review the post it notes and group them into key common areas e.g. housing, employment, family etc

Improving the service

Review the red post it notes, ask participants to think about:

Why these have not gone so well?

How they could be improved for the future?

Is there a particular agency responsible who could assist?

Moving forward

Re-cap and write onto the flipchart what can be improved in terms of service delivery and experience and go through what is possible and not.

Additionally ask whether there is anything else that would improve the service and resettlement experience for the participants.

Re-cap on what will be done with the feedback - be realistic!

Annex 9: Operation Swaagatem Pre-Arrival Planning Forum Materials

Extracts from the Agenda

1. Bhutanese background BC-Yukon Region, Department of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism
2. Killing Time - Excerpt from Documentary on Bhutanese refugees
3. First Month in Canada Immigrant Services Society of BC
4. Health Care Approach Bridge Clinic, Vancouver Coastal Health
5. Welcome BC - current settlement and language program in Tri-Cities Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
6. Public Education Coquitlam School District
7. Civic Engagement Strategies/Considerations

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. With your knowledge of Tri-Cities (local community resources / assets / school supports, etc) and the fact that the Bhutanese will be on income support (similar to provincial welfare rates) what specific Tri-City neighbourhoods should we consider settling families? Please list specific neighbourhoods, blocks, if possible.
2. In addition to what you have already heard, what other civic engagement ideas / ways do you have to get residents involved in supporting the settlement of Bhutanese newcomers?
3. Up to 50-60 children and youth under 18 years old may arrive as part of the first Bhutanese group. What local programs/services e.g. recreation, etc are you aware of that could be used to establish linkages to support these kids? Please be as specific as possible program name and contact?

NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

A big Journey

begins with

little

steps



Endurbúseta **Relocare** Resettlement Réinstallation Letelepítés Reasentamiento **Reinsediameto**
Umsiedlung Reinstalação Uudelleensijoittaminen **Gjenbosetting** Genbosætning Przesiedlenia uchodźców
Presídlování Genbosætning **Hervestiging** Endurbúseta Presídlovanie **Vidarebosättning** Áttelepítés

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