

BUILDING A RESETTLEMENT NETWORK OF EUROPEAN CITIES AND REGIONS

Experiences of the SHARE Network 2012-2015



ICMC: REFUGEE PROTECTION AND RESETTLEMENT

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) advocates and responds to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals and communities, contributing to preserving the dignity and rights of refugees, migrants, and other displaced persons, regardless of their faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

Working around the world in partnership with governments, local actors, faith-based organisations, the UNHCR, and other partners, ICMC provides essential humanitarian assistance and support in countries like Jordan and Syria. In Greece, ICMC deploys experts to assist UNHCR in providing protection support, including on the Greek islands of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Rhodes and Kos.

Since 1951, ICMC has identified more than one million refugees for resettlement, and accompanied them through the resettlement process, including helping them prepare for their new lives abroad. ICMC's resettlement activities are carried out globally and have evolved over the years to address the changing needs of displaced persons.

Since 1998, ICMC has been managing the ICMC-UNHCR Resettlement Deployment Scheme, deploying more than 170 experts in resettlement and child protection to support UNHCR's field offices throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. In 2014, these experts submitted applications for 64,000 people to be resettled, representing half of the total of resettled persons globally in 2014.

Through its Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and Middle East (RSC TuME), ICMC processes the applications of refugees referred by UNHCR for resettlement to the United States. With nearly 100 staff members and more than 7,000 refugees being resettled each year, the Resettlement Support Center for Turkey and the Middle East is one of the biggest refugee resettlement centers in the world.

The ICMC office in Brussels works to promote resettlement in Europe. Together with its partners IOM and UNHCR, ICMC has developed the European Resettlement Network (www.resettlement.eu), which promotes information sharing, capacity building and exchange on best practices. Through the Resettlement Saves Lives Campaign, ICMC Europe and its partners are advocating for 20,000 resettlement places annually in Europe by 2020.

In order to engage local actors in resettlement, ICMC implemented the SHARE project to promote refugee protection, a culture of welcome, as well as planned and coordinated refugee reception and integration programmes in cities and regions across Europe.

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| PRINCIPLE AUTHORS: | ICMC Europe |
| DATE OF PUBLICATION: | December 2015 |
| COVER PHOTO: | The Lord Mayor of Sheffield greets Liberian refugees at the Town Hall, (Courtesy of the Sheffield City Council) |

FOREWORD

“Either we enable migrants to become part of the community, or we will witness tensions and a further growth of xenophobic movements. SHARE brought together cities, towns, communities, churches and migrant associations to promote and coordinate a real response to the needs of integration. I am proud of it.”

- Peter Sutherland, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and President of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)

Over the last 4 years, the SHARE project has built a European resettlement network of regions, cities and their civil society partners to promote refugee protection and refugee resettlement, a culture of welcome and increased capacity to plan and coordinate refugee reception and integration programmes in cities and regions across Europe.

Engaging and working with regional and local actors involved in reception and integration in this context, has provided SHARE many opportunities to explore, assess and pilot approaches to refugee reception and integration policy and practice in Europe.

Particularly with regard to resettlement, SHARE has sought to:

- increase the number of resettlement programmes and places offered by European countries;
- encourage the engagement of local actors to support, sustain and coordinate these programmes;
- ensure high-quality reception and integration measures that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of resettled refugees; and
- develop peer-learning, best practice exchange and capacity-building activities between experienced, emerging and new resettlement countries.

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This guide is published in a new global era for refugee movement, in which the number of forcibly displaced persons around the world has now reached approximately 60 million and Europe is experiencing unprecedented – and continually increasing – levels of refugee arrivals.

With continued loss of life in attempts to cross the Mediterranean, developing adequate channels for the orderly admission of refugees will be at the core of next strategies to address asylum and migration challenges in the European Union. Resettlement is a significant tool to provide such orderly, safe and legal access. Furthermore, as resettlement involves transferring refugees from countries of first asylum to new receiving states, it's a way to ensure solidarity with the many countries that are hosting the largest part of refugees.

The next few years represent a crucial period for Europe in which its ability to receive refugees and provide them with adequate reception, status and integration services will be put to the test

We hope that this summary of policy reflections, tools and resources and recommendations produced by the SHARE Network from 2012-15 (and available at www.resettlement.eu), will support regional and local actors implementing reception and integration in European refugee resettlement and relocation programmes and offer useful guidance for refugee integration programmes in Europe.

Petra Hueck
ICMC Europe, Director

December, 2015

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1 ABOUT THE SHARE NETWORK

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF SHARE

Developed by ICMC in strategic partnership with the city of Sheffield, SHARE was implemented between 2012 and 2015 with co-funding from the European Commission¹ as an integral part of the European Resettlement Network (ERN).

SHARE was developed upon the initiative of the European Parliament, calling for pilot projects to work towards *‘the creation of a network of contact and discussion between targeted municipalities on experiences and best practices in resettlement and integration of refugees’*.

As defined in the Commission’s Work Programme 2011, the Pilot Project on Resettlement would, as a priority, need to ‘establish contacts and a discussion network between municipalities and other local and regional authorities of those Member States which have just started a resettlement programme or want to participate in the near future, and of those Member States which are experienced in resettlement, together with UNHCR and NGOs experienced in best practices in the resettlement and integration of refugees’.

After the pilot phase, SHARE continued as a preparatory action further strengthening network building of European regional and local authorities and their civil society partners. SHARE included regions, cities and their local civil society partners in 24 European countries.

To facilitate the inclusion of local and regional actors in European and global exchange, discussions and developments on resettlement, SHARE pursued the following specific objectives for the network:

- Offer opportunities for structured dialogue and practice exchange between regional and local actors in both experienced and emerging resettlement countries and those planning or considering resettlement;
- Strengthen the capacity of cities, municipalities and civil society actors to facilitate refugee integration and offer welcoming communities;
- Offer communication, learning and exchange steered by a project coordination unit;
- Advocate for resettlement as a refugee protection tool and solidarity instrument;
- Facilitate sharing good practices for creative and contextualized local resettlement solutions; and
- Promote synergies between resettlement and mainstream actors working in asylum/migration.

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Looking forward, in order to sustain learning and network tools, SHARE will feed into the further design and implementation of the European Asylum Support Office’s (EASO) resettlement and integration related tasks, promoting more consistent cooperation with cities and regions in the context of building a Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

1.2 SYNERGIES WITH THE EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT NETWORK

SHARE was developed as an integral part of the European Resettlement Network (ERN) which was established by the joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC ‘Linking-In EU Resettlement’ project (September 2011 to January 2013) and continued under the project ‘Strengthening the response to emergency resettlement needs’ (February 2013 to December 2014).

The ERN established a network website at www.resettlement.eu, a contact database of resettlement and integration actors both within and outside of Europe and a body of knowledge, resources and publications.

The ERN provided a pre-existing, cost-effective framework for SHARE’s specific work and many SHARE activities were specifically designed to expand upon and enhance the development of the ERN with the specific aim of ensuring the inclusion of regional and local actors in the wider network of resettlement

¹ ‘Pilot Project on Resettlement grant 2011’ (Ref. HOME/2011/CFP/PPRS) and Preparatory action ‘Network of contacts and discussion between targeted municipalities and local authorities on experiences and best practices in the resettlement and integration of refugees’ grant 2013 (Ref. HOME/2013/PARS/AG/5941).

actors both in Europe and globally.

SHARE has created a **dedicated SHARE Network webspace** at www.resettlement.eu, resourcing elements of the website's design and ensuring both the availability of SHARE resources for ERN members and the visibility of SHARE and regional/local resettlement to a broad range of international, European and national actors. When the SHARE project started, the ERN counted 2,500 stakeholders in the database. Between 2012- 2015, SHARE reached out to 1,218 regional and local stakeholders, whose contacts were included in the shared EU Resettlement Network/SHARE contact database. In addition to receiving news, updates and materials produced by the ERN, all database contacts receive updates on SHARE activities, the SHARE Magazine, information on SHARE networking opportunities, conferences and events, links to SHARE resources and publications, and invitations to respond to consultations and provide feedback on any aspect of the project.

1.3 PROJECT PARTNERS

ICMC Europe led the first phase of the SHARE Project in partnership with the lead SHARE city of Sheffield, the EUROCITIES network, UNHCR and (associate) partners in Austria (Red Cross), France (Créteil), Paris and France Terre d'Asile (FTDA), Germany (Aachen, Munich, ProAsyl), Spain (ACCEM), The Netherlands (Dutch Refugee Council) and the United Kingdom (the city of Manchester, Refugee Action and Refugee Council).

SHARE II was implemented in partnership with IOM, UNHCR, EUROCITIES and ECRE and partners in: Belgium (Caritas International), the Czech Republic (Burma Center Prague), Finland (Tampere), France (Forum Réfugiés-Cosi and France Terre d'Asile), Ireland (St. Catherine's Community Services Centre), The Netherlands (Refugee Council Limburg) and the United Kingdom (Sheffield) and with associate partners in all the aforementioned countries as well as in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Romania.

1.4 ENGAGING CITIES AND REGIONS IN SHARE

The SHARE Network is the first Europe-wide city and region networking initiative in the area of refugee resettlement, therefore a significant effort was made in ongoing outreach to engage actors in its activities. This work was undertaken, from the outset, in collaboration with a network of national civil society actors, through partnerships with European networks and international organisations and with assistance of key cities in the network.

Benefiting from relationships and research developed under the ERN, SHARE has reached out to three different groups to engage in best practice exchange:

- Regional and local authorities *already involved* in receiving resettled refugees, with expertise and experience that could benefit their counterparts in other countries and (potential) learning needs in specific areas of reception and integration;
- Regional and local authorities *considering or planning a first engagement in resettlement*, requiring basic information about the process and tools to support the establishment of new local programmes; and
- Regional and local authorities and civil society actors in European countries with no national resettlement programme, *requiring information and resources to support advocacy for the national decision-making about whether to receive refugees.*

TYPES OF ACTORS ENGAGED IN SHARE (2012-2015)

| | |
|-----|--|
| 60% | Non-governmental organisations |
| 31% | Local governments (civil servant or political representatives) |
| 4% | Central governments |
| 3% | International organisations |
| 1% | Universities |
| 1% | Volunteers |

Source: SHARE contact database (1,218 contacts)

Since the SHARE Project began in March 2012, SHARE has reached out to 1,218 regional and local contacts which were added to the shared EU Resettlement Network/SHARE contact database.

Engaging with regions and cities on refugee protection and resettlement has proved to be an intensive and often slow process. European regional and local authorities face several challenges in engaging in an initiative such as SHARE. Decision-making is accountable to a local or regional electorate and can subsequently be a lengthy process requiring specific information and assurances. In recent years, European regional and local authorities have operated in a context both of reduced resources and broadened priorities in relation to vulnerable populations (such as homeless and disabled), meaning that authorities often do not have a staff lead for refugee issues, and capacity to participate in activities relating to refugees can be limited.

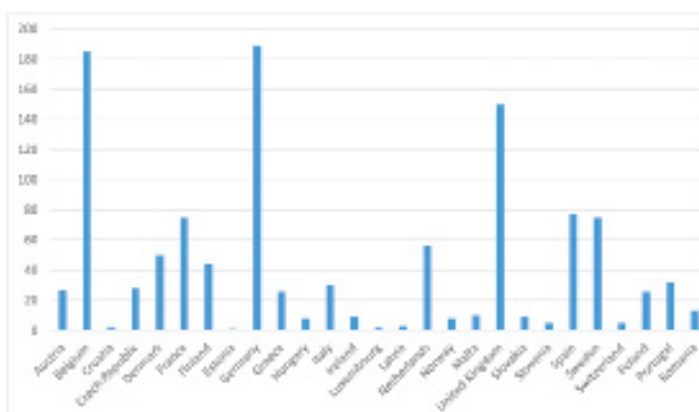
The SHARE Network took an innovative, intensive and tailor-made approach to engaging regions and cities in the network, by:

- Developing an understanding of the priorities, strengths and challenges of individual regional and local contexts, through site visits, research and intensive dialogue with relevant actors.
- Engaging the broadest possible range of regional and local actors, including political authorities, mainstream service providers, civil society organisations, migrant and refugee associations, local media, faith-based organisations, private business and others.
- Building on the experience, expertise and connections of key SHARE partners, including national civil society organisations and networks, European networks such as EUROCITIES and the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), and institutional actors such as the Committee of the Regions.
- Engaging cities with humanitarian and human rights-based pledges and commitments raising the profile of refugee resettlement and protection in this context.
- Strengthening the SHARE Network from below by supporting the development of national and cross-border SHARE platforms.
- Maintaining a dedicated SHARE Network webspace and producing SHARE Network tools and resources, including a SHARE Network Magazine.

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The Syrian refugee crisis generated a steep increase in interest by local actors in SHARE as of 2013, with countries like Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland and the UK launching new resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Programmes (HAP) in addition to other types of programmes offering legal avenues to Syrian refugees, under different type of arrangements. Some countries, previously not involved in resettlement, like Italy, started ad-hoc resettlement programmes. SHARE actively engaged with new local actors receiving Syrians, benefiting from ICMC comparative research in the framework of the publication: *'10% of Refugees from Syria: Europe's resettlement and other admission responses in a global perspective'*² published in June 2015. The many welcoming initiatives developed by cities, NGOs and citizens across Europe provided a new impetus to SHARE, to facilitate discussions and experiences and to inform new actors about available tools to assist in starting new programmes to support refugees in their cities, such as through volunteering.

OVERVIEW OF NUMBERS OF STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN SHARE



Following the May 2015 European Agenda on Migration, the European Council adopted a first voluntary pilot programme on resettlement across all countries in the European Union, calling for 20,000 resettlement places. This offered new opportunities for SHARE to reach out to new actors in countries previously not engaged in resettlement, particularly in Central and (South) Eastern Europe and the Baltics.

Source: SHARE contact database (1,218 contacts)

² Access full copy under: http://resettlement.eu/sites/icmc.tcp.eu/files/10%25of%20Refugees%20from%20Syria_compressed_LR.pdf

2 THE POLICY CONTEXT: CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 RESETTLEMENT

Resettlement provides protection and a new life for refugees. It involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third country that admits them – as refugees – with long-term residence status. Resettlement generally carries with it the future opportunity to become a naturalised citizen. Countries receiving resettled refugees do so voluntarily and in collaboration with UNHCR.

European countries have historically contributed a great deal to global protection and durable solutions for refugees via participation in resettlement, as was the case for the Vietnamese boatpeople and refugees from ex-Yugoslavia. Sweden was the first country in Europe to begin an annual resettlement programme in 1950, followed by Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands and Norway in the 1970s.

Since the turn of the century, more European countries have established annual programmes with others participating in European ad-hoc, emergency resettlement initiatives, *i.e.* in connection with refugees displaced by conflict in Iraq (2008-9), Libya (2012) and Syria (as of 2014).

The European Union has actively promoted refugee resettlement over the past ten years, including resettlement as an essential part of the external dimension of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Coordination and resourcing of European resettlement has been further strengthened by the 2013 establishment of the Joint EU Resettlement Programme.

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Benefiting from financial support of the European Union, 14 European Union countries engage in resettlement: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.³ The number of places offered by European countries on an annual basis, however, continues to be small, amounting to around 5,500 places in 2012, compared to 60,000, 8,000 and 6,000 offered by the United States, Canada and Australia, respectively, for 2012 alone. Resettlement is therefore still a relatively 'niche' and relatively unknown activity in Europe.

However, the context for refugee resettlement and protection in Europe has markedly changed with the arrival of refugees into Europe reaching levels not seen since the era of the Second World War and the number of forcibly displaced persons around the world now exceeding 60 million.

For 2015, UNHCR estimates 960,000 persons as in need of resettlement across the world, of which 377,000 are Syrians.⁴ This number represents around 10% of the Syrian combined refugee population in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. In 2014, UNHCR called upon the global community to admit 130,000 refugees, by offering resettlement and other types of admission for Syrians, the latter including, humanitarian admission, community based sponsorships, medical evacuation, admission of relatives, academic scholarships and humanitarian visas. The 130,000 target was met by the end of 2015 with approximately 60,000 places offered by Europe (more than 30,000 by Germany alone), mainly under a Humanitarian Admission Programmes (HAP), a programme similar to resettlement.⁵ Safe and orderly legal avenues for refugees, however, prove to be largely insufficient in relation to needs. Lacking livelihood possibilities and future prospects, over a million refugees have crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 to seek protection in Europe.

³ For an overview on resettlement programme in Europe see : <http://www.resettlement.eu/news/new-edition-welcome-europe-now-online>

⁴ UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2015, June 2014.

⁵ For more information on different types of admission programmes: <http://www.resettlement.eu/news/crisis-syria>

To respond to increasing protection needs and show solidarity, in May 2015, the European Commission launched 'A European Agenda on Migration'⁶ which was further expanded on in July of that year by the Justice & Home Affairs Council Conclusions.⁷ In this framework the EC proposes to:

- work with UNHCR to resettle 20,000 persons from outside of the EU during 2015-17; and
- Internally relocate 160,000 persons 'in clear need of international protection' from Greece and Italy to other European countries.



Syrian refugees admitted under the German Humanitarian Admission programme upon arrival in Germany, courtesy of the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

a country by country allocation, based on 'objective and quantifiable factors'.⁸ The proposed distribution key with defined relocation and resettlement intake numbers, represents a major overhaul in European policies, more equally spreading responsibilities across European countries.

Faced with large increases in refugee arrivals to Europe, of which the majority are hosted by a few European countries, notably Germany and Sweden, additional refugee intakes and solidarity continue to be heavily disputed among European countries. With the European debate focusing primarily on relocation from Greece and Italy, it is hoped that the European Commission will progress with its proposal for a permanent relocation and resettlement programme, announced in the first half of 2016.

Over 750,000 persons, the majority refugees, have entered the EU from Turkey in 2015. In a context of an ongoing war in Syria, it is clear that absent legal and orderly ways to find protection, refugees will continue to find irregular and dangerous routes to come to Europe. Refugee numbers continue to swell even further in 2016.⁹ The European Commission has therefore recommended implementing a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme in the context of the EU-Turkey Action Programme.¹⁰ The Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme would be similar to resettlement, however with refugees being granted subsidiary protection or an equivalent temporary status.

Resettlement and other types of admission allow stakeholders to plan and invest in reception and integration programmes for refugees, which planning will be vital in an era of unprecedented refugee arrivals. It is in this context that SHARE, which creates partnerships between cities, NGOs and citizens, will have a particular relevance in responding to the multiple needs and challenges of refugees in a new era of European asylum.

⁶ See 'A European Agenda on Migration' under: <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/european-agenda-migration>

⁷ See Annex I

⁸ <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2015/jul/eu-jha-council-20-7-15-final-prel.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/52b2febafc5.pdf>

¹⁰ December 15 2015: Commission presents recommendations for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey for the refugees from Syria.

2.2 ADDRESSING MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

The SHARE Network was established in recognition of the crucial role that regional and local authorities play in welcoming and supporting refugees in Europe.

Refugee resettlement is characterised by a complex division of competences and responsibilities between national, regional and local governments.

With respect to the national level of governments, they have the competence to decide who to admit into their territory. Governments set numbers they want to resettle on an annual or ad hoc basis and determine which nationalities and profiles of refugees proposed by UNHCR they want to prioritise. Having selected refugees, they organise for travel and sometimes pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) programmes in order to prepare for integration.

Upon arrival of refugees, government grants status, which is the basis for further entitlements and rights. They also decide whether they will offer additional or mainstream financial support for reception and initial settlement support for resettled refugees. Such support can be granted directly to municipalities, to NGOs responsible for settlement services (normally during the first year upon arrival) or to partnership, being a mix of actors.



Antonio Costa (former Mayor of Lisbon) highlighting the importance of good coordination between national, regional and local authorities at the SHARE Network conference (Brussels, October 2013).

The EU influences the relationship between national and local governments, by means of offering central governments AMIF financing for setting up resettlement programmes and by means of offering lump sum payments to central governments when resettling certain priority profiles (refugees with medical needs, women at risk etc.) or refugees from priority regions. It's then up to the national government to decide how to allocate these funds as between local authorities receiving resettled refugees.

Some governments channel this funding through to municipalities or other local

actors responsible for settlement support, but in many cases these funds are added to the national budgets.

Regardless of national governments' competencies, regional and local authorities play a central role both in offering reception and integration support once refugees have arrived, and in responding to wider challenges of building welcoming and inclusive communities at the local level. The ongoing success of national programmes to receive resettled refugees thus depends on the commitment, ability and partnerships of local and regional authorities.

We see that national governments depend more and more on the support of cities and regions and their civil society partners to ensure that refugees will be received, housed and integrated. The role of local actors is becoming more and more significant in a context of scarce resources and budget cuts, following the financial and economic crisis.

In this context of fewer and fewer resources, national governments demand more and more support from local authorities. Increasingly, cities, churches and citizens are asked to contribute to refugee integration services, such as in the areas of health, education, labour market integration and language learning. This can be especially challenging in the recent climate of increased populist rhetoric in which receiving refugees is often questioned.

Mapping national, regional & local competence in resettlement, integration and protection

SHARE worked together with project partners to create the ‘Who does what?...’ an online resource containing country-specific summaries that aim to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of European local and regional authorities in refugee resettlement, integration and protection?
- What about civil society organisations and other public and private bodies?
- How do these arrangements differ across European countries, and who are the key actors?
- And what about the wider asylum and migration contexts for resettlement and integration?

The resource includes downloadable summaries for 4 countries – Denmark, Sweden, the UK and The Netherlands, and the 3 emerging resettlement countries of France, Spain and Austria. Whilst Austria does not currently engage in refugee resettlement, a summary was prepared to reflect the discussion on establishing a programme that has been ongoing for a number of years, and the Austrian humanitarian admission programme for Syrian refugees established in 2014. Each summary follows the same format, covering the following information:

- Governance
- Local government
- Resettlement
- Asylum – Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and support for asylum seekers
- Regional government
- Migration: an overview
- Integration

Regional and local authorities are uniquely positioned to recognise integration challenges on the ground, and to react in a timely manner both through mainstream initiatives and partnerships with civil society actors and local citizens. Although governments often set national integration policy frameworks to guide and resource the work of local and regional actors, in many contexts, regional and local authorities are able to be flexible in how they apply national policy and to exercise some discretion in developing their own integration strategies and approaches. Bigger European cities often have more diverse populations, including refugees and migrants, and thus more resources and greater impetus to direct resources toward local integration strategies and services. For smaller municipalities located in more rural areas, often without significant refugee and migrant populations, regional authorities can play an important role supporting the development of integration practices and achieving economies of scale in service delivery across several localities.

11

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: ENGAGING SMALL MUNICIPALITIES AND LOCAL ACTORS IN THE DORDOGNE (FRANCE)

‘We had to rise to the challenges and succeed at all costs, first for the sake of these families and children in distress, and to prove that integration in a rural setting is possible and may also represent an opportunity. Their relief upon arrival, their reaction and their smiles today, the children who are thriving, are all the proof we did what we had to do’

Annick Maurusane, assistant to the mayor of Jumilhac-le-Grand (1,200 inhabitants) Dordogne.

France offered 52 Syrian refugees staying in Egypt the possibility for resettlement. Two villages in the Dordogne, responded to a call for places. The advance preparation mobilised numerous actors: the prefecture, the community of municipalities; the regional health agency, the family benefit office, the public housing office, the job centre and the Dordogne Support Association (ASD), the latter being designated as the principal service provider. Refugees placed with serious medical conditions were received in the department of Isère (Auvergne – Rhône Alpes) given the need for proximity of appropriate health care centres. The families arrived in the municipalities in Dordogne on May 2014 in the presence of the local population, settling into their new homes that were equipped and furnished in advance by the ASD. Their arrival was also facilitated by the assistance of two Syrians who were living in the region, one of whom regularly served as an interpreter. The long preparatory work enabled the children to return to school the day after their arrival. The adults were assisted by ASD to help them to apply for their social rights, sign their Reception and Integration contract etc. The adults received language training throughout 2014 and by the beginning of 2015 were actively looking for jobs. They now have cars, enabling them to have a degree of mobility and gradually are covering their own costs. So far, the assessment of the reception and integration of Syrians in the two villages in the Dordogne has been positive according to the testimonies of the municipalities, the ASD and the refugees themselves.

The SHARE Network therefore sought to:

- build capacity and the profile of regional and local authorities as actors in effective multi-level governance structures to receive and support refugees; and
- shift the focus of resettlement policymaking and programming to enable regional and local actors to respond fully to the challenges and opportunities presented by refugee resettlement and integration.

While building capacity of local actors, SHARE had to adapt to a dramatically changing resettlement and refugee protection context. When SHARE started in 2012, resettlement only amounted to around 5,500 places for Europe. Resettlement and refugee protection and integration, were therefore still a relative 'niche' activity in Europe. The Syrian refugee crisis which fully evolved during 2013, brought the need for legal access of refugees to the forefront of the migration and asylum debate, resulting in many different programmes and initiatives in resettlement and other types of programmes offering protection.

2.3 PLACEMENT OF RESETTLED REFUGEES OVER THE NATIONAL TERRITORY

Dispersal of placement is the process by which resettled refugees are distributed or located on the national territory of a receiving country. Host states decide on placement strategies and on placement competences within their multi-level governments. They have the power to adopt different systems and approaches as they see fit.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: THE ROLE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS IN SWEDEN

In Sweden, **County Administrative Boards** (CABs - regional agencies of the central government) agree on regional refugee quota numbers with national authorities, and negotiate placement with municipalities. CABs also support the reception and integration activities of municipalities, and develop tools, training and other resources and activities to strengthen integration expertise and practice across a given region.

In the framework of the ERF funded **SMAK Project**, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) and the CABs strengthen work **methods and strategies** for the settlement and reception of resettled refugees across all levels of government (employment office, municipalities etc.), with a specific focus on resettled refugees with disabilities and other particular special needs.



Ibrahim with his host family in Parma - Ibrahim is a Somali refugee. After spending many years in a SPRAR reception facility, "Rifugiati in famiglia" placed him in the home of Sandro, his wife Arianna and their four children, aged from 1 to 12. Courtesy of Consorzio Comunitas.

Approaches to placement vary across European resettlement programmes and include:

- Resettled refugees are placed upon arrival in centralised reception facilities, where they receive integration support for a limited period. After this initial period, the national authorities negotiate placement in a municipality offering additional local integration programmes. (Example: the Czech Republic);
- Resettled refugees are placed upon arrival in centralised reception facilities, where they receive integration support for a limited period. After this initial period, resettled refugees can register in a municipality of their own choice. In general, resettled refugees do not benefit from additional integration support measures when they leave the reception center. (Example: Spain);
- Placement of resettled refugees directly into municipalities according to national asylum or refugee distribution systems. Municipalities cannot refuse. (Example: Denmark);
- Placement of resettled refugees takes place according to national asylum or refugee distribution systems. Municipalities cannot refuse - but can indicate whether they want to receive resettled refugees or other refugees. (Example: The Netherlands);
- Placement of resettled refugees into municipalities is voluntary. National governments offer financial incentives to municipalities to take in (resettled) refugees. (Example Finland, Sweden); and

- The national governments outsource the provision of housing and integration services of a specified number of resettled refugees to municipalities and their (NGO) partners. (Example: UK Gateway Programme).

Placement policies and strategies play a key role in refugee integration. The effect of placement policies on integration outcomes, such as employment, should be understood and, to the extent possible, incorporated into placement decisions. SHARE therefore used a contextualised approach when looking at local programmes, looking to approaches that balance considerations of available affordable housing with refugee integration needs.

2.4 STATUS OF RESETTLED REFUGEES

UNHCR's definition of resettlement requires that the status granted to resettled refugees 'ensures protection against refoulement, provides the resettled refugee with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals and carries the opportunity to eventually become a naturalised citizen of the resettlement country.'

Decisions on the type and duration of legal status to be granted to refugees arriving into Europe, including via organised admission programmes such as resettlement, are within the national competence of authorities in receiving countries.¹¹ Practices vary across Europe, with some granting permanent residency on arrival, others granting temporary residence permits which must be periodically reviewed, and yet others making permanent residency conditional on minimum residency periods (3 to 7 years) and a range of other integration requirements such as completing language and orientation courses, passing related tests and being economically self-sufficient.

Humanitarian admission programmes to admit Syrian refugees, established by several European countries since 2013, have varied in the status granted to those arriving, with some granting refugee status and others using temporary legal residency of varying lengths that can later be renewed and extended.

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Legal status can impact on integration in a number of important ways. At the European level, being recognised as a refugee confers an enhanced legal right to family reunification, often an immediate priority for newly arriving refugees. In many national contexts, refugee status ensures entitlement to specific integration support, welfare assistance, employment and education.

Requiring that refugees undergo additional procedures to renew status has been shown to be a distressing and confusing experience that also delays the start of the individual integration process. A lack of planned pathways from temporary to permanent legal residency or high thresholds for granting permanent residency (for example, in relation to language proficiency and/or civic knowledge), can also impact negatively on longer term integration and settlement for refugees.

As has been discussed in the context of SHARE, it is of the utmost importance for municipalities to be well aware of and informed about status granted, since this directly effects what sorts of entitlements and benefits municipalities can offer newcomers.

In several countries, procedures to obtain status are not well streamlined with the result that refugees need to wait before they can open bank accounts, register for healthcare or receive social benefits etc.

Some countries, like Sweden, grant refugees status outside of the territory prior to arrival and transfer this data to the municipalities. Thus when refugees arrive in the municipality, all formalities are already satisfied.

¹¹ See Annex II

2.5 PROVIDING WELCOME TO RESETTLED REFUGEES

We know from academic research and feedback from SHARE partners and stakeholders across Europe that the first year after arrival in a new community is fundamental to refugees' capacity to reconstruct their lives. In addition to the functional building blocks of integration – such as housing, language-learning and so on – successful integration means enabling refugees to have direct connections and encounters with citizens, and participate in community, cultural and leisure activities. Too often policies and programmes do not acknowledge this aspect of integration, thwarting positive energy and leaving refugees powerless to direct their lives and futures.

Acknowledging this vital phase after arrival, SHARE Network activities and priorities have ensured a prominent place to discussions and exchange with city and civil society partners, on how to define, support and strengthen 'welcoming communities'.



Bhutamese children going to the local primary school in Wommels (North Netherlands). In courtesy of UNHCR / P. de Ruiter;

SHARE discussions with partners have defined a 'welcoming community' as being twofold in nature – 'functional' elements such as housing and financial assistance are equally as important as the 'human' aspect of understanding extended to newcomers by local residents, and the 'emotional' aspect of individual refugees feeling welcome in their new context.

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SHARE Network discussions, exchange, research and consultation produced a definition of a 'welcoming community' as one that:

- provides integration services at the local/municipal level;
- supports the work of volunteers;
- provides adequate reception measures and timely and appropriate housing;
- is characterised by awareness-raising activities in all areas of society;
- ensures social institutions and opportunities are open to refugees and asylum seekers; and

European citizens have been formally engaged as volunteers for welcoming and integrating refugees for many years, giving their time and expertise in support of activities as varied as local orientation, employment mentoring and language-learning. They often act as a bridge between the refugee and the host society, raising awareness amongst co-citizens about the need for refugee protection and creating safe spaces for dialogue and debate. Volunteers are therefore vital in addressing community concerns with respect to social cohesion, fear of loss of cultural identity and xenophobia, all of which need to be discussed in a constructive and open manner.

The recent increase in refugee arrivals to Europe has led to the establishment of many new grassroots, citizen-led initiatives across Europe, who work alongside mainstream reception and integration actors in areas such as meeting the humanitarian needs of new arrivals, providing housing and promoting welcome.

In the context of an ongoing refugee crisis, the final SHARE Network Conference ¹² gathered on October 20th 2015. Over 140 representatives met to discuss resettlement, relocation and local integration of refugees in Europe. Participants included cities and municipalities, regions, NGOs, citizens' initiatives, faith-based organisations, refugees, EU institutions and international organisations from 20 countries in Europe.

Various panels addressed the topic of the placement policies to distribute refugees at the national level through coordination and partnerships between national governments, cities and NGOs. Best prac-

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: A NEW ROLE FOR CHURCHES

The Archdiocese of Cologne in collaboration with Caritas, have launched the initiative Action New Neighbours (Aktion Neue Nachbarn), building upon the core values of compassion, acceptance and a willingness to help refugees, and a belief that 'contact and exchange means strangers become neighbours'.

The initiative supports grass roots reception and welcome initiatives proposed by individual parishes, including housing, language-learning and awareness-raising. Action New Neighbours complements existing structures and programmes for refugee reception and integration by promoting welcome, expanding the type and nature of integration support, strengthening the capacity and resources of local parishes to provide welcome activities and increasing the volunteering opportunities for local residents via their respective parishes.

communities, addressing the need for more and better use of EU funding for refugee integration; volunteering and active citizenship; coordination and local partnerships; awareness raising and anti-discrimination policies.

Whilst cultures of volunteering and grass-roots action and engagement differ greatly across various national and local contexts, it can be said that citizens' engagement in refugee integration is an increasingly prominent aspect of the 'integration offer' for refugees and newcomers in European cities and towns and an important new resource to add to mainstream programmes and services for refugees.

Schools and other educational institutions also have a crucial role to play in addressing misinformation, fear and prejudice.

Programmes receiving resettled refugees should therefore reach out to schools that are receiving resettled children, to explain why the new classmates have arrived, and share information about the culture and backgrounds of the new classmates. Churches have played a leading role in 'welcoming strangers', enabling dialogue between the host community and the newcomers and promoting cross cultural dialogue. Churches have also invested considerably in supplementing official integration programmes with additional resources and activities.

tice panels looked at varied responses of cities, NGOs, grassroots associations, citizen and volunteer-led initiatives, and others that have spread across Europe, to raise awareness about the rights of refugees and the many initiatives to welcome refugees. SHARE partners and invitees presented their innovative programmes in finding housing, engaging private business and universities to assist in training and work placements for refugee professionals, or facilitating arts, sports and educational activities for refugee children.

On the occasion of the SHARE Network Conference on 20 October 2015, SHARE launched a SHARE Network policy statement '**Protecting and Welcoming Refugees in Europe**'.¹² The SHARE network statement draws on the tools, resources and learning produced by the SHARE Network since its launch in March 2012 and makes concrete recommendations on "what Europe can do?" to welcome and integrate newcomers in their local



Personal welcome to Burmese resettled refugees by a mayor in the Czech Republic. Courtesy of the Czech Ministry of Interior.

2.6 THE INTEGRATION CONTEXT

Integration is a dynamic, two-way process involving mutual adaptation and accommodation by refugees and migrants, and the local communities and societies in which they settle. Integration involves interrelated factors such as housing, health, employment, language-learning, civic participation and feelings of safety and welcome that can also serve as indicators of overall well-being. Recent discussions have focused on the local nature of integration and how it takes place at the neighbourhood level, and on employment and economic self-sufficiency as markers of successful integration. Although the EU has articulated a common policy agenda to underpin actions in the field of integration and provides financial support for integration programmes via the Asylum & Migration Fund (AMIF), there is no common European integration programme for refugees or migrants and no legally binding European standards on integration.¹³

¹² Access the full conference report under: <http://resettlement.eu/page/refugee-resettlement-and-integration-europe-share-network-discussed-experiences-and-lessons>

¹³ See Annex I.

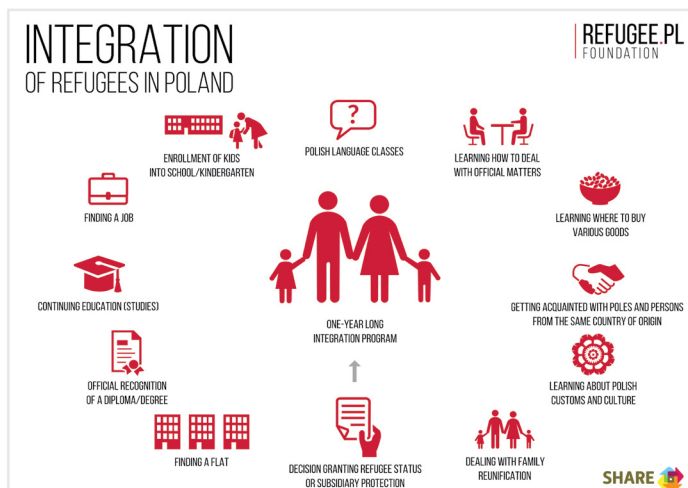
Unlike migration, integration remains a national competence, with integration roles and responsibilities for national, regional and local actors determined by and within individual states.

In European refugee resettlement, initial reception and integration are planned processes. Resettlement actors in receiving countries are provided with information ahead of refugees' arrivals, which such actors then use to ensure that the immediate needs of the refugees are effectively met. Such needs include accommodation, health, interpretation and initial orientation.

In countries like Belgium and The Netherlands, resettled refugees receive a special intensive programme in the initial period after arrival, delivered by the local authority and/or a local NGO partner. As with other third country nationals, resettled refugees follow the mainstream integration programmes which are steered centrally by national governments and are implemented locally by NGOs, language institutes or other subcontractors, often without any formal participation of the city. Civic integration programmes are key elements of national integration policies. In certain countries, these programmes are mandatory for specific groups and linked to integration tests and sanctions that can affect access to residence permits and social benefits.

The financial and economic crisis has put the provision of integration services under severe pressure and it is not uncommon for refugees to face waiting lists to enlist in courses. Many language courses do not offer sufficient classtime or can be too intensive or theoretical for certain groups, requiring development of new and innovative ways to acquire language.¹⁴

SHARE has therefore paid considerable attention to exchange activities looking at expanding capacity in integration services at local levels, such as through volunteering. An overview of integration programmes offered by European resettlement countries can be found in Annex III of this publication.



Coordinating a one year integration programme for resettled/relocated refugees in Poland: awareness-raising infograph campaign by Refugee.pl Foundation.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: GOVERNMENT- NGO PARTNERSHIP TO INTEGRATE RESETTLED REFUGEES

The Austrian government has long been reluctant to engage in resettlement. During 2013-2014, however, the Austrian government agreed to receive 1500 Syrian refugees, approximately half through resettlement. The Austrian government contracted the ARGE Working Group, comprised of the NGOs Red Cross, Diakonie and Caritas, to provide additional support for UNHCR referred resettled Syrians.

Support covers arranging for accommodation, and providing orientation, language tuition, and education and employment counselling. Integration measures were incorporated in the wider mainstream integration measures for migrants and refugees. ARGE developed additional measures to aid integration and build welcome such as a volunteer 'buddy' system that matches new arrivals with local residents. Working in the outskirts of Vienna, in a neighbourhood with different migrant groups, the NGO Diakonie, experienced difficulties in providing services to persons with different rights and entitlements. 'We try to minimise this by making our services as accessible as they can for everyone' states Diakonie.

2.7 SHARE POLICY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon conclusion of 4 years of the SHARE program, which promoted dialogue, comparative research and best practice exchange, we can draw some clear and compelling policy recommendations as set forth below.

A. EUROPEAN WIDE ENGAGEMENT IN RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ONGOING REFUGEE ARRIVALS

Europe has responded to the significant increases in refugee arrivals, particularly of Syrians, by establishing new refugee resettlement and relocation programmes in **which all European countries will participate**. As a result, 'traditional' resettlement countries will undertake significant expansions of their existing programmes to receive and integrate refugees, and many 'new' countries will now establish programmes and mechanisms to do so.

The SHARE Network experience is that all countries in all circumstances have something to offer, and can tailor-make solutions and approaches that meet the challenges of resettlement and/or relocation in their specific contexts. In European countries with little or no experience in resettlement or relocation, **planning an engagement in both resettlement and relocation, provides an opportunity to build partnerships, processes and expertise, create economies of scale, and build capacity for sustainable future engagement**. Those arriving via resettlement and relocation programmes share many common needs that should be **jointly and effectively addressed via integrated reception and integration programmes**.

Countries experiencing economic challenges can establish successful programmes to receive refugees. Establishing programmes to offer protection for refugees does not require massive investment, and all countries can make a contribution. Efficiencies and economies of scale can be achieved by, for example, using existing asylum infrastructure and distribution mechanisms to receive and place refugees, and mainstreaming integration support for resettled/relocated persons into existing services and programmes.

In the context of new Europe-wide programmes to receive refugees, and the future possibility of a larger quota-based distribution of refugees across Europe, it is likely that **almost all European cities and towns will be required to receive refugees in the future**. Meeting current European resettlement and relocation commitments relies on local actors offering enough places for refugees at the local level. Building future European efforts to respond to global refugee needs will require the local engagement to be sustained, with local actors who are able to provide clarity on the number and quality of resettlement places on offer from time to time. Having engaged with actors across Europe over the last four years, **the SHARE Network experience is that all municipalities can offer places with welcoming environments** for refugees and support effective integration.

B. GRANTING STATUS AND ENTITLEMENTS

Granting different statuses and entitlements for resettled, relocated persons and refugees that come through the regular asylum procedure creates challenges and confusion. In addition, distinguishing among people who share the same nationalities, backgrounds and/or similar experiences, creates inefficiencies and inequalities in the delivery of local programmes to different groups and profiles. **SHARE learning suggests that it is preferable to provide all refugees with the same nationalities with the same entitlements and services** and to utilise the **same partnerships and expertise to deliver services to specific groups and profiles** (such as unaccompanied minors, women at risk, victims of torture and trauma).

C. NATIONAL REFUGEE PLACEMENT POLICIES AND REGIONAL COORDINATION OF MUNICIPAL INTAKE

The relationship between national policy and regional and local authorities with respect to refugee quotas is complex. **Mandatory regional/local refugee quotas** can ensure that regional and local authorities are obliged to create the necessary places at a municipal level. Basing distribution of places on quantifiable factors will result in a perception of equitable contribution of places and thereby promote a more positive attitude towards participation. **Voluntary participation** of regional/local actors and engagement in political decision-making can often create more ownership and support for receiving refugees at the local level, but can be less effective in terms of actually creating places.

Strategies and approaches to ensuring the provision of places at the local level are a competence of national authorities, and in the recent past, we have seen that placement policies can be changed and adapted as needed. In the current context of large numbers of refugee arrivals, we see that **more and more countries are moving towards mandatory distribution keys**, to ensure a more equitable placement over the national territory. **SHARE experience is that more equitable distribution over a country promotes integration and diversity and results in less resistance and animosity in local actors and citizens who feel a shared responsibility with other local communities.**

In some European countries, national authorities empower **regional authorities and bodies** to negotiate the number and profiles of refugees that individual municipalities will receive, ensuring that regional-level refugee quotas – and overall national commitments – are fulfilled. Including regional authorities and local actors in such discussions and negotiations, promotes realistic quota-setting and an increased sense of ‘ownership’ amongst such actors.

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The SHARE Network experience is that regional-level coordination of placement can be of great benefit to refugee-receiving programmes. Developing regional structures and partnerships supports the work of local integration actors across multiple municipalities by **providing economies of scale and pooling of expertise**. In addition, regional structures can act as a gateway to accessing national and European funding for integration programmes at the municipal level.

Coordinating placement at regional-level can ensure access to a **bigger and more diverse range of housing** across participating local areas. This can increase placement options for ‘harder-to-house’ groups such as single people and larger families, and support placement approaches that respond to the changing availability of housing in different local areas over time.

Regional coordination can also **expand the range of services and support** available for refugees requiring **access to specialist services** (for example, those who have experienced torture or trauma or have specific medical needs) and ensure their placement is sensitive to the capacity of local service providers to meet their specific needs.

While **smaller municipalities** often have the capacity to provide relatively few places to receive refugees each year, these places are still crucial to fulfilling and expanding national quotas. Regional-level coordination can facilitate and promote these small engagements by taking on management and coordination tasks on behalf of participating municipalities.

By sharing resources, expertise and developing joint activities, regional programmes can achieve cost-efficiencies in reception and integration and promote more equitable integration across regions. Examples include, employing regional interpreters to work with refugees and service providers in all participating municipalities, and regionally coordinating capacities such as language tuition and employment training for refugees.

Regional coordination can also include **joint development of resources to support local reception and integration work**, such as written orientation information for refugees and guidance and background information for staff working with refugees.

D. MATCHING REFUGEE PREFERENCES WITH LOCAL CAPACITIES AND ‘SENSITIVE’ PLACEMENT

Placement decisions should be as flexible as possible to support refugees in pursuing their aspirations and making the best use of their abilities and capacities in their new country of residence. While placement is guided by a wide range of variables, not least of which is the availability of housing, national authorities can support refugee integration by **factoring individual and group-based refugee case information into placement decision-making**. For receiving towns and cities, **‘sensitive’ placement** based on local knowledge can improve the ability of regional/local actors to support effective integration and build support amongst local communities. Ensuring **local services have the capacity to meet specific needs** will ensure better individual integration, and also minimise the impact of arrivals on service provision for other local residents.

Local actors can contribute to effective placement decision-making by providing up-to-date information on the specific challenges and pressures they are facing in their city/municipality, and the extent to which they can effectively meet the needs and support the integration of specific refugee groups and profiles. **Individual integration outcomes are generally improved when refugees are placed close to or within easy reach of family members or friends** already in the country, and/or those of a similar national or religious background. **While SHARE advocates for better spreading of refugees throughout countries, SHARE learning also shows that mutual support (and therefore proximity) of refugee and migrant communities is critical for overall integration success.** Therefore in terms of placement, a balance should be reached between both objectives.

Refugees often express a preference for placement in larger cities, however, smaller municipalities can provide a ‘soft landing’ after arrival, particularly for families with children. In smaller municipalities, local orientation and settlement can be less challenging than in larger urban areas. Key services and venues such as schools, healthcare, community facilities and places of worship are often located in close proximity to one another, making them more easily accessible. For families with children, this can support more rapid and effective problem-solving for integration, and provide a less stressful and safer environment in which all family members can settle.

Whilst refugees received into smaller municipalities with less diverse populations may be highly visible, **smaller communities can provide increased opportunities to build local support for reception and integration.** Both local political representatives and central actors in local communities such as **churches, sports clubs or local associations**, can be highly effective partners for sharing information about new arrivals, building public awareness and support, and engaging and coordinating citizen involvement in integration.

For young adults wishing to pursue a **university education**, placement in remote and/or rural areas with no accessible universities or higher education institutions will limit their integration possibilities in relation to both education and employment.

For refugees with **specific health and mental healthcare needs**, placement should ensure access to relevant **specialist services**. Where specialist services or institutions such as universities are located only in larger urban centres areas with limited housing opportunities, it can be useful to consider placing refugees in smaller neighbouring municipalities linked by public transport.

E. FUNDING AND RESOURCING OF LOCAL PROGRAMMES

Equitability of resourcing across local programmes can promote a more positive engagement of local political actors, who will be reassured that their city or municipality is being engaged on the same terms as others. Transparent, ongoing dialogue on resourcing for local refugee-receiving programmes supports effective reception and integration practice and builds local support. Decisions on how and to what extent to allocate **European AMIF resettlement/relocation funds** to local reception and integration programmes are a competence of national authorities, and the level of additional funding available from national governments and within receiving towns and cities differs greatly across European municipalities. For local programmes to be effective, there must be **transparency about what financial resources** are available and how they can be used. Furthermore, **access to allocated funding must be timely** and straightforward.

SHARE learning shows that including regional and local actors as full partners when deciding priorities for how resources are allocated by national authorities to local programmes, promotes strong partnerships and a sense of 'ownership' of the programme by local actors. Allocation of funds will respond better to real needs on the ground and be more efficient if local actors are involved in priority setting and programme definition.

F. COORDINATING AND PLANNING OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS – KEY ROLE OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL ACTORS

Both resettlement and relocation are **complex processes involving multiple actors and mechanisms**. To be effective in receiving and supporting refugees, regional and local authorities must be able to plan and develop programmes that meet the needs of incoming refugees and make the best use of capacities and opportunities present in their specific local contexts.

Local authorities and partners must therefore receive clear and timely information from national authorities about resettlement programmes, including on available (financial) resources, and possible challenges that may arise in this context (for example, managing the (financial) impacts of delayed refugee arrivals by 'blocking' housing).

The SHARE Network experience is that regional and local actors are well able to plan effective local programmes where they are engaged in on-going stakeholder coordination facilitated at the national level and/or regional level. This engagement also provides opportunities to network with international and civil society organisations, and helps to build mutual understanding and strengthen problem-solving within a national programme.

Local actors can also play a key role in reception. **Resettlement programmes in Europe take distinct approaches to placing refugees**. Several countries use a '**centralised reception**' system, in which resettled refugees are initially received at an accommodation facility where they stay for a defined period before the government secures places in a municipality. In others, resettled refugees move directly upon arrival into independent accommodations in a municipality, in an approach referred to as '**direct reception**'.

Particularly in the case of 'direct reception', local actors are an important resource and partner for **developing pre-departure information** and activities for refugees. National authorities and international organisations should actively facilitate their input, including in regularly reviewing pre-departure information to ensure it remains accurate. Whilst some countries, like Sweden, have facilitated participation of municipalities in pre-departure activities, this approach is resource-intensive, and works only in programmes that allocate refugees to municipalities pre-departure. Innovative alternative examples of involving local actors include, for example, The Netherlands, where refugees are introduced to local communities with Google Maps and videos.

Collating and sharing good-quality, individualised information on refugee profiles prior to their arrival enables regional and local actors to better plan reception and housing needs. Some governments therefore share refugee case files prior to arrival. Providing essential elements of reception such as information on **special medical needs** and **interpretation** in the language of the newly arrived refugees, will provide a positive start for integration in their new community.

It is crucial that local actors give input into defining **minimum pre-arrival time periods** for receiving case information. Agreeing clear **pre-arrival planning periods** will build the confidence of local actors to plan and deliver effective programmes. Planning in this regularised way also provides a useful framework to develop processes and partnerships to support a sustainable local programme in the future.

In national programmes using **centralised reception**, actors from receiving municipalities can still support better post-arrival orientation by, for example, visiting refugees during their stay in centralised facilities to introduce themselves and the community to which the refugees will move. This approach has proven successful in the Friedland Reception Centre in Germany.

G. PEER LEARNING AND EXCHANGE IN BUILDING CAPACITY OF CITIES AND TOWNS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES IN LONG-TERM INTEGRATION

Programmes to receive refugees will only be successful if integration is achieved in the longer term.

National aims and objectives for refugee integration can provide regional and local actors with a useful basis to plan local programmes and interventions. Strong political leadership at the regional/local level will ensure constructive and sustainable engagement of relevant partners in achieving positive integration outcomes. Integration tools, resources, challenges and expertise **differ greatly across national, regional and local contexts** in Europe, and can be factored into the design of national resettlement and relocation programmes. It is crucial to **build the integration capacity and expertise of local actors** involved in designing and operating new programmes. **European cities and towns with experience in receiving refugees are a resource** to support this process for less experienced actors. Experienced local actors are best-placed to understand the challenges and priorities of their counterparts setting up new programmes, and to enable these programmes to build on existing expertise. They can draw on their own experience to identify common errors and challenges, and share the solutions and approaches they have developed.

Peer exchange between regional and local actors is crucial to enabling new programmes to fully incorporate the body of European resettlement expertise. In European countries expanding existing refugee-receiving programmes to new towns and cities within their territory, actors in existing local programmes are an easily accessible source of expertise and advice. It is important to **build upon expertise that already exists and not reinvent the wheel**, time and time again. **For countries establishing entirely new programmes, the SHARE Network has demonstrated how experienced regional and local actors in neighbouring countries and elsewhere in Europe can similarly assist in providing expert peer advice and input.**

SHARE has piloted frameworks and approaches to structure **contextualised and tailor made peer exchange** on resettlement and integration amongst regional and local actors, and produced tools and resources to guide future exchanges in this area.

H. THE ROLE OF POLITICAL LEADERS, LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS AND GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN OFFERING WELCOME AND LONG-TERM INTEGRATION SUPPORT

Engagement in SHARE has shown that **strong political leadership builds welcome**, and creates sustainable refugee-receiving programmes at the regional and local level. Political representatives can play an essential role in informing local residents about plans and activities to receive refugees. **Together with civil society actors**, political representatives can help build public awareness of and support for refugee protection and integration. Local political support for refugee protection, for example by endorsing pledges to uphold refugee rights or through membership of relevant city networks, can further support the creation of a positive, welcoming local environment for integration.

Political authorities, such as mayors, can also importantly mobilise the sustainable engagement of mainstream service providers in local reception and integration programmes, and ensure integration is addressed throughout public policy and service provision in a manner sensitive and appropriate considering the local context.

SHARE has demonstrated that integration is much more successful if there is a **multi-stakeholder engagement in refugee reception and welcome, and an innovative and creative approach to engaging new partners**. Integration at the local level can be expanded and improved if a broad set of local stakeholders - such as faith-based organisations, migrant associations, employers and universities – are able to make contributions each respecting their own roles and mandates.

Planning and coordinating reception is more effective when undertaken by a **core partnership of local actors** responsible for specific elements of reception and orientation such as housing, healthcare, education and registration for welfare benefits. Partnerships can enhance reception services by:

- agreeing mutual roles/responsibilities based on refugees' reception and orientation needs;
- pre-planning reception tasks and activities before refugees arrive;
- allocating resources and monitoring the implementation of planned tasks during the post-arrival period; and
- providing a mechanism for joint problem-solving and a forum for local actors to jointly evaluate and improve their practices.

At the local level, conditions for refugee integration can be improved if **local residents** are well-informed about global refugee needs and how their local programme contributes to wider European and global efforts. Local political and civil society actors can provide information to build **public awareness and support, and to promote citizen involvement** in supporting reception and integration. **Involving grassroots, citizen-led initiatives** in refugee integration promotes welcome, builds trust and leads to more sustainable local programmes. Including grassroots volunteering and other initiatives in local programmes can significantly expand the 'integration offer' for refugees in their new neighbourhoods, building a welcoming local environment and providing refugees and local residents with opportunities to meet one another.

To ensure sustainable and effective programmes, citizen-led activities to support resettled/relocated refugees should always be **complementary to mainstream services** delivered by core partners.

Volunteering enables refugees and other local residents to meet with each other, engage in joint activities and build mutual understanding. Refugees are supported to access new social networks outside of mainstream services, and local volunteers can use their experiences to raise awareness within their own communities and contacts. Volunteers can support integration in a variety of different roles, including **language support, one-to-one mentoring, social guidance and/or employment coaching**. It is important that the activities of volunteers are distinct from those of **professional social workers**, and designed to complement and not substitute for professional reception and integration services.

Refugees benefit from opportunities to volunteer within a wide range of organisational settings. Refugee assisting organisations can act as intermediaries to support both refugees and hosting organisations to ensure **successful refugee engagement in a wide range of volunteering opportunities**.

National authorities and civil society organisations can play an important role in disseminating best practices and linking grassroots initiatives in different locations. To better support integration and expand new programmes, civil society organisations in some European countries are discussing mechanisms to coordinate the input of citizens' initiatives at the national level.

I. RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS IN REFUGEE RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION

In European countries with predefined programmes for the integration of newcomers, **services for resettled refugees** are often **mainstreamed into wider service provision**. Other European resettlement programmes provide **specialised integration support specifically for resettled refugees**.

The SHARE Network experience is that positive integration outcomes for refugees can be achieved in either context, provided that integration support responds to the needs and capacities of individual refugees and is effectively coordinated across a range of local partners and stakeholders.

SHARE network members' practices show that positive integration outcomes for refugees **are best achieved via a casework approach coordinated by a lead local partner**, such as a municipality or NGO, which brings together partners working with refugees post-arrival to monitor integration and develop joint strategies to address particular needs. **Successful integration programmes are time-limited, respond to specific needs and support refugees to live independently.**

Providing integration casework support for a defined period of time after refugees arrive, enables target-setting and planning for integration, and a 'phasing out' of casework support at the end of this initial period. Successful programmes will be flexible in engaging mainstream service providers and/or extending casework support for refugees with longer-term integration support needs.

Effective casework **support should address integration at both an individual and family/household level**. Individuals within single refugee households or families may have multiple integration needs and trajectories. Children who attend school, for example, may learn a new language faster than their parents, altering family dynamics and presenting new challenges in areas such as education. Assessing individual integration needs and progress in the context of families and households can help service providers to more effectively **support all members of a household** taking account of interrelated needs (housing, education, employment etc.).

Personalised integration plans (PIPs) are a tool to set short, medium and long-term outcomes and targets for individual refugees' integration, and to plan the necessary steps to achieve integration. Personalised integration planning thus empowers refugees and creates ownership of the process. PIPs facilitate the management of mutual expectations and a regular progress review. PIPs are co-developed with refugee input, and as a result incorporate refugees' assessments of their own integration capacities and their aspirations for the future, including with regard to employment. Individualised planning provides a useful framework to engage new partners and stakeholders in supporting integration, based on the specific needs and interests of individual refugees.

PIPs can be regularly **reviewed and updated** over time, a process that also helps refugees to adjust expectations in areas of integration such as employment and education. They are a useful tool to remind refugees how far they have progressed since arrival, and to review the effectiveness of particular actions and interventions at an individual and programme level.

J. PRIORITIZING EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Employment is a key integration priority and an important indicator of successful integration. Support to move towards employment should therefore be an important **component of all integration programmes** for refugees, including activities such as competencies assessments, vocational skills development, and workplace language-learning.

The SHARE Network experience is that refugees of all types of backgrounds can be supported to move toward employment, and more positive employment outcomes can be created through an individualised approach and innovative local partnerships and approaches.

At a time of fierce public debate in Europe about the feasibility of receiving and integrating large numbers of refugees, **positive employment outcomes can also help to build public support** for refugee protection and integration on a more general level.

However, realistically one must expect that it will take some time for refugees to fully enter the work force and that this will be **difficult to attain when basic integration needs** - such as healthcare, housing and (basic) language training – **are not yet met.**

Employment support interventions should focus on identifying and developing the individual skills and capacities to boost refugees' employability in the **regional/ local job market** and should therefore closely link to **refugee placement policies.** Integration actors can help refugees in the local job-search process by offering support in areas such as completing job applications, compiling CVs and mock interviews.

SHARE experiences show that vocational training and language-learning can better increase refugees' employability if they focus on areas of **skills shortage and demand in the local job-market.** If necessary, formal up-skilling of refugees for specific employment roles can take place via cooperation with universities or other local educational and training institutions.

Individualised integration planning provides a useful framework for assessing individual barriers to accessing employment, and developing interventions and solutions to overcome such barriers. Individualised integration planning can also help in setting realistic targets for individual refugees' progress in employment, in the context of their overall integration. For single mothers with full-time childcare responsibilities, for example, moving into employment will not be a realistic possibility in the short term. Integration support can still build skills and experience relevant for later employment, for example, through **ongoing language training and opportunities to volunteer.**

SHARE members report frustration by refugees at the requirement to pass **high language level tests prior to entering the job market.** Linking refugees to employment opportunities that require **limited language and vocational skills** can facilitate **quick entry into the labour market,** and support social and cultural integration. Longer-term employment outcomes will be improved if entry-level positions for refugees are provided together with on-going support to move into more skilled roles. It is crucial that refugees moving into employment can continue to progress in integration areas such as language proficiency but the lack of absolute proficiency should not be a barrier to any and all employment. Local programmes can support ongoing integration through the flexible provision of support and activities for refugees who are working.

Local citizens can support positive employment outcomes for refugees by acting as volunteer mentors. Local citizens from professional backgrounds can use their expertise, experience and networks to assist refugees wishing to move into the same sector or role. They can advise on training and qualification routes, support study, assist with job search and help with networking. Retired local professionals can be a useful source of volunteer employment mentors for organisations seeking to facilitate these activities.

3. BUILDING THE SHARE NETWORK

3.1 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF SHEFFIELD: PROVIDING FOR A FRAMEWORK FOR CONTEXTUALISED LEARNING AND EXCHANGE

The strategic partnership between ICMC and Sheffield and the Yorkshire & Humber regions has been a key element in building the SHARE network of peer learning and dialogue.

ICMC identified Sheffield and the Yorkshire & Humber regions as strong partners and as a peer learning model/laboratory for the following reasons:

- Their **longstanding experience** in receiving **substantial resettlement numbers** (around 300 annually in Sheffield, Hull and Bradford together);
- Well defined **agreements between national governments and cities and local NGO partners** on annual resettlement numbers and groups, pre and post arrival coordination and settlement funding arrangements;
- Capability to receive **many different nationalities** (Burmese, Bhutanese, Somali, Congolese, Iraqis), including both urban refugees and refugees that have lived in camps for prolonged periods;
- The **variety of size and infrastructure** of cities and municipalities in the Yorkshire & Humber region, facilitating matching with other cities across Europe with similar profiles;
- Well planned, defined and coordinated **local city- NGO partnerships to provide settlement services** and ensure coordinated referrals to mainstream services (health, education, language learning, employment);
- Defined **methodology and tools used to deliver integration support** during the first year upon arrivals (Personal Integration Plans (PIP));
- Engagement with **local citizens**, volunteering groups and migrant/refugee associations; and
- Branding of the city of Sheffield as a **City of Sanctuary**, demonstrating a political commitment to refugee protection and welcome of refugees.

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3.1.A THE SHARE OUTREACH PUBLICATION 'WELCOME TO SHEFFIELD'

'Europe should collectively be able to offer many more resettlement places than it currently does. By coming together to share our experiences, overcome the challenges and celebrate our successes, we will be able to say that together, we made a real difference'.

Councillor Julie Dore, Leader of Sheffield City Council



The ['Welcome to Sheffield – Reflections on 8 years experience of receiving resettled refugees at the local level'](#) describes the Sheffield and the Yorkshire & Humber region resettlement programme in its many facets and the key factors that have led to its success. The publication was co-produced by ICMC, the UK city of Sheffield and British Refugee Council, together with the EUROCITIES network, UNHCR and the UK resettlement cities of Hull and Bradford and targets countries, regions, cities and civil society organisations, which want to learn about how local resettlement programmes operate, when considering whether to engage in resettlement or want to expand or improve their programme. The publication provided the city of Sheffield with a platform to invite the participation of European regional and local authorities and their partners in the SHARE Network, and ICMC a succinct and accessible tool to increase cities' awareness about refugee resettlement at the local level and the opportunities and support available via SHARE.

3.1.B SHARE VISIT PROGRAMME TO SHEFFIELD AND THE YORKSHIRE & HUMBER SIDE REGION

The SHARE visit programme to Sheffield and the Yorkshire and Humberside has been the major activity of the project and the main tool to facilitate structured dialogue, mutual learning and best practice exchange, allowing for **contextualised learning and city involvement** in resettlement and refugee integration. The programme was facilitated with the close cooperation of the city of Sheffield and the UK NGO partners Horton Housing Association, Refugee Action and British Refugee Council, and the expert input of the [EUROCITIES network](#).

The methodology for the visits was inspired by EUROCITIES' peer exchange methodology used in the [Implementing project](#). This methodology was adapted by ICMC to respond to the resettlement context and national competencies in asylum, including placement policies. The methodology for the tailor made visit programmes was as follows:

- **4 – 6 months preparation time** to identify and reach out to learning delegations;
- **Multi -stakeholder delegations:** city, civil society, sometimes national governments;
- Establish **defined learning objectives** for delegations ;
- **Pre-visit preparation of Sheffield delegates** on national context, competencies, challenges and opportunities to engage in resettlement;
- Programme including **formal peer assessment session** amongst authorities, presentations, thematic visits, such as health, housing, language learning, volunteering and employment, and meetings with resettled refugees; and
- **Evaluation** of what and how to apply to national context, through visit reports and actions for follow up.

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Deputy Mayor of Aachen Hilde Scheidt on the SHARE City Exchange Visit to Sheffield (October, 2012).

For 6 delegations, a visit on the second day to [Hull, Bradford](#) and the [Greater Manchester](#) region in the UK was arranged, to showcase a different partnership approach to cities in Europe, which almost all struggle with obtaining housing for resettled refugees.

Visit programmes and activities were designed to address the specific national, regional and local contexts of each delegation. Each visit programme was accordingly tailor-made to the needs, interests and priorities of each visiting delegation, drawing on the full spectrum of expertise and practice offered by the UK resettlement partnership, **and enabling visiting delegations to match visit locations to their own regional and/or local contexts**. To offer more participant places and improve cost effectiveness, the implementing team often matched delegations from different countries with regard to their learning needs.

On Day 1 of each visit programme, the city of Sheffield led a '**city-to-city**' conversation and discussion, using SHARE review tools co-developed by ICMC Europe and EUROCITIES. Visiting delegates gave short presentations on their region and/or municipality and the work of their respective organisations, according to a form included in the City Exchange Visit methodology, and met with local service providers and civil society partners of the city of Sheffield.

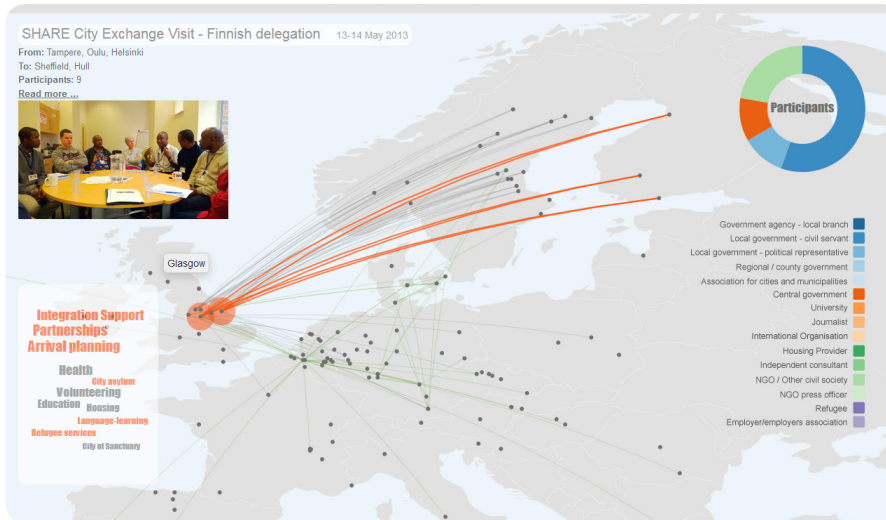
On Day 2 of each programme, the UK resettlement partnership hosted **site visits** to resettlement and integration practitioners in towns and cities in the Yorkshire and Greater Manchester regions. All visiting delegates completed a **pre-visit questionnaire** to express their interest in different thematic integration areas around which the UK partnership could shape Day 2 site visits, and the city and/or region that they would most like to visit as part of the site visit.

3.1.C THE VISITING DELEGATIONS

Between 2012 and 2015, SHARE facilitated a programme of 10, 2.5-day City Exchange visits to the UK for 89 participants from 12 countries, participating with mixed delegations from municipalities, cities, civil society and in some cases national governments. These can be broken down into three groups:

- Countries that are considering resettlement: Austria, Hungary, Poland.
- Countries that have recently started resettlement Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain.
- Countries with longstanding experience in resettlement: Finland, The Netherlands, Sweden.
- [Germany](#) - A delegation from the [North Rhine-Westphalia region](#) with participants from three of the region's major cities - Bonn, Aachen and Düsseldorf. The delegation's pre-selected interests and priorities were **education, volunteering and integration support**. "It's about meeting each other as equals – whereby both parties can learn a lot from each other" - Ingeborg Heck-Boeckler, Amnesty Asylum group Aachen. A delegation from [the city of Munich](#) focusing on exchange of good practices with regard to national grassroots movements to build a culture of hospitality for those seeking sanctuary.
- [Sweden](#) - 16 participants from the Swedish regions (counties) of Gävleborg, Västerbotten and Jämtland (co-funded by the national ERF [Landa Project](#) the County of Gävleborg). **These regions look at coordinated approaches between smaller municipalities** – such as in the Humberride region.
- [Finland](#) - 9 participants including NGO and city representatives from Oulu and Tampere. Pre-identified learning needs of the cities were **engaging citizens as volunteers for refugee integration** – a thematic area that was later addressed during the '[Sharing Through Mentoring](#)' programme in which Tampere participated as Implementing City. Additional problems that were identified by Finnish participants were how to engage cities to receive resettled refugees.
- [Czech Republic](#) - 9 participants from the cities of Bzenec, Brandýs nad Labem, Kutná Hora and Polderady. Among other things, the visit programme focused on special needs of **refugees suffering from torture and trauma**. These needs were addressed by the city of Sheffield through a horticultural therapy project that supports vulnerable men and women to improve their mental health through engaging in therapeutic gardening at [SAGE's](#) their allotment gardens in the city.
- [Austria & Poland](#) - A specialist visit for countries not yet engaged in resettlement. For countries that are new to resettlement, the visit programme **promotes a multi-stakeholder approach** – and also invited national stakeholders, since they will decide whether to launch a national resettlement programme. The visiting delegation included 10 participants from the Austrian Ministry of Interior, the Vienna Integration Fund, the Vienna Social Fund, the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and representatives from the city of Lublin and Caritas Poland.
- [The Netherlands & Belgium \(Flanders\)](#) – The joint delegation reflected with Sheffield partners on opportunities to in crease **partnerships between cities and NGOs and mainstreaming into education, health and employment services**. City and NGO representatives from Wetteren (BE), Zaventem (BE) and Zaanstad (NL) attended the visit programme.
- [France](#) - 7 participants from the NGOs Forum Réfugiés (Lyon), France Terre d'Asile (Paris) and Expand national capacity across regions- Isard Cos (Pau), and the city of Nantes. The visit programme focused on city-civil society partnerships and engaging Nantes as a new city in resettlement.
- [Spain](#) – 11 participants from the NGOs Spanish Refugee Aid Commission (CEAR), Red Cross Cantabria and la Rioja, the municipalities of Bilbao, Alcobendas, Torrelavega, the regional council of Madrid and the Ministry of Employment and Social Security (MeySS). The visit programme focused on **promoting a multi-stakeholder approach on volunteering** – and therefore also invited national stakeholders.

- [Hungary & Poland](#) – A partnership between participants from the Reformed Church of Hungary-Refugee Mission, Ocalenie Foundation (Polish NGO from Warsaw), the Ministry of Interior of both Poland and Hungary as well as the regional UNHCR office Budapest which coordinates resettlement. Engaging Central European countries in resettlement has been a priority under SHARE II. The programme focused on **promoting a multi-stakeholder approach and on building relationships** to assist in the future development of a national resettlement programme. The visit also inspired the organisation of the SHARE Regional Resettlement conference in Prague, September 2015.



SHARE peer-learning resource available online on: <http://resettlement.eu/sites/resettlement.eu/shareviz/index.html>

3.1.D PROMOTING MEDIA COVERAGE ON RESETTLEMENT

On February 27-28, journalists and NGO Press Officers from across Europe came together in the UK city of Sheffield for the **SHARE City Exchange Media Visit**. Part of the wider SHARE City Exchange Visit Programme, this specialist visit introduced European media to refugee resettlement, and provided opportunities - through meetings and interviews with resettled refugees and city officials, and site visits to practitioners - to gather material with which to develop media features on resettlement.

The 2-day programme was organised by ICMC Europe, in partnership with the [city of Sheffield](#), [British Refugee Council](#) and the Sheffield Gateway Refugee Communities Forum, with outreach to the delegation by the [ECRE Media Officers Group](#).

Represented in the delegation were France ([La Croix](#) daily newspaper & [France Terre d'Asile](#)), Czech Republic ([Czech Radio](#) & [Organisation for Assisting Migrants \(OPU\)](#)), The Netherlands ([NRC Handelsblad](#) daily newspaper & [Dutch Council for Refugees](#)), Germany ([die Tageszeitung](#)), Poland ([Polityka](#) weekly news magazine & [Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights \(HFHR\)](#)) and Brussels (EU - [European Council on Refugees & Exiles \(ECRE\)](#) & [EuroParl TV](#)). Delegates published articles and features for their respective organisations and publications using the material they gathered in Sheffield, made available to view and download on the [SHARE Media & Partner Corner](#) on the SHARE webpages.

Czech national radio followed up their participation in the Media Visit by producing two further programmes on refugee resettlement, both drawing on interviews with participants at the SHARE Network Conference held in Brussels in October 2013:

- 'What is the European response to the Syrian refugee crisis?' (December 2013)
- 'The New Life Is Just Like the New Year' on integration challenges and opportunities for resettled refugees after their arrival and the role of local actors in the integration process (broadcast January).

Additionally, a national journalist from Austria participated in the Austria-Poland SHARE City Exchange Visit that took place on 4-5 July 2013.



La Croix (French national newspaper), 2 April 2013

3.2 PROMOTING LOCAL STAKEHOLDER EXCHANGE

Within SHARE I & II, project partners Caritas International, Burma Centre Prague, France Terre d'Asile, Forum Réfugiés and ICMC facilitated **4 one-day national SHARE Platform meetings**, among those operating regional and local resettlement programmes. These meetings focused on **local and regional coordination** to support the effective placement of resettled refugees and agree actions to present local issues effecting refugee resettlement at the national and European levels. National SHARE Platform meetings also engaged new city/region actors not yet involved in refugee resettlement, thus facilitating peer exchange and developing **new relationships at the national level**.

- [Czech Republic](#): (2012) ERN/SHARE stakeholder conference, bringing together 12 Czech municipalities to discuss **planning and coordination of new arrivals** (6th November 2012).
- [France](#): (2014) ERN/SHARE stakeholder conference on the [admission of Syrian refugees](#) to France (18th June 2014).
- [Belgium](#): (2015) Fedasil, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), SHARE and Caritas International organised a meeting on the Belgium resettlement programme for Syrian and Congolese refugees (23rd June 2015).
- [France](#): (2015) France Terre d'Asile and Forum Réfugiés-Cosi presented their co-written report on best practices to improve the **French resettlement programme** at the French national platform meeting in Paris (24th June 2015).

3.3 FACILITATING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

On 28th September 2015, ICMC Europe and SHARE partners Stichting Vluchtelingen Werk Limburg (The Dutch Council for Refugees, Limburg), the city of Aachen, and the city of Sittard-Geleen, organised a one day cross-border meeting on participation and integration of refugees in the **Meuse-Rhine Euregion**. The conference took place in the city of Aachen, and was attended by 40 representatives of relevant actors from Limburg in The Netherlands, North-Rhine Westphalia /Kreis Aachen in Germany, and Limburg/Namen in Belgium. The conference addressed refugee reception and housing challenges as well as refugee integration programmes in the respective cities and regions. As Syrian arrivals to the cities of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion continue to increase, new mechanisms to receive refugees and facilitate their progress in moving into independent housing and local integration programmes were discussed.

Alderman for social affairs Bert Kamphuis (Sittard-Geleen) and Deputy Mayor Hilde Scheidt (Aachen) both underlined the importance of cross-border cooperation in meeting housing challenges, in pooling of interpreters and in labour market integration.



Sandra Knabe (city of Aachen), Hilde Scheidt (Deputy Mayor of Aachen), Bert Kamphuis (alderman of Sittard-Geleen), Lisette van de Gazelle (city of Sittard-Geleen) and Chris Baltussen (Dutch Council for Refugees, Limburg) at the SHARE Cross-Border conference (Aachen, September 2015).

“The local authorities in the Euregion, whether it is here in Aachen, in the Belgian or the Dutch border regions, are all dealing with the same challenges in trying to (...) integrate them (refugees) into society and to offer them suitable accommodation and increase their chances of participation in the labour market. Therefore it is important to learn from each other, to share our experiences and to acknowledge that our responsibilities don't stop at the national borders.”

– Bert Kamphuis, alderman, the City of Sittard-Geleen

The Dutch Council for Refugees in Limburg presented their practices in volunteering in areas like language learning, social guidance and employment. Volunteering was identified as an area of future cooperation and exchange. Representatives of the churches (Archdiocese Roermond and Caritas Cologne) also presented initiatives to welcome and support refugees. [Click here](#) for the full conference report.

3.4 SHARE NETWORK MAGAZINES

The SHARE Network produced 5 editions of the SHARE Network magazine, distributed in print and online to over 1,000 partners and stakeholders from European cities, municipalities, regions and their civil society partners, national governments, European institutions and international organisations. The magazine provided updates and feedback on past and planned project activities, and raised city and regional awareness of relevant topics including articles on city visits, thematic issues, specific refugee situations, refugee arrivals at the local level, stories/testimonies about reception and integration of specific refugee groups in local communities throughout the EU and an agenda of SHARE Network events (both physical and virtual) and opportunities.



All 5 issues can be accessed on the [SHARE Magazine menu section](#) of the SHARE Webpages.

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3.5 SHARE CITY PROFILES

SHARE II added 35 new city profiles to an [interactive online map](#). Profiles are searchable on the basis of pre-determined criteria offering the possibility to assess commonalities amongst local resettlement contexts across countries, and subsequently to determine the transferability of successful local practices and approaches to increasing resettlement capacity.

SHARE II partners and network members completed online SHARE city profiles for their city/region while ICMC conducted additional research for new cities and completed additional profiles. City/region profiles include the following elements: resettlement procedures & partnerships, pre-arrival planning and information-sharing, reception, health, housing, legal advice, participation of previously resettled refugees, education, volunteering, resourcing and financing.



4 RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICE EXCHANGE IN THEMATIC AREAS

4.1 PLANNING FOR ARRIVALS - THE SHARE CITY CURRICULUM

“A Toolkit for Welcoming, Supporting and Empowering Resettled Refugees” - this resource is designed to provide tools, templates and ideas that will support those working on resettlement programmes to respond to challenges, better meet the needs of resettled refugees and support their aspirations for successful resettlement. The tools it includes have been compiled based on the successful approaches used by many SHARE Network partners and stakeholders across Europe and shared with us and our partners through SHARE activities, events and research throughout 2012-14.

The toolkit includes templates and guidance in three distinct sections - **‘Arrival, Reception & Orientation’, ‘Integration Support & Planning’ and ‘Tools for Caseworkers’**. Local authorities, refugee supporting NGOs and service providers can either adapt these materials for use in their work, or use them as inspiration for developing their own approaches and ideas for resettlement and integration in their respective regional or local contexts. [Click here](#) to access the SHARE City Curriculum page and download tools and templates.

4.2 PRE-DEPARTURE CULTURAL ORIENTATION – SHARE WEBINAR

At a time when European countries have granted protection to over 30,000 refugees from Syria, both by extending existing resettlement quotas and establishing new resettlement and admission programmes, adequately preparing refugees and receiving communities for arrival is more crucial than ever. Answering the questions that refugees may have before entering this new stage of their life and reinforcing information received pre-departure after refugees arrive can help to reduce anxiety and avoid disappointment. **Pre-departure cultural orientation** programmes and information therefore benefit both the refugees as well as the receiving communities and authorities

Co-organised by ICMC and IOM, the [SHARE Expert Webinar ‘Building the Basis for Integration: best practice and successful approaches in pre-departure Cultural Orientation’](#) draws on the experiences of field experts from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and practitioners working on pre-departure and reception for resettled young people and their families in the Swedish municipality of Strömsund, to explore successful current approaches to pre-departure cultural orientation in European resettlement and admission programmes.

4.3 RESPONDING AND RECOGNIZING TRAUMA AMONGST REFUGEE POPULATIONS – SHARE WEBINAR

Resettled refugees arrive in European countries from a variety of different situations and backgrounds. They may have spent long periods living in refugee camps, lived for shorter periods in urban settings or – as is the case for the Syrian refugee population – have recently fled to another country to escape conflict and danger.

Many resettled refugees will have experienced traumatic events, including separation from and loss of family members, torture, sexual violence and direct involvement in conflict, and may also have spent significant periods without access to sufficient physical and/or mental healthcare. The process of arriving and settling into a new country and community can both exacerbate previous trauma, and provide a space in which the effects of previous trauma can begin to manifest themselves.

In many European resettlement countries, resettled refugees are dispersed over national territories after arrival, often outside of the major cities and urban centres where specialist intercultural psychosocial support may be available. Service providers working with resettled refugees in European cities and towns may not have the skills or experience to identify trauma in their clients, develop appropriate responses or make accurate and helpful referrals to specialist support.

To build the capacity of non-specialist staff working with resettled refugees, this SHARE Expert Webinar '[Recognising & Responding to Trauma amongst Refugee Population](#)' brought together experts from 4 European countries to present **tools, resources, advice and guidance on recognising and responding to trauma**, and to engage in discussion and exchange with participants about their experiences in this context.

4.4 HOUSING

The success of European resettlement depends on the continued commitment of European regions, cities, municipalities and their civil society partners, which often face several fundamental challenges, to the multiple needs of local citizens, asylum seekers and others, including in terms of housing. Regional and local resettlement actors in Europe continue to overcome obstacles to housing resettled refugees through the development of creative and innovative solutions. As SHARE Network members have indicated, in order to fulfil national resettlement commitments, it is crucial to engage new actors to offer housing for resettlement.



Housing introduction in the Czech Republic

For refugees who have fled their countries, it may have been many years since they have had a place where they can feel safe, secure and able to focus on the future. Housing is a central and necessary precondition to regaining autonomy, but resettled refugees also require support in navigating surrounding services, building friendships and developing confidence in their status as community members. The SHARE Network conducted research on innovative and successful approaches to providing housing for refugees within European resettlement programmes and published findings in the publication '[A Place To Live, A Place To Stay - A Good Practice Guide For Housing In Refugee Resettlement](#)' reflecting the crucial and foundational role of housing in the wider integration process.

The publication was co-published by **ICMC and the North West Gateway Resettlement Partnership of the UK**, a regional partnership made up of the NGO Refugee Action and 6 local authorities (Manchester, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Tameside and Stockport) that together operate a resettlement programme for 470 resettled refugees each year.

The publication draws on 12 months of research and consultation with partners and stakeholders of the SHARE Network, including 41 qualitative interviews with housing practitioners in 8 experienced European resettlement countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and the UK) and Austria. The research aimed to identify and structure creative, innovative and successful approaches to providing housing for refugees, drawing on practices for both resettled and other refugees, and to make recommendations for developing this area.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: CITIZENS OFFERING HOUSING TO REFUGEES

To enable refugees to move out of large scale and overcrowded asylums shelters and centres, the [Refugees Welcome website](#) was created in Berlin in November 2014. The initiative is now active in 8 other countries in Europe namely Austria, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, Poland and Italy. Similar to the rent lodging website Airbnb, the site acts as a platform for citizens to sign up their home or free room in their house or apartment.

The programme 'matches' refugees to citizens who offer their homes, a process carried out by a refugee assisting organisation. If both the refugee and the flatmate get along, the refugee can move in. Also, after the refugee moves in, the team stays available for questions and also helps get financing to compensate the host for the use of his/her room. Refugees Welcome has, to date, helped 500 refugees and asylum-seekers find a place to live.

The final publication, in particular the selection of practice examples and the development of recommendations for inclusion in each thematic chapter, was supported by the **SHARE Expert Group on Housing**. This group comprised 35 invited expert participants from 10 European countries providing expert input that shaped the final publication content, creating ownership of the recommendations by SHARE Network partners and stakeholders and ensuring the publication's usefulness for peer resettlement practitioners across Europe.

4.5 VOLUNTEERING

For resettled refugees who experience a rapid change when they arrive in new countries and communities, both volunteers and opportunities to become involved in volunteering can play a fundamental role in providing friendship, facilitating reception and adaptation, and supporting long-term settlement and integration. At the October 2013 [SHARE Network Conference](#), SHARE partners and stakeholders identified volunteering as a priority area for development, and aimed to incorporate into their work, the expertise, knowledge and experience of those involved in volunteering for refugee integration.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

The Portuguese Refugee Council is an accredited training provider, and offers a **free to access e-learning package** for anyone who needs or wants to learn more about refugees. This [e-CPR package](#) includes a final module on volunteering, and has been particularly useful both in attracting new volunteers and enhancing the skills and knowledge of existing CPR volunteers. e-CPR is offered over a 6-week period for groups of up to 30 people. The course requires approximately 5 hours per week of trainees' time, and includes access to discussion groups and an e-tutor.

4.5.A DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICES: 'SHARING THROUGH MENTORING' PROGRAMME

The SHARE Network's 'SHARING through Mentoring' programme, was a thematic city exchange programme focused on volunteering in refugee resettlement. Using the methodology developed by SHARE partner [EUROCITIES](#) and expert consultant [MigrationWork](#), the 2012-14 [ImpleMentoring](#) project, 'SHARING through Mentoring' aimed to gather expertise on volunteering for refugee resettlement and integration from across Europe (including [VluchtelingenWerk Limburg](#)), develop tools to guide the development of practice and programming and pilot these tools with the SHARE Implementing City of Tampere. The 'SHARING through Mentoring' programme began with the [SHARE Network Expert Seminar on Volunteering](#) held in Maastricht in October 2014, continued with an intensive exchange in Limburg during the first city visit, and concluded with a visit by a city-civil society delegation from Limburg to Tampere to support planning for new volunteering initiatives for resettlement in the city.

SHARE VOLUNTEER EXPERT SEMINAR

In order to define a benchmark for successful volunteer programmes, ICMC created a Volunteering Expert Core Group, which gathered at a 2-day international seminar in Maastricht on October 13-14, 2014. Organised in the framework of SHARE II, 25 volunteer experts¹⁵ came together to present their work, and exchange ideas and experiences. The seminar programme incorporated key factors for successful volunteer programmes that were used by SHARE partners during the peer-learning visits in 2015. [Click here](#) to read a full conference report.

VISIT TO THE MENTORING CITY

On 4-5 February 2015, in the framework of the SHARE Network's 'SHARING through Mentoring' programme, a delegation from SHARE partner the Finnish city of Tampere travelled to the Dutch municipalities of Sittard Geleen and Maastricht to learn about the volunteering programmes of SHARE partner VluchtelingenWerk (Dutch Council for Refugees) Limburg. The Tampere delegation of 6 persons was made up of city case workers and Social Service managers working with resettled refugees, and representatives of both the Finnish Red Cross and the Lutheran Church.

[Click here](#) to read the full visit report.



The Finnish delegation in Maastricht visiting a language course organised by the Dutch Council for Refugees.

¹⁵ Arbeiter Wohlfahrt (DE), Caritas Vienna (AU), City of Sanctuary movement (UK), city of Osnabruck (DE), Dutch Council for Refugee (NL), Danish Council for Refugees (DK), European Volunteer Centre (BE), Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (FR), Organization for Aid to Refugees (CZ), Polish Humanitarian Action (PL), Portuguese Refugee Council (PT), Refugee Action (UK), Volunteer Action Sheffield (UK).

VISIT TO THE IMPLEMENTING CITY

On 21-22 April 2015, in the framework of the SHARE Network's 'SHARING through Mentoring' programme, a delegation from the SHARE Mentor Partnership of VluchtelingenWerk (Dutch Council for Refugees) Limburg and the Dutch municipalities of Sittard-Geleen travelled to the SHARE Learning City of Tampere in Finland. The Limburg delegation of 4 persons was made up of a civil servant from Sittard-Geleen, and the Director, Volunteer Coordinator and Policy Officer of the Dutch Council for Refugees (Limburg). Hosted by the city of Tampere and their partners the Finnish Red Cross, Lutheran Church in Tampere and Setlementti Naapuri (Settlement Neighbour), the 2-day visit programme provided the Dutch delegation with an opportunity to explore the partnerships, resources and capacity for volunteering in refugee resettlement and integration in the city. [Click here](#) to read the full visit report.

4.5.B 'VOLUNTEERING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION' – A SHARE NETWORK TOOLKIT PUBLICATION

The toolkit was jointly developed in the framework of the SHARE Network's 'SHARING through Mentoring' programme, led by ICMC Europe in partnership with the EUROcities network, MigrationWork, Dutch Council for Refugees (Limburg), the municipalities of Sittard-Geleen and Maastricht, the Finnish city of Tampere and a wide range of experts working on volunteering and refugee integration across Europe.

The toolkit is an instrument for inspiring, assessing and developing policies and practice for local refugee reception and integration volunteering programmes. It begins with the 'SHARING through Mentoring' standard - a headline summary of the SHARE Network's overall objective of volunteering for refugee integration. It then sets out a number of components summarized below.

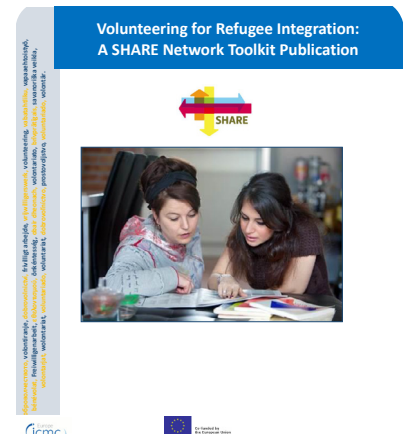
Key factors, or the policy and practice elements that enable cities and organisations to meet the 'SHARING through Mentoring' standard are listed. Each of the six key factors is formulated as a statement, allowing one to verify if it is true for a given city or organisation. Chances of success in reaching the standard are greater the more of the factors are present. Below is a summary of the thematic areas of the six key-factors.

1. Building a Culture of Volunteering
2. Partnerships & Coordination for Volunteering
3. Reception, Participation, Independence & Welcome
4. Supporting Volunteers
5. Who Volunteers?
6. Monitoring & Evaluation

Guide questions ask about issues that need to be investigated before one can say if a city or organisation has the key factor in place.

Good practice examples from organisations across Europe working on volunteering and refugee integration, illustrate the ways in which cities and organisations are working to address the themes covered by each key factor.

Access a copy of the final benchmark tool '**Volunteering for Refugee Integration: a SHARE Network Toolkit Publication**' in [English](#), [French](#) or [German](#).



4.6 EMPLOYMENT

Engagement in paid employment enables refugees to live more independently. For national authorities establishing and expanding programmes to receive more refugees, employment is a key integration priority and an important indicator of successful integration. At a time of fierce public debate in Europe about the feasibility of receiving and integrating large numbers of



Burmese refugees working at the Danish Crown factory in Faaborg-Midtfyn (Denmark).

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: PRIORITISING EMPLOYMENT

Within the framework of the project 'Starters Job' (Dutch '[startbaan](#)'), the Dutch Council for Refugees (DCfR) and the University Assistance Fund (UAF) have helped approximately 790 refugees to find a job over the last three years. 'Starters Job' differentiates between different types of work. The biggest group, 342 refugees, are working as volunteers, interns or are participating in an unpaid first job experience. Around 200 refugees are following a vocational training that will guarantee them a work place after graduation. Another 234 have found a paid job, mostly in the care and technical sectors, or started their own business.

refugees, positive employment outcomes can also help to build public support for refugee protection and integration. The SHARE Network experience is that refugees of all backgrounds can be supported to move toward employment, and more positive employment outcomes can be created through innovative local partnerships and approaches.

4.6.A LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION – PANEL SESSION AT THE SHARE CROSS-BORDER CONFERENCE

SHARE organised a conference in September 2015, to facilitate cross-border collaboration and exchange on participation and integration of refugees in the Meuse-Rhine region. Part of the conference specifically focused on labour market integration of beneficiaries of international protection and highlighted good practices and challenges encountered in that area in Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands.¹⁶

4.6.B EMPLOOI – VOLUNTEERING FOR REFUGEE LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION

On 4-5 February 2015, in the framework of the SHARE Network's '**SHARING through Mentoring**' programme, a delegation from SHARE partner the [Finnish city of Tampere](#) travelled to the Dutch municipalities of Sittard-Geleen and Maastricht to learn about the volunteering programmes of SHARE partner [VluchtelingenWerk \(Dutch Council for Refugees\) Limburg](#). Site visits in both municipalities highlighted the varied roles that VluchtelingenWerk volunteers play in refugee integration in Limburg, including as employment coaches within VluchtelingenWerk's long-standing [Emplooi project](#). Emplooi is the job placement service for refugees in The Netherlands which works closely with [UAF \(University Asylum Fund\)](#) for highly educated refugees. Refugees seeking work, may appeal to Emplooi which has established partnerships with local companies and employers throughout the country. Emplooi seeks ways to help refugees to get involved as a volunteer, find adequate education, an internship or a paid job. [Click here](#) to access the full visit report, including the presentation given by Emplooi during the site visit programme.

4.6.C SHARE CONFERENCE 'THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY: PARTNERSHIPS FOR LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION OF RESETTLED REFUGEES'

Organised by UNHCR in cooperation with SHARE, the 1.5-day conference was held in The Hague on 3-4 October 2013 and promoted partnerships and good practices in refugee labour market integration for local and regional employment services, NGOs and private business.¹⁷ Looking at practices in countries like Sweden, the conference focused on the benefits of a sustainable, strategic approach that mainstreams measures for refugee employment into wider employment initiatives and strategies.

¹⁶ Access a full conference report on: <http://resettlement.eu/page/share-cross-border-conference-september-28th-aachen>.

¹⁷ Access a full conference report on: <http://www.resettlement.eu/page/business-case-diversity-partnerships-labour-market-integration-resettled-refugees-october-2013>.

5 ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNING

5.1 INCREASING RESETTLEMENT PLACES

5.1.A 'A CITY SAYS YES! WELCOMING RESETTLED REFUGEES IN EUROPE' EVENT

On May 8th 2013 in Brussels, in the framework of the [SHARE Project](#), ICMC Europe and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) co-hosted the conference 'A City Says Yes! Welcoming resettled refugees in Europe'. Conference presentations and discussions gave rise to a number of conclusions in key thematic areas, including what constitutes a 'Welcoming Community', how strong partnerships between local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and citizens create welcome at the local level, the central importance of volunteers in facilitating integration and the need to incorporate the views and ideas of previously resettled refugees into the development of local programmes. [Click here](#) to read the full conference report.

PRACTICE EXAMPLE: CITY COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR HOSTING REFUGEES

In 2015, Gdansk City Council voted unanimously to welcome refugees and make city buildings available for housing them, becoming the first Polish city to do so. *'You cannot help refugees without acceptance and empathy from residents and without building a spirit of openness to people who are often persecuted in their own countries'* stated Pawel Adamowicz, Mayor of Gdansk. Gdansk, in close cooperation with the Pomeranian regional authorities and local NGOs, has therefore started preparations to host refugees, looking at housing, language courses, healthcare and psychosocial support where necessary. Instead of hosting refugees in reception centres, the city prefers to receive refugees directly within the host community, as the SHARE network advocates.¹⁸

The SHARE publication ['A City Says Yes! Reflections on the experiences of the Save Me campaign to promote refugee resettlement in Germany'](#) was published in May 2013 by ICMC, German NGO and SHARE partner Pro-Asyl and the network of 'Save Me!' groups in German cities and towns. The publication describes the successful tools and approaches developed by the German ['Save Me' campaign](#) for cities to engage in refugee resettlement. The ['Save Me' campaign](#) is a grassroots, city-based initiative which was founded in Munich in 2008 and now counts over 50 branches in cities and towns throughout Germany. It played a significant role in advocating for the German programme to receive 2,501 Iraqi resettled refugees on an ad-hoc basis in 2009-10.



SHARE produced the publication to highlight the role of the 'Save Me!' movement in contributing to the adoption of a resettlement programme in Germany. SHARE's aim in capturing the experiences of 'Save Me!' in an English-language publication was to promote the potential role of local actors and cities in advocating for more resettlement places through grassroots advocacy and creative partnerships, and in creating positive, welcoming communities that support the integration of resettled refugees.

5.1.B SHARE RESETTLEMENT AMBASSADORS

Previously resettled refugees may be active in supporting new arrivals either as volunteers or as employees of civil society organisations. In addition, some have formed community initiatives that aim to empower their communities and act as a force for positive change. UNHCR, ECRE, the Gateway Refugee Community Forum and other city and NGO partners and stakeholders nominated previously resettled refugees to

¹⁸ For more on building support for refugees in cities through mobilising support from citizens and city councils see the ICMC-Pro Asyl publication: *A City Says Yes! Reflections on the experiences of the Save Me campaign to promote refugee resettlement in Germany*. <http://www.resettlement.eu/page/city-says-yes-reflections-experiences-save-me-campaign-promote-refugee-resettlement-germany>.

participate in the SHARE Resettlement Ambassador Programme and/or informed previously resettled refugees about the scheme so they could self-nominate.

A panel composed of representatives from ICMC, ECRE, UNHCR and the Gateway Refugee Communities Forum, ultimately selected 9 previously resettled refugees from 5 different Member States to act as Resettlement Ambassadors and spokespersons in their city or municipality. The selection took into consideration age, gender, country of origin, resettlement submission category, family status, educational and/or employment background, country of resettlement and resettlement background.

Resettlement Ambassadors (1) act as advocates for an increased number of resettlement places and the provision of good quality reception and integration measures in Europe, in particular at the local level; (2) raise awareness about the role of welcoming communities; (3) provide feedback on their specific local programmes at local/regional/national SHARE discussions and events; (4) participate in local events in their city/municipality to promote the role of the city in resettlement; (5) serve as part of a 'pool' of ambassadors available to respond to media and NGO press enquiries for the duration of the SHARE project; and (6) co-facilitate a workshop/panel at the SHARE II final conference event.

In order to empower refugee ambassadors to fulfill the above tasks, ICMC in collaboration with the University of Sussex facilitated two programmes of **three 1.5-hour online trainings for resettlement ambassadors on communication and presentation skills** (including public speaking), global governance and refugee protection. With the benefit of this training, several Ambassadors have been involved in SHARE Network events and activities, and external events on resettlement and integration taking place in their home countries and cities. [Click here to read a short article by the trainer](#) reflecting on her approach to developing the programme and experience of delivering it to the first group of 5 Ambassadors.

Two video case studies were developed with individual refugee ambassadors around specific contemporary refugee situations and topics, as advocacy tools, and shared with the European media. Click here to meet the 9 SHARE Ambassadors on the SHARE webpages, read a short biography and find out more about their involvement in SHARE.



Filmon Ghebrehiwot – SHARE Resettlement Ambassador and Theo Francken - Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration.

5.1.C 'SHARE VOICES FROM THE CITY' – VIDEO SERIES

Since early 2014, ICMC has collaborated with a range of SHARE partners and stakeholders to produce '[SHARE Voices from the City](#)', a series of online and downloadable video resources highlighting the experiences and reflections of previously resettled refugees and those working with them at the regional and local level across Europe.

A subsection entitled '[Voices from the City](#)' aims to capture the events, celebrations and advocacy campaigns around refugee resettlement of the many SHARE cities and towns. Resources produced to date include a [short film profiling the 10th anniversary celebrations of the resettlement programme of the UK city of Sheffield](#), and [a film capturing the ongoing work of the Finnish Red Cross](#) to increase public awareness about resettlement and campaign for increased places for resettled refugees at the local level in the municipality of Jyväskylä. The video impression from Finland was produced



SHARE short film 'Joining Forces! Resettlement in the municipality of Sittard-Geleen, The Netherlands'.

in partnership with the European Resettlement Network, reflecting the Network's focus on increasing places available for emergency resettlement in 2013-14.

To support outreach to cities considering resettlement, a partnership of ICMC, the Dutch municipality of Sittard-Geleen and VluchtelingenWerk Nederlands (Dutch Refugee Council) collaborated with an external filmmaker to produce the 6 minute documentary 'Joining Forces! Resettlement in the municipality of Sittard-Geleen, The Netherlands.' The short video captures the NGO-municipality partnership and the role of local volunteers in making the resettlement programme in the Dutch city of Sittard-Geleen a reality. [Click here](#) to access and share the short film.

The '[Voices of Previously Resettled Refugees](#)' section focuses on case study interviews with previously resettled refugees living in SHARE towns and cities across Europe. To date, the section includes 5 case study interviews with refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Bhutan.

The '[Voices of Resettlement Actors](#)' section focuses on interviews with local political representatives and those working on resettlement policy or service delivery at the local level across Europe. To date, the resource includes 5 case study interviews with actors from local government, civil society organisations and government representatives working with municipalities on resettlement. In early 2015, the Belgian SHARE Resettlement Ambassador Filmon worked together with ICMC and Caritas International to produce the short film 'Belgium, a land of opportunities – Resettlement in the city of Antwerp.' The film profiles his life in Flanders, and includes visits and discussions with the organisations and individuals that have supported him with his integration and helped him to pursue his goals. [Click here](#) to access and share the short film.



SHARE short film 'Belgium, a land of opportunities – Resettlement in the city of Antwerp'

5.2 AWARENESS-RAISING ON REFUGEE PROTECTION

5.2.A HUMANITARIAN CITIES' EVENT IN LYON ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2013

Since 2004, the City of Lyon has co-hosted with Forum Réfugiés-Cosi, the World Refugee Day umbrella march. The umbrella march takes place annually and is an expression of Lyon's solidarity with refugees around the world. Lyon's example has inspired many others across Europe to express their solidarity by holding World Refugee Day umbrella marches.

On June 20th 2013, on the occasion of World Refugee Day, ICMC, the city of Lyon and Forum Réfugiés-Cosi co-organised and hosted the half-day SHARE event '[Refugee Resettlement - partnerships for a durable protection and reception in France, Belgium and the United Kingdom](#)'.



World Refugee Day umbrella march organised by Forum Réfugiés-Cosi (Lyon, June 20, 2013).

The conference brought together 84 experts from regional and city authorities, civil society organisations and housing organisations from France, Belgium and the UK to exchange experiences and debate the role of regional and city authorities and their civil society partners in providing protection to refugees and contributing to global humanitarian efforts by offering shelter to refugees.

The event programme is available on the SHARE webpages in both [English](#) and [French](#), together with a [final event report](#) which was also disseminated electronically to SHARE and European Resettlement Network partners and stakeholders. To ensure as wide a distribution as possible of discussions that took place at the conference, all interventions and presentations were filmed and videos [made available to view on the SHARE webpages](#).

5.2.B VIDEO IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SHARE NETWORK CONFERENCE

On 20th October 2015, on the occasion of the SHARE Network conference, ICMC Europe produced a series of videos with conference participants, including cities, municipalities, civil society organisations and previously resettled refugees – focusing on 3 case study interviews on the following thematic areas:

- Welcoming refugees to Central-Eastern Europe;
- Meet the SHARE Resettlement Ambassadors; and
- Welcoming Communities.



Click [here](#) to view the 3 short case study videos highlighting SHARE Network members' and SHARE Ambassadors' concerted actions to enable refugees to settle, integrate and move toward independence in their new societies!

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5.2.C #REFUGEESHAVERIGHTS - SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

As the year 2015 came to an end, recognising that it was a year of unprecedented mass displacement worldwide especially for Syrian refugees, ECRE and ICMC Europe launched a social media campaign with the aim of highlighting the importance of sharing our rights with refugees. The campaign was developed as part of the SHARE-project, with all 90 ECRE member organisations actively taking part.

Every day, refugees are discriminated against, mistreated, and denied their human rights. This campaign asserts that refugees have the same human rights as all other European citizens.

We call upon citizens to share their human rights with refugees. During the festive season, let us all be reminded that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." [Click here](#) to find the ECRE & ICMC Europe "Refugees have the right to have rights" #refugeeshaverights campaign on Facebook.



#refugeeshaverights



ecre
European Council
on Refugees and Exiles



Europe
icmc
International Catholic
Migration Commission

6 RESEARCH

The SHARE Network has been engaged in a programme of ongoing research on the competences of local and regional authorities in relation to refugee protection since the project's establishment in early 2012. SHARE research has drawn strongly on the experiences of practitioners working on resettlement and related initiatives at the local and regional level, elicited via a programme of mapping, outreach and in-depth qualitative interviews.

6.1 'WELCOME TO EUROPE: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO RESETTLEMENT'

SHARE has contributed many research outcomes and findings from the early stages of its research to the third, 2013 edition of ICMC's '[Welcome to Europe: A Comprehensive Guide to Resettlement](#)' publication, published in July 2012 in the framework of the joint IOM, UNHCR and ICMC 'Linking-In EU Resettlement' project. SHARE research contributed to the expansion of the European country chapters of the publication to include specific sections on reception and integration arrangements, best practices, and the role of regional/local authorities and actors in the resettlement process. As a result of the research, country chapters including on emerging resettlement countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Romania and Spain), and 2 non-resettlement countries (Bulgaria and Hungary) were expanded.

6.2 'THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN FRANCE: CURRENT SITUATION AND WAYS OF IMPROVEMENT'

SHARE, [France terre d'asile](#) and [Forum réfugiés-Cosi](#) published 'The resettlement of refugees in France: current situation and ways of improvement', an annual report on the French resettlement program for 2013 and 2014. French NGOs, France Terre d'asile et Forum Réfugiés-Cosi, which are involved in the national reception program, developed the report based on the experiences and contributions of local, regional and national resettlement actors. The publication includes:

- Data relating to the French resettlement program in 2013 and 2014, including the latest information on the exceptional program set up for Syrian refugees in 2014;
- Portraits of refugees resettled in two French cities;
- An overview of the actors and active partnerships in the French resettlement program;
- Profiles of the national reception programmes;
- A summary of the challenges, opportunities and recommendations for the future; and
- An initial assessment of the specific program for Syrian refugees and the impact on the annual settlement program.

[Click here](#) to download the full report.



7 ANNEXES

ANNEX I - 2015 PROPOSALS FOR RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION PLACES PER COUNTRY

| 2015 proposals for resettlement and relocation places per country | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Country | Places for relocation (july) | Places for relocation (october) | places for resettlement | total number of places: relocation and resettlement |
| EU28 | | | | |
| Austria | 0 | 3,640 | 1,900 | 5,540 |
| Belgium* | 1,346 | 4,564 | 1,100 | 7,010 |
| Bulgaria | 450 | 1,600 | 50 | 2,100 |
| Croatia | 400 | 1,064 | 150 | 1,614 |
| Cyprus | 173 | 274 | 69 | 516 |
| Czech Republic | 1,100 | 2,978 | 400 | 4,478 |
| Denmark* | / | / | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Estonia | 130 | 373 | 20 | 523 |
| Finland* | 792 | 2,398 | 293 | 3,483 |
| France* | 6,752 | 24,031 | 2,375 | 33,158 |
| Germany* | 10,500 | 31,443 | 1,600 | 43,543 |
| Hungary | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ireland* | 600 | 0 | 520 | 1,120 |
| Italy | n/a | 0 | 1,989 | 1,989 |
| Latvia | 200 | 526 | 50 | 776 |
| Lithuania | 255 | 780 | 70 | 1,105 |
| Luxembourg | 320 | 440 | 30 | 790 |
| Malta | 60 | 133 | 14 | 207 |
| Netherlands* | 2,047 | 7,214 | 1,000 | 10,261 |
| Poland | 1,100 | 9,287 | 900 | 11,287 |
| Portugal* | 1,309 | 3,074 | 191 | 4,574 |
| Romania | 1,705 | 4,646 | 80 | 6,431 |
| Slovakia | 100 | 1,502 | 100 | 1,702 |
| Slovenia | 230 | 631 | 20 | 881 |
| Spain* | 1,300 | 14,931 | 1,449 | 17,680 |
| Sweden* | 1,369 | 4,469 | 491 | 6,329 |
| United Kingdom* | / | / | 2,200 | 2,200 |
| Total EU28 | 32,256 | 120,000 | 22,504 | 174,760 |
| EEA & Switzerland | | | | |
| Liechtenstein | / | / | 20 | 20 |
| Iceland | / | / | 50 | 50 |
| Norway* | / | / | 3,500 | 3,500 |
| Switzerland* | / | / | 519 | 519 |
| Total EEA & Switzerland | 0 | 0 | 4,089 | 4,089 |

Source: 'A European Agenda on Migration' under: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf.

ANNEX II - RESETTLED REFUGEES' ACCESS TO PERMANENT RESIDENCY AND CITIZENSHIP: A EUROPEAN OVERVIEW

| | AFTER HOW MANY YEARS IS PERMANENT RESIDENCY GIVEN TO REFUGEES? UPON SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS? | AFTER HOW MANY YEARS CAN THEY APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP? | DUAL CITIZENSHIP? | INTEGRATION REQUIREMENTS? | WHAT ARE THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO ACCESSING CITIZENSHIP? |
|----------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| BELGIUM | Once refugee status is officially granted | 5 years | Yes | Evidence of both social integration and economic participation | A2 level in one of the national languages (French, Dutch, German) |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | Once refugee status is officially granted | 5 years | Yes (since 2013) | Formal tests on socio-political and historical aspects of the Czech Republic "Good character" test | B1 level in Czech |
| DENMARK | 5 years. Conditions include: - being self-sufficient - signing the declaration of integration - Passing Danish language test level 1 or higher - Holding regular full-time employment or being involved in an education programme for at least 3 of the 5 years. | 8 years | Yes for recognised refugees | Being self-sufficient Proof of knowledge of the Danish society and of Danish culture and history by presenting a certificate of a special citizenship test | Passing Dansk 2 (as of June 15th, 2013) |
| FINLAND | After 4 years | 4 years | Yes | No | B1 level in written and oral Finnish or Swedish ² |
| | Once refugee status is officially granted (renewable every 10 years) | Once refugee status is officially granted | Yes | Demonstrating assimilation to French society Signing the Charter of the rights and duties of the French citizen | B1 level of oral French |
| GERMANY | 5 years. Conditions include: Having "secure livelihood" Knowledge of the German legal and social system by passing the final test of the orientation course and have a B1 level in German. | 8 years of consecutive legal residence ³ | No for resettled refugees ⁴ | Being self-sufficient Naturalisation test | Prove an adequate knowledge of German (level B1) |
| IRELAND | On arrival, temporary residency card to be renewed annually | 3 years | Yes | No | No |
| NETHERLANDS | After 5 years of residency and after passing the integration exam and when there has been no violation of public order. | 5 years | Yes for recognised refugees | Naturalization ceremony during which the person has to declare allegiance to the NL. | A2 level in Dutch |
| NORWAY | After 3 years of residency and after the completion of the Norwegian introduction courses | 7 years ⁵ | No | No | No.6 |
| PORTUGAL | No permanent residency permit ⁷ | 6 years | Yes | No | A2 level in Portuguese |
| ROMANIA | After 5 years ⁸ | 4 years | No | Attachment to the Romanian State and people Being self-sufficient | Good knowledge of the Romanian language |
| SPAIN | On arrival | 5 years | Yes | No | No |
| SWEDEN | On arrival | 4 years or 8 years ⁹ | Yes | No | No |
| UK | On arrival. Resettled refugees receive a permanent residence card referred to as "indefinite leave to remain". | 5 years | Yes | Life in the UK test Citizenship ceremony | ESOL entry Level 3 standard. |

¹ Refugees can be exempted after 8 years of legal residency.

² Illiterate applicants may ask for an exception from the language skills requirements. See chapter on Finland for more details.

³ Brought down to 6 or 7 years if the integration programme is completed successfully and relatively quickly.

⁴ On the contrary, refugee recognized through the domestic asylum procedure can assume dual German- country of origin citizenship.

ANNEX III - MAIN FEATURES OF RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION IN EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT COUNTRIES

| | BELGIUM | CZECH REPUBLIC | DENMARK | FINLAND | GERMANY |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| STATUS UPON ARRIVAL | Application for refugee status | Application for refugee status (Applicants for international protection until refugee status is granted) | The 6-month residence permit given before arrival is automatically extended to up to 5 years | Convention refugee status – Permanent residence permit | Resettled refugees are not granted legal refugee status. Up-to-three-year temporary residence permit. |
| ACCESS TO PRP /CITIZENSHIP | Once refugee status is officially granted/after 5 years (+conditions) | After refugee status is officially granted/after 5 years (+conditions) | After 5 years (+ conditions)/ after 8 years | Upon arrival/after 4 years (+conditions) | After 5 years (+ conditions)/after 8 years of consecutive legal residence |
| RECEPTION/ SERVICES ON ARRIVAL | Representatives from Fedasil | IOM, Czech Department for Asylum and Migration Policy, Refugees' facility administration. Refugees are provided with immediate assistance and are directly accompanied to the IAS. | Danish Immigration Service (DIS) when refugees arrive at Copenhagen airport, by the receiving municipality in other cases. | Volunteers trained by the Finnish Red Cross accompany refugees to the municipalities and assist them with the practical details. | Representatives from BAMF/An initial orientation programme - 'Welcome to Germany' - is provided for resettled refugees in the Friedland reception centre. |
| CENTRALISED/ DIRECT RECEPTION | Centralised reception (Reception centres in Pondrôme & Sint Truiden) – 4 to 6 weeks | Centralised reception (Integration Asylum Centre) – 6 months | Direct reception in municipalities | Direct reception | Reception centre in Friedland – up to 14 days |
| REGIONAL/ MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT TO PLACE REFUGEES | Voluntary | Voluntary | Legal obligation (refugees are assigned to municipalities according to a distribution key) | Voluntary | Voluntary (refugees are assigned to Länder according to a national distribution key) |
| INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR REFUGEES DURATION/ CONTENT | 12 months/ In Flanders: mandatory civic orientation classes (Flanders) & Dutch classes, social and employment orientation In Wallonia: optional French classes and registration at the employment agency | Min 12 months/400 hrs of Czech, cultural and social orientation, employment assistance | 3-year mandatory integration programme/ language, vocational training, Danish society courses, employment assistance | 3 years/ -Individual integration plan -Language & employment training -Finnish culture | Duration may vary (federal system)/orientation programme(history, culture, legal system, social values, rights and obligations), German language, counselling, recreational activities for children and young refugees |
| GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO MUNICIPALITIES/ REGIONS | Yes, based on the number of resettled refugees | Lump sum of €25-30,000 (depending on the size of the family that is received) provided by the Ministry of Interior + additional funds for basic furnishings and renovation of 'integration flats' and provision of social assistance | Yes | Municipalities receive lump sums per refugee to cover placement, social services, health-care, psychological support, employment & training support Municipalities also receive 'special compensations' for costs relating to serious sickness and reimbursements for unforeseen costs linked to child protection. | |
| NGO ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES | NGOs Caritas and Convivial meet refugees in the reception centres, assist with finding housing and assist with administrative procedures, access to services etc. | Partnerships between municipalities and NGOs such as Association of Citizens Assisting Migrants (SOZE), Organisation for Aid to Refugees (OPU), Burma Centre Prague in implementing the integration programme | The Danish Refugee Council, the KIT, the Danish Red Cross assist refugees with the integration process | Finnish Red Cross + Volunteers trained by the Finnish Red Cross | The role of NGOs in the integration process varies considerably across Länder and between municipalities. Caritas and Diakonie provide support within their wider programmes for refugees and other migrants in many municipalities, and Save Me groups are also active in supporting and befriending resettled refugees. |

| | ICELAND | IRELAND | THE NETHERLANDS | NORWAY | PORTUGAL |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| STATUS UPON ARRIVAL | Convention Refugee Status and Temporary residence card valid for 4 years | 'Programme refugee' status | Application for refugee status at the airport/ Asylum residence permit | Temporary residence permit valid for 3 years issued prior to refugees' departure for selection mission cases and upon arrival for dossier cases | 5-year refugee residence permit (renewable unless cessation of refugee status, national security or public order issue) |
| ACCESS TO PRP /CITIZENSHIP | After 4 years (+conditions)/ after 5 years of continuous residency (+conditions) | A 'leave to enter and remain' temporary residence card is issued and must be renewed annually/ after 3 years of residency | after 5 years (+conditions)/ after 5 years (+ conditions) | After 3 years of residency (+ conditions)/after 7 years (+ conditions) | No permanent residence permit/Citizenship after 6 years (+ conditions) |
| RECEPTION/ SERVICES ON ARRIVAL | Icelandic Red Cross | A representative from the selection mission receives refugees upon arrival. | COA | Directorate for Integration and Diversity (IMDI) | Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR)& translator/3-hour orientation class delivered within the 1st week after arrival |
| CENTRALISED/ DIRECT RECEPTION | Direct reception | Centralised reception – 8 to 12 weeks | Direct reception | Direct reception | CPR's Reception Centre of Bobadela (Loures)-6 months |
| REGIONAL/ MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT TO PLACE REFUGEES | Voluntary | Voluntary | Legal obligation (application of a specific distribution key) | Voluntary | Voluntary. According to a new decentralisation policy, refugees will be spread over the territory after the initial 6 months (criteria still need to be defined). |
| INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR REFUGEES DURATION/ CONTENT | 1 year/ personalised social guidance, language courses, psychological assessment and counselling | Up to 18 months | Up to 3 years/ civic integration course, Dutch language | 2-3 years/language, employment preparation, social and cultural studies | 6 months/practical information, personalised integration plan, language, legal & social support |
| GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO MUNICIPALITIES/ REGIONS | Yes in order to support municipalities in the provision of integration services | The OPMI provides municipalities with funding for an interpreter for the first 2 weeks after refugees' arrival. No additional funding is provided for receiving municipalities. | Yes. Municipalities receive 1 000 euros per adult refugee resettled | Subsidy for refugees' benefits for a 5-year period: EUR 77,405 for an adult and EUR 74,895 for a child | No indication at the time of writing about whether or not municipalities will receive financial support as part of the new decentralisation policy. |
| NGO ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES | Iceland Red Cross is responsible for coordinating and implementing the integration programme, together with the municipalities | Integration support for resettled refugees in receiving communities, funded by the local authority | NGO partnerships established at the local level during the reception and integration process. Volunteer support through the Dutch Refugee Council is available in most municipalities. | NGOs collaborate with municipalities on a project basis on integration activities. | CPR provides legal and social support, developing a personalised integration place for each refugee. CPR also identifies and refers to available vocational training or work. |

| | ROMANIA | SPAIN | SWEDEN | UK |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| STATUS UPON ARRIVAL | Refugees enter Romania as 'transferred persons'. After being recognised as refugees, they are issued with a temporary residence permit | Refugee identity card or beneficiary of subsidiary protection identity card | Permanent residence permit | Convention Refugee status with indefinite leave to remain |
| ACCESS TO PRP / CITIZENSHIP | after 5 years (+conditions) | Upon arrival/after 5 years | Prior to departure/after 4 years of residency (5 years for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection) | Upon arrival/after 5 years (+ conditions) |
| RECEPTION/ SERVICES ON ARRIVAL | General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII) | Reception centres managed by Spanish NGOs/individual integration plan is established | Municipalities/Employment Service | Upon arrival, and depending on the area in which housing has been allocated, refugees are received by staff from Refugee Action, Refugee Council or Horton Housing Association/3-week intensive orientation |
| CENTRALISED/ DIRECT RECEPTION | Centralised reception/2 months in the reception centre in Galati | Centralised reception/6-12 months in the reception centre | Direct reception | Direct reception |
| REGIONAL/ MUNICIPAL COMMITMENT TO PLACE REFUGEES | Voluntary | Voluntary | Voluntary. Placement is based on county distribution numbers established by the PES in collaboration with the SMB. | Voluntary |
| INTEGRATION PROGRAMME FOR REFUGEES DURATION/ CONTENT | Social assistance and counselling, language courses, health and education assistance | 2 years/language, vocational training, employment support, health assistance and civic & social orientation, psycho-social and legal counselling+ special services for groups at risk of social exclusion | Approx. 2 years/ language, social orientation course, employment support | 12 months/Personalised Integration Plan, social orientation and advice |
| GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO MUNICIPALITIES/ REGIONS | No | No | EUR 9,100 for adults and children & EUR 5,700 for seniors (>65) distributed monthly over 2 years + one-time grant of EUR 830 for adults and EUR 332 for children. No one-time grant for seniors. | Mixture of government and ERF funding channelled through Home Office that covers reception & integration for the first 12 months |
| NGO ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES | NGOs such as JRS Romania provide some support to refugees during the integration process | ACCEM, CEAR and Cruz Roja manage some of the CARs under contract with ESS. NGOs are involved in the implementation of the integration programme. | There are not many NGOs involved in resettlement in SE but depending on the location, some NGOs offer additional activities to complement municipal programmes | Refugee Action in the Greater Manchester region; British Refugee Council for the Yorkshire & Humber region, cities of Sheffield and Hull. Liaison point for refugees: individual advice, and supporting access mainstream services including social welfare, education and training, healthcare and language-learning; development and maintenance of refugee communities. |

ANNEX IV - LANGUAGE TUITION PROVISION FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES: A EUROPEAN OVERVIEW

| COUNTRY | MANDATORY/ VOLUNTARY | LINKED TO SOCIAL BENEFITS &/OR OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT | FREE | DURATION/ NR OF HOURS OF TUITION | IMPLEMENTED BY |
|-------------------|--|--|-----------------|--|--|
| BELGIUM | In Flanders : Mandatory In Wallonia: Voluntary In the Brussels region: Volun- tary | Yes in Flanders | Yes | In Flanders: up to 600 hrs In Wallonia and Brussels: Variable | In Flanders & Brussels region: Houses of Dutch Wallonia & Brussels region : Schools of social promotion , long-life learning ed- ucation, socio-professional integration institutions |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | Mandatory | No | Yes | 12 months + long term language tuition depending on needs/400 hrs of intensive Czech during the initial 6 months | Ministry of Interior, Municipalities, NGOs |
| DEN- MARK | Mandatory | Yes | Yes | 3 years ¹ / up to 2,000 hrs (15-18 hrs a week) | Municipalities, NGOs (DRC, Danish Red Cross, KIT) |
| FINLAND | Mandatory | Yes | | 3 years/60 study units of 35 hrs each | Municipalities, employment offices, CSOs |
| FRANCE | Mandatory | No | Yes | Variable/ Up to 400 hrs | Language learning centers |
| GERMANY | Mandatory if the local immi- gration office considers it | No | No | Variable/ 4 hrs during 5 days initially and then 600 hrs (+ additional 300 hrs free of charge if necessary) | Civil society organizations commis- sioned by BAMF |
| IRELAND | Mandatory | No | Yes | 8- 12 weeks in the reception center followed by a 2 years programme / depending on needs | |
| NETHER- LANDS | Voluntary ² | No | No ³ | Maximum of 3 years/ variable depending on needs | Contracting body: DUO Courses delivered by official course institutes |
| NORWAY | Mandatory | Yes | Yes | 2 years which can be extended to 3 years/ 550 hrs as part of the introduction course + 2,400 hrs if necessary | Municipalities and sometimes NGOs |
| PORTU- GAL | Mandatory in the reception center and then optional | No | Yes | Initial 6 months + long term learning available if necessary)/ 150 hrs initially (+ optional 150 hrs + 150 hrs if deemed necessary) | CPR in the reception centers IEFR and partners such as professional training centers and high schools are responsible for the mainstream language course |
| ROMANIA | Voluntary | No | Yes | One year/ 4 hrs a week | GII in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth through school inspectorates. |
| SPAIN | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2 years/ depending on the individual integration programme | NGOs |
| SWEDEN | Mandatory | Yes | Yes | Variable/ depending on the refugee needs | PES |
| UK | Mandatory | No | Yes | Depending on the PIP | Various higher education, training and community-based institutions |

¹ In May 2013, the government and the Enhedslisten party came to an agreement to extend the right to attend free Danish classes from 3 to 5 years but such decision has not been implemented at the time of writing.

² However, the integration exam which is mandatory includes a language component.

³ Refugees may request a loan to attend the language courses, which they are exempted from the requirement to repay if they pass the civic integration test.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

BAMF: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

CPR: Portuguese Refugee Council

CSO: Civil Society Organization

DRC: Danish Refugee Council

Hrs: Hours

IEFP: Institute for Employment and Vocational Training

PES: Public Employment Service

PIP: Personal Integration Plan



A EUROPEAN RESETTLEMENT NETWORK FOR CITIES AND REGIONS

Protecting and Welcoming Refugees in Europe

A joint statement issued by ICMC Europe on behalf of the SHARE Network, on the occasion of the SHARE Network Conference (Brussels, October 20th, 2015)

SHARE - the network of cities, regions and local actors committed to offering protection and welcome for refugees resettled to Europe – calls for a multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure a durable integration of refugees in times of the largest displacement crisis in Europe since World War II. This includes coordination, information-sharing, awareness-raising and citizen support for countries and municipalities welcoming people in need of international protection.

The number of forcibly displaced persons around the world has now reached approximately 60 million, around a third of whom are refugees. Europe has seen an unprecedented level of refugee arrivals, and numbers continue to increase on a daily basis. It is essential that European responses continue to uphold international obligations to protect refugees in this context of multiple refugee crises, including refugees fleeing both Syria and the many other refugee-producing conflicts and situations across the globe.

An effective European response requires sustained solidarity and cooperation, both amongst European countries, and between the EU and the countries currently hosting the vast majority of those who are displaced. It will require increased and sustained support for these countries, the realisation of internal EU protection mechanisms such as relocation, and expanded safe and legal avenues - complementary to existing refugee resettlement programmes - that enable refugees to enter and seek protection in Europe.

To ensure the solutions offered to refugees and those seeking protection in Europe are truly durable, this reformulating of European policies and frameworks must include a renewal of approaches to reception and integration. This requires engaging actors in local communities, particularly in countries with little previous experience of receiving refugees, and continued advocacy at the political level to counter xenophobia and improve the level of understanding amongst the European public about the need for refugee protection.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS IN EUROPEAN CITIES AND TOWNS

Direct contact and interaction with local citizens in receiving communities can counter isolation, improve language skills, foster a sense of belonging, and assist in the understanding of local cultures and systems. Citizens can be engaged in supporting refugee integration through volunteer programmes focused on refugees' immediate needs post-arrival, or accompanying refugees through the integration process towards their full independence.

Citizen-led initiatives can supplement but cannot replace refugee reception and social services, and/or integration programmes. In this way, citizens can build support for refugee integration from all sections of society, and continue to make a substantial contribution to offering a broad and inclusive welcome for newcomers in European towns and cities.

Integration is a complex, two-way process of mutual adaptation that does not happen overnight. In addition to standard components of integration, such as language-learning, children's access to education, health services and employment support, planning for partnerships that will facilitate integration should address the specific needs of particular refugee groups, such as those related to trauma and periods spent without access to basic healthcare. Partnerships should also include grassroots, citizen-led initiatives, which have a central role to play in extending local capacity to provide a welcoming environment.

To ensure European countries can receive larger numbers of newcomers, new and innovative partnerships must be developed amongst governments, local authorities, civil society organisations and other service providers, which should in turn engage with a broader set of stakeholders such as churches, migrant and diaspora associations, employers, universities and others.

RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT EUROPE CAN DO?

1. Integration is what will come next for Europe, and needs to be the main priority for action under the European Agenda on Migration. EU emergency programmes must be part of future decision-making.
2. National AMIF programmes need to include more funding for integration, whereas a defined part must be dedicated specifically to refugee integration.
3. Cities, in consultation with civil society partners and local populations, must be able to determine integration priorities and target groups, as they know best what is needed in terms of integration. Direct access for cities to AMIF integration funding would ensure that European funding for integration reaches the local level and supports effective, locally developed integration measures and priorities.
4. Volunteering and active citizenship initiatives should be supported, endorsed and celebrated at the European, national and local levels - including through the development of inclusive policies, funding for coordination, and tools to recruit, manage and support volunteers.
5. European funds take too long to be processed and allocated by Member States. Cities and their partners are frontline service providers, with proven capacity to respond urgently to humanitarian crises.
6. Coordination and information-sharing on integration can be improved. Countries with experience of receiving refugees should share practices with those with less history of doing so, and national authorities should transmit learning via training, tools and resources for regional and local actors.
7. Actors at all levels should prioritise awareness-raising on refugee protection and solid communication on legal rights and integration support measures, including by incorporating both in anti-discrimination policy and programmes.

SIGNATORIES

EUROPEAN NETWORKS/PLATFORMS:

- Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)
- European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE)
- European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)
- International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Europe

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)

AUSTRIA

- Refugees Welcome Austria
- Diakonie Refugee Services

BELGIUM

- Caritas International
- Convivial
- Mentor-Escale

BULGARIA

- Bulgaria Red Cross

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Burma Centre Prague
- Society of Citizens Assisting Emigrants (SOZE)

FINLAND

- Finnish Red Cross

FRANCE

- Forum Réfugiés-Cosi

GERMANY

- City of Aachen

IRELAND

- Saint Catherine's Community Services Centre

ITALY

- Consorzio Comunitas

MALTA

- Kopin

THE NETHERLANDS

- Dutch Council for Refugees (Limburg)
- The Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF)
- City of Sittard-Geleen

POLAND

- City of Slupsk
- Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
- Refugee.pl Foundation

ROMANIA

- Romanian Arab Cultural Center

SPAIN

- Spanish Commission for Refugee Aid (CEAR)
- The city of Madrid

SWEDEN

- Caritas Sweden

UNITED KINGDOM

- British Refugee Council
- Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre
- City of Sanctuary
- Malvern Welcomes
- City of Sheffield
- Migration Work
- Scottish Refugee Council

The project 'SHARE: Building a European Resettlement Network for Cities and Regions' is implemented by ICMC Europe in collaboration with its project partners and is funded by the European Commission under the Preparatory Action 'Network of contacts and discussions between targeted municipalities and local authorities on experiences and best practices in the resettlement and integration of refugees'(2013). The views expressed and information provided in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the EC, and are sole responsibility of ICMC Europe.



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