

Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

Five countries working on new refugee sponsorship programs; Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) launches Guidebook to share best practices.

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 18 September 2017 –

One year after it was [formed](#) and nine months after [its official launch](#), the [Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative](#) (GRSI) is pleased to announce that it is working closely with the governments of Argentina, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Each of these countries has launched, or is in the process of developing, a community sponsorship program in support of refugee resettlement.

The GRSI particularly congratulates government and civil society partners in both the United Kingdom and Argentina, where refugees have already begun arriving under recently launched community sponsorship programs.

We also acknowledge the UAE's commitment to welcoming 15,000 Syrians as part of the country's relief contribution, and are pleased to have been able to work with the UAE as they explore possible models for this effort that conform with the country's unique circumstances.

The GRSI is also marking its one year anniversary with the international launch of a Guidebook designed to help government officials, civil society organizations, and communities around the world design their own sponsorship programs. The Guidebook identifies an expanding series of questions that actors may ask themselves when designing their programs, and then explains by way of example how the successful Canadian sponsorship program treats each area.

The Guidebook is available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese on GRSI's [multilingual website](#).

The GRSI announced its five partner countries and formally launched its international Guidebook at the 2017 [Concordia Summit](#), where GRSI leaders participated in a panel discussion at the opening plenary.

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; His Excellency Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; Frank Giustra, Founder and President of the Radcliffe Foundation, and Sean Hinton, Director of the Economic Advancement Program, Open Society Foundations and CEO of the Soros Economic Development Fund; highlighted the importance of developing programs that engage public, private, and community actors in support of refugee protection.

The GRSI is a multi-stakeholder coalition that aims to build worldwide refugee resettlement capacity by encouraging and supporting the development of community sponsorship programs. It is led by the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Radcliffe Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and the University of Ottawa.

QUOTES

"Canada congratulates the five partner countries that are developing community sponsorship programs. Canada's refugee resettlement program is stronger thanks to the participation and support of civil society. We hope the Guidebook, which draws on the Canadian model, will inspire others to develop their own community sponsorship program"

- **The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada**

"As a proud Canadian, it is gratifying to see so many other countries interested in building refugee sponsorship programs based on Canada's proven model. The GRSI Guidebook will serve as a practical tool to actors from the public, private, and community sectors advocating for or designing community sponsorship programs in their own countries. Together as global citizens, we can change the course of a refugee's life."

- **Frank Giustra, Founder, Radcliffe Foundation**

"With the number of refugees at its highest level in more than two decades, the need for resettlement is greater than ever. Community-based, private sponsorship is a powerful tool to help bridge the ever-widening gap between resettlement needs and places available. UNHCR stands ready to work with States, civil society and communities, together with GRSI partners, to establish and expand private sponsorship programmes - a concrete example of the collaboration and partnership called for in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants."

- **Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

"The University of Ottawa is proud to be part of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative. At a moment when mobility, integration and diversity are so important for all countries, we hope it will encourage the development of more community sponsorship programs around the world and, ultimately, help save more lives."

- **Jacques Frémont, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Ottawa**

"There are millions of people across the world who want to do more to help welcome refugees. The model of community sponsorship that Canada pioneered is a proven way to engage individuals, local organizations, and businesses to contribute to refugee protection and to channel their compassion. I'm delighted to see the commitments made today by several countries to develop sponsorship programs."

- **George Soros, Founder and Chairman, Open Society Foundations**

ABOUT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative was announced in September 2016 following the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants 2016 and officially launched in December 2016 in Ottawa, Canada. The initiative is a partnership between the Government of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the University of Ottawa, the Radcliffe Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations. For media inquiries please contact info@refugeesponsorship.org.

For more information:

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

cic.gc.ca

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twitter.com/CitImmCanada

Instagram.com/CitImmCanada

Open Society Foundations

opensocietyfoundations.org

facebook.com/OpenSocietyFoundations

twitter.com/opensociety

Instagram.com/opensocietyfoundations

Radcliffe Foundation

radcliffefoundation.org

twitter.com/radcliffefdn

Instagram.com/radcliffefdn

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

unhcr.org

facebook.com/UNHCR

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University of Ottawa

uottawa.ca/

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Additional Information:

- [Global Initiative Brings Canada's Refugee Sponsorship Model to the World](#) (27 June 2017)
- [Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative promotes Canada's private refugee sponsorship model](#) (16 December 2016)
- [Media Advisory – Canada to Host High-Level Meeting of Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative](#)
- [Canada, UNHCR and Open Society Foundations seek to increase refugee resettlement through private sponsorship](#) (19 September 2016)
- [Backgrounder: Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program](#)

For more information (media only):

Media Relations

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada National Headquarters

613-952-1650

CIC-Media-Relations@cic.gc.ca