

GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

GRSI AT A GLANCE

GRSI and EASO hold seminar on community sponsorship in the EU

GRSI joined forces with the European Asylum Support Office to hold a symposium on refugee sponsorship at EASO headquarters in Malta on April 19 and 20. Attended by a dozen EU member states, the EASO-GRSI Workshop on Private Sponsorship Programmes was a follow-up to an exploratory meeting organized by EASO in January that assessed the level of involvement and interest in community-based refugee sponsorship among participating Member States.

The symposium featured a series of workshops led by three GRSI experts: Jennifer Bond (University of Ottawa Refugee Hub), Chris Gregory, (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) and Kate O'Malley (UNHCR). They were joined by Dr. Sabine Lehr, manager of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program at the [Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria](#) in Canada.

The first workshop focused on policy and program design. The second examined operational elements such as refugee eligibility and screening, matching with sponsorship groups, travel arrangements, resource allocations, and settlement and integration. The third workshop explored the crucial relationship between government and civil society actors in the context of building, launching, growing and maintaining a community-based refugee sponsorship scheme.

EASO is an operational agency of the European Union. It provides a variety of supports to EU Member States, such as coordinating cooperation among Member States, helping to assess asylum data, and liaising with other EU institutions, international organizations and civil society.

GRSI's man in Dublin

Dennis Cole, Assistant Director, Partnerships and Liaison at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, recently visited the Irish Justice Ministry to support Ireland's efforts to build a community-based refugee sponsorship program. Here's a quick report from Dennis.

Community Sponsorship around the World



Canada in 2018 is a country of global citizens

Meeting over plans to welcome refugee family to Whitehead

Irish delegation learns how to settle refugees the Canadian way

When Refugees Lead: A Conversation with Canada's Refugees Minister

Following a very successful [Ottawa policy retreat](#) with a team of Irish government and civil society leaders in February, I was asked to assist the Irish government and civil society partners in developing a made-in-Ireland policy framework for community sponsorship.

Over the course of a three-week assignment embedded in the office of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and working closely with the government, Irish Red Cross, and civil society partners, I put together documentation that draws heavily upon the Canadian and UK sponsorship programs but adapted to fit the model worked out by the Irish in Ottawa.

It was an interesting experience, as it involved designing a model that complements an existing rights and entitlements-based resettlement model while finding a fitting role for community sponsors.

I think the Irish approach will be of interest to a number of existing resettlement states, particularly in the European context, with its broad set of existing social protection mechanisms.

And as a person with Irish heritage, it was personally rewarding to see how Ireland is honoring its own migratory history by such progressive moves in refugee resettlement at a time when the world needs such examples.

Training and information for refugee sponsors in Canada

Here is an excerpt from an [interview](#) with Yosief Araya of the [Refugee Sponsorship Training Program](#). The full interview can be found in the [Case Studies](#) section of the [GRSI Guidebook](#).



What is the RSTP?

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) is administered by Catholic Cross-cultural Services (CCS). The main purpose of RSTP is to respond to the training and informational needs of the refugee sponsorship community and individuals who are interested in sponsoring through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program. In addition, RSTP supports the promotion and matching of Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) program – a cost sharing initiative between the Canadian government and refugee sponsors to resettle high needs refugees.

How and why was RSTP formed?

RSTP was created in 1998 to address the ongoing information, support, and training needs of private sponsors. CCS has been delivering the program since 2008. Over time, RSTP has evolved and now offers a robust collection of training and information materials in various media, expanded workshop options, outreach to new and ongoing sponsors, and is using technology to reach sponsors regardless of location through online courses and webinars. RSTP is committed to building the capacity of the diverse sponsoring community.

How is RSTP structured? How do you work?

CCS is under contract with the Government of Canada to deliver RSTP services to sponsors across the country. Services are delivered by staff located in CCS's head office in Toronto, Ontario, and by a network of RSTP trainers located in six additional cities across the country (Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Halifax). RSTP delivers training in the form of workshops, information sessions, webinars, online e-courses, and through hosting an annual national Sponsorship Agreement Holder conference that brings in subject experts to address ongoing and emerging

issues related to the sponsorship of refugees. All RSTP produced materials are available through the program website while new information and program updates are also circulated via group emails and bi-weekly bulletins. A great deal of sponsor support and problem solving is done over telephone and via email exchanges.

What is the best part of your experience?

Through our work of sharing and providing information, delivering training, and supporting sponsoring groups, RSTP contributes to resettling refugees. By offering our knowledge and guidance to private sponsors, we enable them to successfully sponsor and settle refugees. Sponsorship is about saving the lives of refugees, and offering them protection and opportunities to live in a safe and peaceful country and enjoy their rights! RSTP is proud to contribute to this noble cause.

Learn More

[Understanding PTSD \(Refugee Sponsorship Training Program\)](#)

[Refugees out-earn millionaire 'business class' immigrants years after arriving in Canada](#)

[New forms and guides will come into effect for PSR](#)

"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. Together as global citizens, we can change the course of a refugee's life."

- [Frank Giustra, Founder and President of the Radcliffe Foundation](#)

What is GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of five organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Radcliffe Foundation and the University of Ottawa. It aims to help other countries set up their own community-based refugee sponsorship programs, strengthening local communities and improving the narrative on refugees in the process.

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