

# GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

## AT A GLANCE

### Global Refugee Forum: GRSI Spotlight Session



GRSI Spotlight Session on community sponsorship in Geneva, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>

The Global Refugee Forum in Geneva, December 16-18, brought significant positive attention to community sponsorship programs all over the world. The GRSI hosted a **spotlight session**, "Refugee Sponsorship: Building Communities through Sponsorship", on December 16<sup>th</sup> to highlight the growing number of partnerships involved in community sponsorship and the benefits that it brings to host communities. The panel included Canadian Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino and Irish Minister David Stanton, as well as representatives from the UNHCR, an Argentinian politician and German government official, civil society organizations from the UK, New Zealand and the US, Ed Shapiro from the private sector, and a refugee and sponsor from Canada.

The panel included discussion on how programs developed, methods of support and the impacts that community sponsorship has on settlement communities. Each participant in the spotlight session was able to provide thoughtful insights on community sponsorship from their own unique perspectives.

As a representative from the UNHCR stated during the session, "... we see the numbers of refugees rising and solutions for them dwindling, the potential of community sponsorship is very exciting ..."

### Launch of the GRSI States' Network and State Recognition



States receiving recognition for their efforts in Community Sponsorship at the Canadian Mission in Geneva. PHOTO CREDIT: Pierre-Michel Virot

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative held a reception at the Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva to formally launch the States' Network, and recognize states for their efforts in advancing community sponsorship. Eleven states were recognized: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

The States' Network is a group of states committed to sharing best practices and capacity building on community sponsorship. This year the network is co-chaired by Canada and the UK.

During the Global Refugee Forum, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and Spain also endorsed a public declaration indicating their support for community sponsorship. This declaration is available in **English, French, German, Portuguese** and **Spanish**.

## Community Sponsorship Announcements At the Global Refugee Forum

A number of exciting announcements about community sponsorship were made at the Global Refugee Forum. Portugal and Brazil reaffirmed their support of community sponsorship with the announcement of the launch of their pilots set for 2020. Ireland also announced increases to the number of refugees they will resettle over the next 4 years, including through community sponsorship. Irish Minister David Stanton made the announcement that Ireland will welcome 2,900 refugees by the end of 2023 as part of a new phase of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP). Spain will also add to more regions to the community sponsorship pilot already underway in the Basque region.

Check out the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative on Twitter! Follow @theGRSI on Twitter for more updates on #communitysponsorship

## A photographic tour of the Syria Program

A new exhibition in Argentina seeks to publicize the path taken by refugees to Argentina through the Syria Program, from pre-departure until arrival in Argentina and through the process of integration into host communities. The goal of the program is to show the variety of actors involved in resettlement, including government, donors, international agencies, and civil society, while helping the public to better understand the experiences of refugees. Other than photos the exhibition includes audiovisual material and a collaborative mural created by program beneficiaries, professors and students of the National University of the Arts. The exhibit ran from November 28 to December 19. For more information, click [here](#). (Article in Spanish)



### COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN THE NEWS

103 people, 33 families, 13 countries. Toronto church helps refugees find "a new place to land"

- Refugee Sponsorship Programs: A Global State of Play and Opportunities for Investment

## European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

Calls for applications to foster persons in need of protection through private sponsorship schemes. Deadline: January 30, 2020 17:00 Brussels Time For more information on applications, [check out this page](#).

## Basque community opens its doors to welcome family from Syria

The Basque region of Spain has launched a community sponsorship pilot, welcoming five families to the region. The sponsors are supported by the NGO Cáritas and the Ellacúa Foundation. The families receive help getting access to language classes and medical care, doing school runs and getting to know their neighbours. The goal is to give them a sense of community through the involvement of sponsors. The Albashan family has settled into the region with the help of local volunteers, has already learned Spanish and are currently learning Basque. The community has provided important supports to the family since their arrival and have helped them to integrate into the community. "... there are people who help you to forget that pain, via their actions and their support for our integration, so when I got to know the group, I felt that I had another family in Spain." The groups involved with the pilot hope that these early successes can increase support for the program in surrounding communities. For more information, click [here](#).

### What is GRSI?

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative is a partnership of five organizations – the Government of Canada, UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Giustra 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.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

[GRSI ONLINE](#)

[CONTACT US](#)



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada



uOttawa

THE GIUSTRA FOUNDATION

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS