

# GLOBAL REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP INITIATIVE

## SPECIAL EDITION: MIRPS SUPPORT PLATFORM SIGNATURE EVENT

MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event:  
May 2022



United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs delivers a speech at the opening of the MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event.

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Representatives from MIRPS countries and MIRPS Support Platform members pose for a photo at the Signature Event.  
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From May 24 to May 26, 2022, Canada hosted the MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event (MIRPS is a Spanish acronym for the “Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework”). The MIRPS is a regional application of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) which encourages regional

cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination for a greater responsibility sharing in matters of prevention, protection and durable solutions. The MIRPS member countries are Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama. The [MIRPS Support Platform](#) is a group of state and non-state actors<sup>1</sup>, formed at the request of the MIRPS, working to support the efforts of the MIRPS countries in offering solutions to the forced displacement situation in Central America and Mexico. The MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event consisted of MIRPS countries, MIRPS Support Platform members, and other stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and businesses exchanging good practices and examples of innovative initiatives on the themes of resettlement, complementary pathways and integration.

The three-day, in-person event included eight panels featuring over 41 experts. The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) led the panel on community mobilization and organized a program for a luncheon on Day 2. Details on the event can be found [here](#).

Are you a policymaker or civil society leader designing a refugee sponsorship program?

[Download the GRSI's policy design workbook.](#)



<sup>1</sup> The Support Platform is made up of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the European Union (EU), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), France, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, the United States of America, the Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Learn more at [mirps-platform.org/en/](https://mirps-platform.org/en/).

### GRSI Luncheon featuring Tareq Hadhad, former refugee and CEO of Peace by Chocolate

On the second day of the Signature Event, the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative put on a lunch program to advocate for the increase of protection spaces for refugees globally, including through the development and expansion of complementary pathways like community sponsorship with the support of groups like the MIRPS Support Platform.



Marian Campbell Jarvis, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, opens the luncheon.

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Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Marian Campbell Jarvis, opened the luncheon by highlighting community sponsorship programs in Canada and around the world, and stressed the great need for durable and sustainable solutions for refugees.

Jennifer Bond, Managing Director of the University of Ottawa's Refugee Hub and Chair of GRSI, then facilitated an informal conversation with Tareq Hadhad, CEO of Peace by Chocolate, who shared his experiences as a Syrian refugee and his sponsorship journey to Canada, as well as his perspective on ways forward for refugee protection.

Mr. Hadhad then delivered a keynote speech to the audience, detailing his experience with his kind and welcoming community sponsors in the small town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada, and highlighting the strengths that

refugees bring to their communities. The audience was very moved by Mr. Hadhad's story, and saw the power of complementary pathways for refugees and integration first-hand.



Peace by Chocolate CEO Tareq Hadhad tells his story of his journey from Syria to Canada to the audience.

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### Community Mobilization Panel: MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event Day 3



(Left to Right) Jennifer Bond (Refugee Hub), Robin Dowse-Willoughby (United Kingdom), Sarah Cross (United States), and Alfredo Mariano Lopez Rita (Argentina) speak about community mobilization.

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On the third and final day of the MIRPS Support Platform Signature Event, the GRSI led a panel to discuss community mobilization. The Refugee Hub's managing Director and Chair of GRSI, Jennifer Bond, moderated the panel, while Robin Dowse-Willoughby (United Kingdom – Home Office), Sarah Cross (United States – Department of State), and Alfredo Mariano Lopez Rita (Argentina – Directorate General of Immigration) spoke as panelists.

Key takeaways from the panel included the versatility and creativity of community sponsorship as a whole of society effort, the strength of community sponsorship as a welcoming and integration tool, and the necessity for a broad range of complementary pathways involving non-traditional actors to respond to increased need, as well as disasters or emergencies.

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

### GRSI Community Sponsorship States Network Meeting



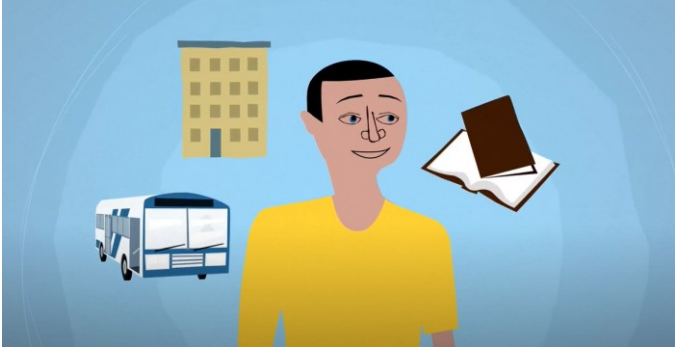
State representatives from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and members of the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub pose for a group photo.

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On May 26, 2022, the GRSI convened state representatives for the 10<sup>th</sup> Community Sponsorship States Network meeting in Ottawa, Canada. This was the first States Network meeting to have in-person attendance in over two years! Delegates from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States, plus representatives from the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub, attended the meeting in-person. Delegates from New Zealand, Italy, and representatives from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees joined the meeting virtually.

The meeting was focused on improving and expanding community sponsorship as a complementary pathway globally, building upon community mobilization from refugee crises, and the strength and importance of monitoring and evaluating community sponsorship programs.

### The GRSI Marks World Refugee Day with a new video!



A new GRSI animated video, titled “[Sponsorship School: Financing Sponsorship](#)” is now available on the GRSI’s YouTube channel! This video offers advice on how to finance a refugee’s sponsorship. This video was launched on World Refugee Day, June 20<sup>th</sup>, in support of the theme: “[Whoever. Wherever. Whenever. Everyone has the right to seek safety.](#)”

**What is the GRSI?**

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