

# Integration Initiative: “Twinning” Projects

## Background and Mandate

### I. Mission Statement: International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees (ICRIRR)

“*The International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees* is designed to provide an international forum for the exchange of ideas and means of supporting refugee resettlement among the traditional and emerging resettlement countries. Planned as the mid-point catalyst in an on-going process of exchanging ‘best practices’ in the integration of resettled refugees among the resettlement countries, goals for the Conference include:

- Drafting commonly endorsed principles for the ‘successful’ reception and integration of resettled refugees that are applicable regardless of the level of funding available to resource resettlement programmes;
- Facilitating both formal and informal links and exchanges between the various resettlement countries;
- Gathering resources for the development of a reception and integration handbook; and
- Strengthening the reception and integration programmes of traditional and emerging resettlement countries

### II. The Integration Initiative: Next Steps By Tripartite Partners<sup>1</sup>

(Quote from the second of three objectives approved as the 12-month work plan for the *Integration Initiative Reference Group*):

“Encourage and design a strategic approach to capacity building, at the local and national levels, in emerging and traditional resettlement countries, to facilitate and enhance the work of reception and integration. The role here would be primarily coordination, information sharing, and sustaining networks and linkages already established in the planning process of ICRIRR, such as websites, list serves, promotion of existing training seminars and venues of professional development on integration issues, etc.”

(Quote from the Assistant High Commissioner. Mr. Soren Jessen-Petersen, included in Mr. Carlgren’s proposal of 21 June endorsed by resettlement partners at the ATC):

“What are the practical ways through which we can strengthen the work of both emerging and traditional countries? Perhaps we need to concretely think about “twinning” projects between countries to provide the needed technical assistance, training and transfer of knowledge on what works and what does not work in integration services.”

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<sup>1</sup> Proposal by Mr. Andreas Carlgren, Director General of the Swedish National Integration Board, supported by those attending the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, 20-21 June 2001, which forms the mission, mandate and 12-month work plan for the *Integration Initiative Reference Group*, reporting to the Working Group on Resettlement.

## Principles for Engaging in “Twinning” or “Befriending” Projects

As an operating principle, care must be taken to ensure that engagement in “twinning” or “befriending” projects should be driven by the self-identified needs of the emerging resettlement countries, rather than approached from the perspective of what any of the other tripartite partners might *perceive* was needed or wished to offer in the way of support. Similarly, “twinning” projects involving initiatives between any of the traditional resettlement countries should be mutually developed. In all situations, clear objectives and goals should be identified, summary reports written, and evaluation mechanisms implemented so that resulting “best practices” might subsequently be shared with all resettlement partners.

### Menu of Options<sup>2</sup>

1. Short and longer-term deployments and secondments to enhance capacity building as requested by receiving resettlement countries.
2. Preparation of quarterly “wish lists” by emerging resettlement countries providing updates on specific requests for “twinning” initiatives or “befriending” projects; training expertise; materials or equipment, etc. – to be circulated to the traditional resettlement countries for possible “matches” for “twinning” initiatives.
3. Preparation by traditional resettlement countries of annual (or quarterly?) calendars of events specifying focus and key themes for conferences, training workshops, consultations, etc. to which representatives from the emerging resettlement countries might be invited, according to interests and needs. (Further, special efforts might be made by planners within the resettlement constituencies of the traditional resettlement countries to build in to future planning budgets for these events funds to support the invitation of representatives from the governments and/or NGOs of at least one emerging resettlement country for each major event providing opportunities for training, linkages, site visits, exchanges of “best practices,” etc.)
4. Secondments of appropriately experienced and linguistically compatible staff from the governments or NGOs of traditional resettlement countries to accompany representatives from the emerging resettlement countries on selection missions. (This would ease the burden upon the limited staff resources available within UNHCR and might allow for some helpful exchanges of ways in which pre-arrival orientation is provided, selection criteria determined and implemented – as well as assisting in making introductions to UNHCR field staff, for example).
5. Personnel exchanges and reciprocal site visits between all resettlement countries to enhance relationships and the fostering of mutual understanding and support.
6. Offering means of supporting initiatives designed to connect leaders of specific ethnic or faith groups *awaiting* resettlement with their counterpart communities in the emerging resettlement countries. This type of initiative would foster the building of trust concerning advantages offered by potential *receiving*, emerging resettlement countries. The intentional fostering of these relationships would

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that “twinning” or “befriending” options should *not* be limited to the ideas noted on this ‘menu’ - which simply is designed to serve as a catalyst to inspire initiatives to enhance formal and informal links between the resettlement countries resulting in enhanced capacity to maximize the potential of resettlement as a tool of international protection and durable solution.

- further provide reassurances with regard to refugees eventually being received and befriended by welcoming communities.
7. Initiation of joint training initiatives on specific issues (e.g. development of micro-enterprise projects; training to enhance refugee leadership potential in reception and integration programmes; models for implementing successful orientation programmes; strategies for developing hospitable communities, or for providing special assistance to survivors of trauma or torture, etc.)
  8. Support for strategies designed to encourage “successfully” developing emerging resettlement country representatives to accompany UNHCR, governmental and NGO teams to undertake missions to other countries within the same region to enhance the possibilities of developing new resettlement programmes. This strategy would serve the purpose of providing opportunities for the ‘successfully developing’ emerging resettlement countries to “tell the story” of how they began their programmes, what they learned along the way, how they have benefited from the exchange of best practices with other resettlement countries, their solidarity and support with the tripartite partners, and the opportunity to affirm their own ‘moral imperative’ to participate in this method of responsibility-sharing. The presence and active support of strategically selected tripartite partners would potentially reinforce the integrity of this message.
  9. The accompaniment by tripartite partners with relevant UNHCR representatives from HQ and the relevant regional offices on missions designed to explore ways in which strategically targeted EU countries might consider initiating a resettlement quota. This support might also involve offering training to enhance the capacity of governments and NGOs in these EU countries to serve as partners in implementing resettlement programmes.
  10. Offering resettlement and integration-related materials in translation for the benefit of emerging resettlement countries with linguistic compatibility.
  11. Supporting the cost of translations of the Integration Handbook in French, Spanish and Portuguese for the benefit of the emerging resettlement countries of West Africa and Southern South America.
  12. The participation of representatives from the governments and NGOs of resettlement countries (both traditional and emerging) on evaluation missions, development of recommendations, provision of suitably skilled staff for “trouble-shooting” initiatives, as well as follow-up training and/or monitoring visits. This assistance would ease the pressure on over-extended UNHCR Resettlement Section staff who may not have the necessary expertise to “trouble-shoot” or train on issues relating to resettlement and integration issues.
  13. Active assistance in regularly updating the UNHCR-NGO deployment scheme roster to ensure that experts are easily identified for assignments designed to promote resettlement as a tool of international protection and durable solution.
  14. Assistance in designing, implementing and providing continuous updating for the web pages devoted to the *Integration Initiative* on [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org) (see links to *Resettlement*).
  15. Support in identifying and leveraging private funding (e.g. through grant and proposal submissions) for the enhancement of integration in the emerging resettlement countries.