

2021 UNHCR Regional Consultations with NGOs

“Inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons through localization of humanitarian action and engagement with communities in a post-COVID-19 context”

Session 1: How can NGOs and UNHCR support organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons to enhance inclusion in Europe? - Tuesday 21 September 2021, 9:00-12:30 CET

Key definitions

In the framework of the Consultations, **localization** refers to the engagement with and support of local actors in favour of refugee protection and solutions. The definition of local actor is considered broadly, referring to non-governmental actors operating in the country in which they are headquartered without any affiliation with an international NGO, to national governmental entities operating in all areas of the country or in a specific area only, and to organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

Providing advocacy, protection and assistance to their communities, **organizations led by refugees**, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugee returnees and stateless persons are either entirely established and led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, refugee returnees and stateless persons, or have more than 50% of such populations in positions of leadership and decision-making. Such organizations can be formal or informal and may or may not be officially registered/have legal recognition in the country.

Integration is considered as a gradual and two-way process leading to full and equal membership in society, comprising legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions. This includes preparedness by refugee communities to adapt to host societies without giving up cultural identity, and by receiving communities and institutions to welcome refugees and meet the needs of a diverse population.

While integration is a durable solution for refugees, and implies a permanent stay in the host country, **inclusion** refers to the broader inclusion within national services, systems and economies of all forcibly displaced people upon arrival in host societies. This entails their participation in decision-making processes, with a view to contributing to shaping policies and decisions that affect them, while limiting the negative effects of dependency, facilitating eventual local integration, or enabling persons of concern to live with dignity and some degree of normalcy pending an eventual return to countries of origin.

Background

- **May 2016:** The Grand Bargain agreement called for more support and funding tools for local and national responders as well as a *participation revolution* aimed at the inclusion of people receiving aid in decision-making that affects their lives.
- **2018:** Highlighting that responses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist, the Global Compact on Refugees recognized the important role of civil society organizations, including those led by refugees, in assessing community strengths and needs, in ensuring inclusive and accessible planning and programme implementation, and in capacity development.
- **2019:** On the occasion of the first Global Refugee Forum, the Global Refugee-Led Network called key stakeholders to support the meaningful participation of refugees and host communities in decisions that affect their lives by formulating a specific pledge.
- **2020:** In the framework of the UNHCR Global Consultations with NGOs, UNHCR and NGOs agreed to jointly improve their collaboration with organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and IDPs, which have been critical in the COVID-19 response, and to find ways to fund them and strengthen their capacity. The full recommendations are available [online](#).
- **2021:** The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe (RBE) conducted a comprehensive mapping of organizations led by refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, identifying more than 80 such organizations across the region. The results fed into the

UNHCR Issue brief on Promising practices from working with refugee-led organizations in Europe, which will serve as a background document for this Consultation.

- **September 2021**: A Conference by Refugees on Volunteerism, Participation and Leadership in Europe (REFUGEE RE-CONNECT) was jointly organized by UNHCR and the [European Coalition of Migrants and Refugees \(EU-COMAR\)](#) to enhance visibility and networking, as well as to develop a set of concrete recommendations to UNHCR, governments and other stakeholders to support the work of refugee-led organizations. These recommendations will serve as a starting point for the working group discussions planned during the Consultation (see agenda).

Objective

This session seeks to identify context-specific avenues to jointly improve the collaboration with organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons in favour of their inclusion.

Expected outcomes

- Joint **recommendations** for UNHCR RBE, UNHCR Country Operations, regional NGOs, local NGOs and other relevant stakeholders to enhance the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons in the region through the strengthening, collaboration and promotion of organizations and initiatives led by refugees themselves, as well as asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons. These recommendations will feed into the 2021 Executive Committee and UNHCR's planning. Their implementation will be monitored jointly by UNHCR and NGOs using existing Regional Dialogues.
- Contribution to and exchange on existing compilations of **good practices** of UNHCR-NGO partnerships with organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons in favour of their inclusion. This mapping will seek to facilitate cross-fertilization and networking.

Leading questions

- *What does “meaningful participation of and partnerships with” organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons mean in the European context?*
- *What is the role played by organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons in favour of the inclusion of refugees and others of concern in the European context?*
- *How can UNHCR and NGOs partner with, promote and strengthen organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons to facilitate the inclusion of refugees and other persons of concern in the European context?*

Agenda

Tuesday 21 September 2021, 9:00-12:30 CET

- **Opening** (25 minutes)
 - **Pascale Moreau**, Director of the UNHCR RBE
 - **Jérôme Elie**, Head of Forced Migration, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
 - **Catherine Woollard**, Director, European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

Facilitator: Nicolas Brass, Head of External Engagement, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

- **Presentation** (15 minutes): Recommendations from organizations led by refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons by the rapporteurs identified during the REFUGEE RE-CONNECT conference (10 September 2021)

Facilitator: Caroline Dulin Brass, Senior Community-Based Protection Officer, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

- **Q&A** (15 minutes)

Facilitator: Loise Dai Rocheteau, Policy Officer - Forced Migration, ICVA

- **Panel discussion:** Promising practices (40 minutes)
 - PartecipAzione, Italy
 - Refugee Board, Bulgaria
 - Training Kit for Empowering Refugee-Led Community Organizations, Europe

Facilitator: Loise Dai Rocheteau, Policy Officer - Forced Migration, ICVA
- **Q&A** (15 minutes)
- **Break** (15 minutes)
- **Working group discussions** (45 minutes):
 - Working group on civic engagement
 - Working group on refugee leadership and participation
 - Working group on labour market
- **Plenary** (30 minutes): Identification of recommendations stemming from working group discussions

Facilitator: Florent Marty, Senior Partnership officer, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe
- **Wrap-up** (10 minutes)
 - Jérôme Elie, Head of Forced Migration, ICVA
 - Nicolas Brass, Head of External Engagement, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe

Background documents

UNHCR Issue brief on Promising practices from working with refugee-led organizations in Europe (which will be shared one day prior to this session)

ECRE's EU-level report on the status of refugee-led community organizations:
https://aditus.org.mt/Publications/rcotrainingproject_eulevelreport_122020.pdf