

Global Refugee Forum 2019 Template for Good Practices

Please send this template and any attachments to the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team at hqgrf@unhcr.org **as early as possible** to facilitate the consolidation and presentation of good practices in time for the Global Refugee Forum.

Good practices can be shared on the Global Refugee Forum website and then included in the digital portal, which is currently under development.

Please complete a separate template for each good practice.

Name of entity sharing good practice

Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

Name and position of contact person

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Partners

The Government of Canada, UNHCR, The Open Society Foundations, The Giustra Foundation, the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub

Name of good practice

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative

Country/ Region:

Global

Year(s) of implementation and duration:

3

Document related to the good practice model/approach:

Attached Available at:

www.refugeesponsorship.org

General description of the good practice: (max 200 words)

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI) is a joint initiative of the Government of Canada, the UNHCR, the Open Society Foundations, the Giustra Foundation, and the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub. Inspired by and drawing from four decades of experience with Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, we have the mission to encourage and support the adoption of community sponsorship around the world. We pursue our mission by working to achieve three main objectives:

- (1) Increasing refugee resettlement opportunities and improving refugee integration outcomes by engaging governments, community groups, individuals, philanthropists, and businesses in resettlement efforts;
- (2) Strengthening local host communities that come together to welcome newcomers; and
- (3) Promoting welcoming and inclusive societies, and improving the narrative about refugees and other newcomers.

Main activities of the good practice: (max 200 words)

The GRSI supports countries that are exploring community sponsorship by providing capacity building support through four main stages of program development: (1) feasibility assessment; (2) program design; (3) program implementation; and (4) program scaling.

Specific GRSI activities fall within the following broad clusters:

- Identification and outreach to potential adopters;
- Supporting key stakeholders and developing national partnerships;
- Providing deep, comparative and evidence-based policy expertise;
- Providing hands-on, wrap-around and tailored technical support, resources, and connections;
- Creating and maintaining networks;
- Developing and delivering sponsor training tools and materials;
- Providing web-based sources of information;
- Developing inspirational and educational videos;
- Convening and managing secretariat functions; and
- Engaging with the broader sponsorship ecosystem

Results of the good practice: (max 200 words)

Since GRSI was launched in December 2016, we have seen the creation and growth of new community sponsorship programs in Argentina, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, and the United Kingdom. We are also actively encouraging interest in sponsorship globally. Through these new programs, more than 1,000 refugees will be sponsored outside of Canada by the end of 2019 by over 25,000 new sponsors and supporters.

Beyond meeting immediate protection needs, research has shown that community sponsorship results in positive outcomes for sponsored refugees as a result of the more tailored, direct, and personalized support and guidance they receive from sponsors. Moreover, by coming together to support refugees through the settlement process, community sponsors strengthen the bonds between themselves and with their community. When sponsors make the active choice to welcome refugees into their communities, this creates a two-way process of intercultural exchange and collaboration. The ripple effect that occurs when sponsors engage their community in welcoming sponsored refugees builds social capital, and a constituency willing and prepared to challenge negative rhetoric around refugees and other newcomers.

Challenges in implementing the good practice and how they are being addressed: (max 200 words)

The GRSI provides customized support to both civil society and government actors in countries around the world to foster opportunities for the creation of sustainable community sponsorship programs adapted to the local context.

Because community sponsorship programs are co-managed by government and civil society – both government and civil society should ideally be involved in program design and implementation. Capacity building in this unique area can be a challenge when government and civil society efforts are not linked-up. The GRSI partnership has been designed to reflect the voices of both governments and civil society actors in order to address this challenge.

It can be labour and resource intensive to offer capacity building assistance to both government and civil society leaders in a given jurisdiction. GRSI meets this challenge by ensuring that there are team members in partner organizations dedicated full-time to GRSI and to assisting our partners around the world.