



**PARTECIPAZIONE: EMPOWERING
ORGANIZATIONS LED BY REFUGEES AND
ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND COMMUNITY-
BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO FOSTER
PROTECTION AND MEANINGFUL
PARTICIPATION IN THE HOST COUNTRY**

**A promising practice
in Community-Based Protection
in Italy**



This document is for general distribution. All rights reserved. Reproductions and translations are authorized, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

© United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, March 2022

Cover photo: A participant looks at photographs at the PartecipAzione networking event in Naples, organised by INTERSOS and UNHCR in Naples, Campania, December 2019.

Photo credit: © UNHCR /Cristiano Minichiello

Title: PartecipAzione: empowering organizations led by refugees and asylum-seekers and community-based organizations (CBOs) to foster protection and meaningful participation in the host country

Programme objective: To empower refugee-led organizations (RLOs)¹ and ensure their meaningful contribution within national civil society, while fostering the protection of persons of concern and their participation in the host country's economic, social and cultural life. The programme aims to enhance the organizational development and growth of RLOs and CBOs that support persons of concern. Specifically, the programme develops the capacities of RLOs and CBOs so that they can better pursue their goals and increase their media activity, access to new sources of funding and involvement with institutions. This includes strengthening their skills, especially in designing and managing projects, researching calls and funding opportunities, developing strategies for communication with, and visibility in, the media, and protecting refugees.

Dates: February 2018 – present (four rounds of annual selection and support to organizations)

Population groups: Refugees and asylum-seekers

Partners: Lead partner international non-governmental organization (NGO) INTERSOS; civil society organizations (CSOs); public authorities, especially municipalities; and private-sector businesses

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME

PartecipAzione was created following an exchange between UNHCR Italy and a group of refugees in 2018. During this exchange, refugees identified the mechanisms that enable them to effectively exercise their right to participate and contribute to society in the host country. Among these, they identified participation in civil society structures and organizations as a key mechanism to enable them to contribute to Italy's governance and policymaking on protection. They proposed that UNHCR strengthen its support to ensure refugee presence in the civil society architecture of the host country.

Following this dialogue and in close cooperation with the group of refugees, UNHCR Italy and lead partner INTERSOS, an international humanitarian NGO based in Italy, jointly designed PartecipAzione in the second half of 2018. PartecipAzione uses capacity-building and networking to empower RLOs and local CBOs. In the context of PartecipAzione, empowerment of RLOs is defined and measured around three key indicators related to: 1) their capacity to access decision-making processes; 2) their presence in, and access to, the media; and 3) their access to funding.

The mission and programmes implemented by the organizations selected to be part of PartecipAzione must aim to foster the protection

of persons of concern, their integration, and their participation in the host country's economic, social and cultural life.

Since 2018, a total of 40 organizations have been selected to be part of the PartecipAzione programme and have received dedicated support through the four interlinked pillars of the programme:

- micro-grants funding for direct implementation of protection-related projects;
- high-level intensive training, delivered both in person and through the dedicated online platform PartecipAzione Innovation Lab² – which was created in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic – focusing on project management, fundraising, communication and refugee protection;
- individualized coaching and mentoring, including technical support and support in applying to funding opportunities; and
- networking – the associations are involved in national and local events, in person and virtually, to facilitate coordination and collaboration with local stakeholders, donors, government entities and other civil society actors.

¹ In this document, “refugee-led” refers to both refugees and asylum-seekers.

² Available from www.partecipazioneilab.org.

By December 2021, Italy had received over half of all refugees and migrants arriving in Europe by sea and an increasing number arriving by land.³ Italy has kept its borders open despite the COVID-19 pandemic. However, public opinion is polarized.

In recent years, there has been a surge in xenophobia and racism, which call for greater attention to the narrative and to fostering peaceful co-existence with local communities. The media often negatively stereotype refugees as either persons in need of help and support with limited capacity to contribute to the host society, or persons condemned to remain in the margins of the host society. The media rarely share stories of integration and resilience. They also rarely analyse in depth the complexity of the numerous integration challenges faced by persons of concern in Italy, including informality, risk of exploitation and violence. Despite positive government efforts, integration remains one of the main protection challenges, as confirmed by the latest Participatory Assessments conducted by UNHCR Italy in 2021. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened access to housing, livelihoods, services and documentation for persons of concern.



Production of the audio touristic guide "Invisible guides" by the association Laboratorio 53 in Rome, Lazio, October 2018. © @UNHCR/V. MUSCELLA

Number of organizations supported by the project since 2018, per region in Italy



While there has been some improvement over the last few years, there is still a limited culture of participation and engagement of persons of concern by protection stakeholders and decision-making actors. Refugees are rarely included in governance structures, including those led by government institutions or by robust civil society networks. Protection systems and services run by the state or civil society are not always adequate or sustainable. The problem is even more dire in the informal sector, where the needs of persons vulnerable to violence, such as women and girls, remain unaddressed.

Yet, at the local level, CBOs and local organizations – especially RLOs – provide essential support and services, and have unique knowledge and experience. Since the beginning of Partecipazione, UNHCR and INTERSOS have mapped over 550 CBOs working on protection and integration, including over 120 RLOs, with enormous untapped capacity. They have often proposed collaborative community-based protection (CBP) strategies and services that promise to be more effective, better targeted and give persons of concern a sense of ownership.

³ For more up-to-date information, see <https://bit.ly/3h07ml1>.

RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The programme **has flexibility to scale up and down depending on the annual budget** by adjusting the number of RLOs and CBO projects that it supports. The 2021 budget was US\$ 310,000.

UNHCR chose INTERSOS as its lead partner for the long-standing partnership working on CBP and integration with the NGO in Italy and other operations. In Italy, INTERSOS has played a leading role in humanitarian response as well as integration, inclusion and social cohesion, through a multisectoral approach and its

presence in different territories, with strong networks and in-depth understanding of urgent and long-term issues.

Staffing involves personnel at UNHCR Italy and INTERSOS. At UNHCR, one staff member dedicates 50–60 per cent of their time to the programme. A **multifunctional team** manages the partnership, with a protection focal point collaborating with colleagues from communication and programming. Other UNHCR colleagues are engaged to deliver training modules, and other activities as needed.



Visibility materials provided during the informative sessions realised by the association Next Generation Italia within the project "Information point for refugee students" in Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, November 2019. © INTERSOS/D. Zitarosa

At INTERSOS, a **full-time Project Manager** ensures coordination internally and with UNHCR.

Two full-time Territorial Liaison Officers regularly **assist** participating organizations, monitor their progress and facilitate networking among them. One officer focuses on the organizations selected in the current year, while the other focuses on organizations from previous years, which jointly run projects.

Furthermore, a **full-time Mentoring Liaison Officer** focuses on capacity-building. This person has designed the training scheme together with UNHCR and oversees implementation. Guest experts facilitate some specialist training sessions (such as on social media and public speaking).

Finally, a **Communication Officer** manages the communication component of the programme. **Support staff** consist of a Logistics Officer, an Administrative Officer and a Migration Unit Coordinator.

INTERSOS manages a **database** of all mapped RLOs and CBOs. UNHCR staff who are working on the programme can feed and access this database, such as to engage relevant organizations in a territory about events or training.

The programme relies on **cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders**. It involves actors from civil society (especially CBOs, NGOs, religious entities, cooperatives and the media), public institutions (especially municipalities, prefectures, ministries and universities), private companies and foundations. They play various roles in the programme, such as participating in the selection committee, delivering capacity-building modules, collaborating with CBOs and RLOs locally, and disseminating information.

PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES



STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

UNHCR and lead partner INTERSOS designed the programme through collaborative consultations over time to adapt to changing circumstances, lessons learned and feedback. Their approach is rooted in CBP, human rights and the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy.⁴ It **centres on refugees and asylum-seekers and their resources, skills, voices, leadership and initiatives.**

Mapping to build relationships and gain information

Continuous mapping of associations that are led by refugees or asylum-seekers, or where these persons have a significant role, has been central from the start. UNHCR and INTERSOS have done this through field activities, presentations at events, visits and meetings in territories across the country that have a substantial presence of RLOs and CBOs. Mapping serves four purposes:

- to reflect the enormous development of refugees' associations;
- to inform refugee communities and associations about the programme;
- to create opportunities for meeting with local entities and institutional stakeholders;
- to consolidate relations with local stakeholders.

Mapping has thus helped build relationships with hundreds of institutional and non-institutional stakeholders. This exercise has identified smaller refugee associations with great potential and enabled some informal refugee networks to form an association and participate in the programme.

By the end of 2020, mapping had identified over 550 associations working closely with refugees and asylum-seekers. Of those, 367 had strong participation from refugees, including 128 where refugees had management responsibility. In 2020 alone, UNHCR and INTERSOS mapped 136 new associations after giving 12 regional presentations that involved about 200 people in 11 regions.

Annual call and selection

Once a year, UNHCR and INTERSOS announce a **call for proposals.**

A **committee then selects** the organizations eligible to receive support. Between 2018 and 2020, the committee was made up of six members: two from UNHCR (one from the protection unit and one from the programming unit), two from INTERSOS, and two external members from foundations and key donors. Since 2021, the panel has also included two RLO leaders.

A manual and matrix set out the **criteria for selection.** There are two main criteria: the project must meet at least one of the programme objectives, and the organization must be led by refugees or asylum-seekers or have a strong participatory approach. The project must also uphold gender equality and non-discrimination; have ongoing activities in the geographic area where the CBO is planning to intervene; be sustainable; have in place a solid structure and accountability, including sound financial management; have good communication; and contribute to the COVID-19 response.

⁴ See www.unhcr.org/protection/women/4e7757449/unhcr-age-gender-and-diversity-policy.html.



ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS

Capacity-building combines four mutually reinforcing activities aiming towards autonomy.



ACTIVITIES

1

INTENSIVE TRAINING

Lead partner INTERSOS provides **intensive training at the beginning of each yearly project cycle**, open to all the organizations that have ever taken part in the programme. The training programme, which takes around 40 hours, revolves around supporting members and their skills to

grow in order to strengthen their management and sustainability. These 40 hours are spread over five months – the duration of new organizations' projects (e.g. May to September in 2021).

At the beginning of each year, INTERSOS **consults organizations on their training needs**.



Bicycle workshop realised by the association ARCI Djiguiya within the project "Benkadi II" in Crotone, Calabria, November 2019. © E. Megna

The most recent training covered four main areas, with some customization:

- **project cycle management**, including writing and managing a project proposal;
- **fundraising**, including searching for funding and calls for proposals;
- **communication** and public speaking, including strategies and techniques;

- **general framework and context of protection of refugees and asylum-seekers** in the host country, including laws, institutions, social and political context, and CBP.

UNHCR has **approached local authorities, especially municipalities, for training space** so that it can hold training sessions in public spaces and engage public entities.

COACHING THROUGH TAILORED MENTORING AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Lead partner INTERSOS **dedicates field support to providing coaching tailored to each organization, through both mentoring and step-by-step technical support** on project implementation. This takes place over the duration of the organizations' projects. First, INTERSOS identifies priority areas, and then provides two forms of support. It holds support sessions in groups with focal points from each organization. In addition, it supports key persons in each organization who are selected based on individual availability. This is important because participating organizations are run by volunteers, meaning that flexibility is necessary, especially regarding time.

This tailored support has two goals. The **short-term** goal is to ensure that organizations achieve their objectives within the implementation timeline. In this respect, support helps organizations define project ideas and key activities, prioritize resources, implement the project, run communication and dissemination, report on finances, monitor results and network.

The **longer-term** goal is for organizations to acquire and strengthen skills, consolidate their role in their communities, and develop solid foundations to achieve autonomy, growth and sustainability. In this respect, support and networking include assistance in seeking funding opportunities, project writing for national and European Union (EU) proposal calls, collaborations to give visibility to organizations' initiatives, and capacity to carry out joint media work.

In 2020, INTERSOS held over 750 individual meetings to support the realization of the planned projects, and 155 individual meetings to help consolidate their growth and sustainability.

The lead partner holds **structured meetings between the individual organizations and the Mentoring Liaison Officer, supported by the Liaison Officers**. These meetings explore further issues in organizations' associative lives such as identity, relations with other actors in the territory, their communication strategy, and opportunities to collaborate with other network members or institutional stakeholders.

There are also **a few group meetings between all the organizations selected in a given year and programme staff**. These meetings facilitate networking and joint work among the organizations. For example, in 2020, 12 group meetings took place consisting of information sessions about open calls for proposal and opportunities, sessions to design and write joint projects with other organizations in the network, and round tables about topics such as university education. In 2021, 420 individual and group sessions were organized, focusing on administrative support, communication, insights on training issues and more.

Lastly, the lead partner conducts **structured field missions**, to meet with not only the participating organizations, but also other members of the programme network, local institutions, and local stakeholders.

PROVISION OF MICRO-GRANTS FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

UNHCR provided micro-grants (of between US\$ 6,000 and US\$ 9,500) to the selected organizations, to implement their proposed projects. These grants come with reporting requirements. Reporting is an opportunity for the organizations to learn by doing, reinforcing their capacity to apply to a call, manage funds, implement a project and report on its results.

UNHCR and the lead partner share the reporting procedures with participating organizations when signing the memorandums of understanding (MoUs).

Then, before implementation starts, the lead partner's Project Manager trains each organization on the procedures. Well-structured organizations have an administrative focal point, so training is minimal. With other organizations, the Liaison Officer remains present throughout implementation to support and follow up when necessary – usually weekly, but daily during reporting periods. Throughout the implementation phase, organizations send financial and narrative reports to the lead partner and UNHCR, which jointly verify them before releasing the next tranche of the grant funds.



Bicycle workshop realised by the association ARCI Djiguiya within the project "Benkadi II" in Crotone, Calabria, November 2019. © E. Megna

4 FACILITATION OF NETWORKING

UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS facilitate networking for organizations by providing them with opportunities to connect with **a range of actors, including municipalities, foundations, cooperatives and small- to medium-sized social enterprises**. They also link organizations with local and national **press and social media** (centering refugee voices) to bring visibility to their activities, events and advocacy.

Networks have taken several forms:

- a **community of practice** on Facebook⁵ where users receive updates on the programme (events, funding opportunities and a forum to interact);
- cross-cutting initiatives, such as **local and national events, in person and virtually** (via Facebook and Twitter, especially during lockdowns);
- at the end of each year, a two-day **national networking event** with all direct and indirect participants (RLOs and CBOs, municipalities, foundations, private companies, media, NGOs), which includes programme discussion groups, with feedback and proposals on the integration and participation of persons of concern;
- the two **Liaison Officers from the lead partner**, to consolidate past and current participants' networks with each other and with other relevant actors.

⁵ See www.facebook.com/groups/709353276133781.



ADAPTATION TO COVID-19 AND ASSOCIATED RESTRICTIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have posed major challenges to the programme. In response, UNHCR and INTERSOS **created the online platform for training and coaching**, PartecipAzione Innovation Lab.⁶ This enabled not only online lessons, thematic round tables and tool exchanges, but also synergies and community-building among the organizations.

Participating organizations also adapted the design and implementation of their projects by supporting the persons experiencing difficulties. UNHCR and INTERSOS **followed their lead by supporting and giving visibility to their work**.

First, they **promoted publications in local and national media**. This helped raise awareness about these organizations' valuable work,

strengthen their relations with institutions and local stakeholders, and enhance networking activities with other organizations.

Second, UNHCR and INTERSOS launched an initiative called "Adaptation to COVID-19" for the organizations in the PartecipAzione network, with the aim of **helping them adapt while guaranteeing an active, sustainable and safe presence** in their territories. Proposals were received from 13 organizations and approved for further funding and support. The initiatives ranged from setting up protective measures against COVID-19 (adaptation of offices, personal protective equipment, technological adaptation) and producing information and audio-visual material, to setting up counters and activities for personal assistance, to training.



ACHIEVEMENTS, RESULTS AND IMPACT

Monitoring by the lead partner includes field visits (mission reports), daily and weekly remote follow-up, and monthly reports. Participants also prepare reports (including interim and final reports), which the lead partner collects, checks, revises and passes on to UNHCR for review. UNHCR and INTERSOS then measure the results through a qualitative and quantitative impact survey carried six months after the end of each programme year.



INTEREST, DIVERSITY, PARTICIPATION AND REACH

Since its launch in 2018, the programme has attracted **applications from a large number of diverse organizations in a variety of regions** in the country. In 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, UNHCR received 62 proposals from 5 regions, 112 from 11 regions, 92 from 16 regions and 49 from 9 regions, respectively (despite the pandemic). Moreover, in 2021, organizations from past years set up three consortiums which co-designed and co-implemented projects. These projects were funded and supported by the programme.

The **organizations supported since 2018 have been diverse**. They are active in a variety of sectors such as health, protection monitoring and civil rights. Some are well established, while others are young (and need more support). Some provide support to specific disadvantaged groups. For example, two organizations were led by lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons; six focused on women's empowerment; and one addressed disability inclusion through a local association that supports persons with disabilities.

Over the years, more than 40 RLOs and CBOs across most regions of the country have completed the programme (2018–2021). In 2019 alone, 145 refugees affiliated with 69 organizations attended the initial training. As at 2021, the programme supported a total of 22 organizations (past and current participants), and more through individual tutoring and coaching.

Between 2018 and 2019, the projects supported by micro-grants reached around 8,000 persons (refugees and non-refugees) in 14 regions of the country, acting as multipliers of social and economic inclusion and integration.

⁶ Available from www.partecipazione.org.



A participant of the project "The world at home" realised by Associazione Multietnica Antirazzista Donne (AMAD) in Ancona, Marche, Italy, October 2020. © AMAD



PARTICIPANT EMPOWERMENT

Overall, the programme has had the **greatest reported impact on** organizations' **project management**; their **partnerships and networking**; and their **visibility** and **credibility** with other stakeholders. The indicators of empowerment have been positive from the start, as the following aggregate results from the 2018–2020 surveys show:⁷

- 84 per cent of organizations reported improved media visibility;
- 88 per cent reported strengthened networks, having developed new partnerships with other organizations;
- 76 per cent reported new funding, distinct from UNHCR-INTERSOS funding, and new projects presented for funding;
- 60 per cent reported access to decision-making meetings with public regional and national institutions;
- 84 per cent reported scaling up their activities since the end of the programme;
- 92 per cent reported mobilizing their resources to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

Participating **RLOs have gone on to sustainably become key players in decision-making at the local, national and even international level, and have increased their influence.** At the local level, many organizations have now become key contacts for local stakeholders such as municipalities and health authorities.

At the national level, the permanent consultation group for the promotion and protection of LGBTIQ+ people, established by the Department of Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, included the organization "Il Grande Colibrì" among its members. Several organizations have direct relations with regional and national media representatives or receive direct requests from foundations for project proposals.

At the regional level, the European Commission selected the *Unione Nazionale Italiana per Rifugiati ed Esuli* [Italian National Union of Refugees and Exiles – UNIRE] to join an expert group on migration, integration and asylum in 2020. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), an alliance of 103 NGOs across 39 European countries, elected the President of Mosaico into its Board.

⁷ UNHCR applied the impact survey again in 2021 for 2020 participants, but results were likely to be somewhat less positive because COVID-19 restrictions in the host country limited the participants' actions.

LESSONS



ENABLING FACTORS

- 💡 **Collaborative and creative partnership and thinking with refugees and the lead partner, INTERSOS,** have been crucial.
- 💡 **Multi-year, flexible funding:**
 - ➔ **Commitment by UNHCR's senior management to funding and supporting this programme for a period of several years** has been essential.
 - ➔ **Flexibility to scale up or down depending on available budget,** by adjusting the number of projects supported, has been invaluable for sustainability.
- 💡 **Building on and adapting UNHCR's activities in the country and beyond,** such as projects for quick impact or for community support, has been helpful.
- 💡 **Spending time with participating organizations** has been paramount for effectiveness and sustainability as it has helped build mutual trust and enabled exploration of synergies:
 - ➔ **Field visits** have been essential for monitoring all participants, and for checking that CBOs ensure the inclusion and participation of refugees and asylum-seekers.
 - ➔ **Having two full-time Liaison Officers,** one for current participants and another for past participants, has significantly contributed to efficiency.



ADVERSE FACTORS AND CONSTRAINTS

- 💡 **COVID-19 and the associated restrictions created hurdles.** However, adapting to these hurdles enabled all stakeholders to keep building trust and maintain activities.
- 💡 **Between and within participating organizations, there are different levels of mastery of languages, relevant IT, administration and finance.** This has required adaptation.
 - ➔ Some persons are fluent in the country's language or in English, while others are not. In response, UNHCR has started **translating** all its training materials into Arabic.
- 💡 **As part of monitoring,** Liaison Officers need to ensure that members have basic skills in tools such as Microsoft Office and Google, and to offer **training.**
- 💡 **Members of RLOs and CBOs have not always prioritized their work that strategically, often neglecting communication and visibility.** In turn, this has made it challenging for UNHCR and INTERSOS to give visibility to their projects, collect their materials and ensure they have developed materials that are up to standard.



TIPS FOR REPLICATION AND SCALING UP



GENERAL APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

- ✓ **Embrace partnership, not donorship**, in relation to both the lead partner and participating organizations:
 - ➔ With the lead partner, ensure transparency, coordination and open dialogue.
 - ➔ With RLOs, seek equal partnerships, and do not undermine their role or credibility through tokenistic or “tick-box” activities. Engage them from the start and throughout, and not as last-minute participants or panellists.
- ✓ **Work with refugees and RLOs, rather than for them, by involving them at every stage** of the programme, including decision-making:
 - ➔ **Include them in the selection of organizations** that will be supported.
 - ➔ **Always seek participants’ feedback** on training and the programme and adjust as relevant. Have adequate feedback mechanisms in place.
 - ➔ **Require that selected CBOs that are not refugee-led demonstrate meaningful participation and decision-making from refugees and other persons of concern** in identifying and implementing solutions on protection.
- ✓ **Understand the local context and the dynamics of the different territories, in all their complexity:**
 - ➔ Know the social, economic and cultural aspects, as well as the political ones.
 - ➔ If possible, review secondary literature on all regions, as a complement to the lead partner’s own assessments of context (for example to assess protection, health, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH]).
- ✓ **Have strategies for risk management and mitigation measures in place:**
 - ➔ **Discuss these with organizations** at inception and during proposal writing.
 - ➔ **Do no harm, by addressing potential protection risks** faced by participating refugees and asylum-seekers, such as anti-refugee sentiments or xenophobia. Consult with the organizations and mitigate the risks prior to public engagement.
- ✓ **Ensure gender parity and representative diversity among the RLOs engaged:**
 - ➔ Ensure that RLOs **reflect the diversity of their communities** in term of their age, gender and diversity characteristics.
 - ➔ Proactively **engage with women refugees and asylum-seekers**. Consider obstacles that they often find most salient, such as language and commitments to unpaid care work for their families. Use their preferred modalities of engagement (for example, they may prefer informal structures).
- ✓ **Bear in mind that the goal is integration in the host country, not the particular activities that the organizations carry out.**



Sewing workshop realised by the association "Pro Loco Passarelli Rinaldo Sisto" within the project "Diramare - Ama-la" in Camini, Calabria, October 2020. © INTERSOS



PROGRAMMING

- ✓ **Plan and budget for continuity and sustainability in the medium to long term.** Community-based engagement is effective with long-lasting results and a sustainable impact, but while cost-effective, it is not free:
 - ➔ Budget appropriately for dedicated and continued resources, time, and staffing (at the right levels and with the necessary skills).
 - ➔ Plan for the lead partner to dedicate considerable time to building trust and collaboration by nurturing relationships with the organizations.
 - ➔ Train the supported organizations in sustainability skills such as fundraising.
- ✓ **Ensure that the relevant people are involved and work in the right conditions:**
 - ➔ **At UNHCR:**
 - Ask management to commit to multi-year programming.
 - Work through a **multifunctional team** involving CBP, protection, programming, communication and private sector partnerships (PSP).
 - Adjust activities and resources in the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) as needed.
 - ➔ **At the lead partner:**
 - Support staff retention, especially by enacting multi-year budgeting.
 - ➔ **Outside UNHCR:**
 - Engage the right organizations and staff.
- ✓ **Start with mapping** – who is doing what, where and how – creating a database.
- ✓ **Require realistic communication strategies and plans in proposals, and make it a criterion.** Prioritize organizations with actual or potential capacities in this area.
- ✓ **Train participants in administrative and financial procedures for reporting:**
 - ➔ In particular, train them on reporting and standard operating procedures (SOPs), IT tools (Excel and Word), and administrative and financial tools. The lead partner can share a lighter version of its own administrative tools with the organizations. This training should **include basics in transparency and accountability**.
 - ➔ As part of coaching, ensure that they have fully read and understood the SOPs.
- ✓ **Be as flexible as possible on deadlines and requirements when working with RLOs.** Most RLO members are volunteers and have other obligations.
- ✓ **Set out a clear structure on how to engage with participating organizations.** For example, at the start of a collaboration cycle, there may be specific tasks such as choosing the type of agreement (e.g. MoUs).
- ✓ **Organize monitoring in diverse ways (field, liaison offices, missions).** Use the corresponding adapted toolkits, developing them if needed.





PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- **Ensure capacity to engage with not just participating organizations, but also all other relevant stakeholders**, such as local authorities, academic institutions and other experts, to assess and encourage their interest in working with RLOs. This can be achieved by having dedicated staff who are regularly deployed in the field.
- **Consider involving some stakeholders to bring visibility to the programme and to RLOs**. For example, UNHCR included private-sector donors on the selection panel.



MORE INFORMATION

- Programme website: www.partecipazionerifugiati.org
- Overview of the programme (2019): www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yc1X_4Wvqul
- Video report of the eight projects supported in 2020: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JK2zmUv_ns
- Factsheet (2021): www.partecipazionerifugiati.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Factsheet-2021_eng.pdf
- Annual reports in Italian: www.partecipazionerifugiati.org/chi-siamo/la-nostra-storia
- Full 2020 report in English (summing up data and information from the previous three-year editions): www.partecipazionerifugiati.org/partecipazione
- Online courses: www.partecipazioneelab.org
- Community of practice on Facebook, alongside a wider public Facebook group for the programme: www.facebook.com/groups/709353276133781
- Reports in video form: <https://youtu.be/WvXys9L737U>
- www.partecipazionerifugiati.org/partecipazione

On promising practices more generally:

To learn about how and why to categorize an operational practice as a promising practice, emerging practice or case study, please refer to the two-page distinction table⁸ extracted from the methodology and background document⁹ on collecting practices and case studies.

You are welcome to submit new case studies and practices through this online form.¹⁰

⁸ Internal resource. Available from <https://bit.ly/3ATt3MN>.

⁹ Internal resource. Available from <https://bit.ly/34exy8O>.

¹⁰ Internal resource. Available from <https://bit.ly/34eS1dt>.

For more information please contact:

Division of International Protection
Community-based Protection Unit
hqts00@unhcr.org

Regional Bureau for Europe

UNHCR Italy
vegaa@unhcr.org
mittendo@unhcr.org

