

## Advocating for Private Sponsorship of Refugees

### What is Private Sponsorship?

Each year, millions of people around the world are forced to flee their homelands in order to escape persecution, war or severe human rights abuses. Often, these refugees are permanently displaced and are never able to return home.

Private Sponsorship (also known as Community Sponsorship) enables a group of people who are interested in helping refugees to use their resource and manpower to directly resettle newly arrived refugees in their communities.

We believe that the best gift that anyone can give to a refugee family arriving in a new country is a place to call home and a community to belong to.

### What does a Private Sponsor do?

Typically, a community sponsor is expected to:

- Meet the family at the airport
- Provide a warm welcome and cultural orientation
- Find suitable housing for the family
- Support access to medical and social services
- Arrange language tuition
- Support them towards employment and self-sufficiency

### How has Private Sponsorship come about?

The first country in the world to create a sponsorship program was Canada during the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979. Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program has allowed Canadians to offer protection and a new home to more than 275,000 refugees since its beginning. Despite its historical success, the Program has been facing dramatic changes and challenges in recent years.

### How does sponsorship benefit your community and country?

Being a sponsor not only helps vulnerable populations to start a new life in your country. It also brings enormous benefits to your own community. For example, sponsors in Canada and the UK have described the following benefits sponsorship has brought to their communities:

- Opening up an otherwise closed community
- Fostering great relationships between different community members
- Creating a more positive narrative around refugees on local and national levels
- Learning about a new culture
- Shifts burden of resettlement of refugees from the state to civil society

### What benefits does sponsorship bring to the refugees?

Compared to refugees who are resettled through government-sponsored programmes, refugees sponsored through groups of private individuals have proven to be better integrated into their new communities, based on the Canadian experience. The biggest benefits include:

- Expediting and improving language learning, which is a major factor in successful integration
- Providing better routes into employment
- Promoting social connections that provide support systems around financial, employment, personal, or health problems

### How can you advocate for Private Sponsorship of Refugees?

As of May 2017, Australia, Brazil, Germany and the UK are running Private Sponsorship programmes that are based on the Canadian model, on regional or national levels.

Here is how you can advocate for the introduction of Private Sponsorship of Refugees in countries that have yet to do so:

- Write a letter or email to your Member of Parliament and/or local representative
- Invite your Member of Parliament and/or local representatives to attend a church/community meeting where you discuss Private Sponsorship, then invite them to respond
- Contact refugee charities and organisations already working with refugees
- Social media campaign: #PrivateSponsorship #CommunitySponsorship
- (...)

Visit Church Response for Refugees website: [www.forrefugees.uk](http://www.forrefugees.uk)

For more information, you can contact Samuel Yung from Church Response for Refugees, [samuel.yung@forrefugees.uk](mailto:samuel.yung@forrefugees.uk).