





CHAPTER 2.11

Creating Welcoming and Hospitable Communities and Restoring Faith in Government

GOALS FOR INTEGRATION (SEE CHAPTER 1.3)

-  **ONE** To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society.
-  **TWO** To promote the capacity to rebuild a positive future in the receiving society.
-  **THREE** To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within families.
-  **FOUR** To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support.
-  **FIVE** To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and the rule of law.
-  **SIX** To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity.
-  **SEVEN** To counter racism, discrimination and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities.
-  **EIGHT** To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership.
-  **NINE** To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experience.

 The focus of this Chapter

 To keep in mind

Chapter 2.11

Creating Welcoming and Hospitable Communities and Restoring Faith in Government

Welcoming and extending hospitality to resettled refugees and restoring their faith in government are critical goals of a refugee resettlement program and themes discussed throughout this Handbook. Strategies for promoting hospitality in key systems such as health care and employment placement services, as well as in specific components of an integration program, such as reception and orientation, are discussed in other relevant Chapters.

The focus of this Chapter, however, is on ways in which countries of resettlement can foster a broader social climate so that resettled refugees feel welcome, safe and understood in their day-to-day interactions in the communities, workplaces, schools and other institutions of the receiving society and so that receiving societies benefit from the attributes of resettled refugees. It is concerned with steps that can be taken to achieve these objectives at both the community and governmental levels and through the media.





CHECKLIST

Planning and supporting the development of welcoming and hospitable communities

When establishing a new resettlement program, give priority to:

- ✓ soliciting the support of community leaders in local integration sites;
- ✓ developing a media strategy;
- ✓ preparing a media information kit;
- ✓ identifying integration experts in relevant ministries;
- ✓ making provision to grant resettled refugees permanent residency;
- ✓ citizenship provisions.

In the longer term, aim for:

- ✓ strategies to engage and build the capacity of key local constituencies to support integration (e.g. employers, labour unions, faith-based communities, local authorities);
- ✓ strategies to strengthen ethno-cultural communities and cultural and religious institutions;
- ✓ planning and legislative frameworks to promote integration and cultural diversity;
- ✓ developing pre- or post arrival cultural orientation programs;
- ✓ strategies to counter racism and xenophobia;
- ✓ strategies to promote community awareness and understanding of refugee resettlement in the media;
- ✓ strategies to protect and monitor human rights.

What is a welcoming and hospitable community?

THERE IS a broad consensus in existing countries of resettlement that a welcoming and hospitable community is one which:

- accepts and embraces diversity of culture, race, ethnicity and religion;
- promotes diversity as an asset to receiving societies;
- extends support to newcomers to ensure that they have equitable access to the resources of the receiving society and are

able to participate equally in it;

- supports newcomers to maintain and build their connections with their culture-of-origin as well as the receiving community;
- promotes freedom from xenophobia, racism and discrimination;
- promotes an understanding of the nature and consequences of the refugee and resettlement experience at governmental, institutional and

community levels;

- has a commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights at domestic and international levels.

In an integration context, however, it is important that hospitality is viewed as a 'two-way street' with resettled refugees also being offered opportunities to understand and negotiate the culture of the receiving country. Strategies for achieving this are discussed in Chapter 2.7.

Hospitable communities as resources for integration and rebuilding

A welcoming and hospitable environment can support the integration of resettled refugees by:

- assisting them to re-establish and maintain a feeling of security in their new country, since fear and anxiety resulting from traumatic experiences often persists long after arrival;
- assisting them to feel a sense of belonging;
- ensuring that resettled refugees are able to access the resources they require for their resettlement and participation in the communities and institutions of the receiving society;
- strengthening cultural communities, thereby enhancing new arrivals' access to social support and enabling them to reconnect with cultural and religious institutions and practices;
- fostering a climate of understanding, acceptance and tolerance of people from refugee backgrounds, enhancing the prospects of them developing meaningful connections with individuals and institutions in the receiving society;
- restoring the trust often lost in others in the course of their refugee experiences, particularly in government officials and others in a position of authority (see p. 20);
- affirming that they are believed and that they have the right to the protection of the receiving country and to be treated with respect and dignity.

In an environment in which they are made welcome resettled refugees are not only better placed to contribute their skills and attributes, but will have a higher level of motivation to do so. Facilitating access to resources and fostering the conditions in which resettled refugees can engage with systems and individuals in the receiving society also helps to prevent their social and economic marginalisation. Mutual understanding and respect between resettled refugees and the wider community helps to build a socially cohesive and harmonious society. This has benefits not only for resettled refugees, but also for other distinct groups, such as indigenous communities and people with disabilities.

Factors affecting welcoming and hospitality

Many resettled refugees originate from countries where government officials and professionals are involved in perpetrating violence and persecution. For these reasons resettled refugees may have a heightened sensitivity to injustices in the receiving society or a fear or lack of trust of



If the (social) 'climate' is not right, the resettlement is so much harder.

Resettlement worker



COMMUNITY



**CREATING WELCOMING AND HOSPITABLE COMMUNITIES
AND RESTORING FAITH IN GOVERNMENT**



those in positions of authority (such as teachers or law enforcement officers). These factors may have an impact on the extent to which they feel safe, on their capacity to form relationships within the receiving society, and on their interactions with key systems such as schools and social service authorities.

Limited proficiency in the language of the receiving society is another significant factor.



**When people welcome you
and you feel good, you
share your own ideas.**

Resettled refugee



Also influential are conditions in the receiving society, including:

- the extent to which there are communities with an interest in human rights, refugee issues and democracy building (e.g. faith-based communities, human rights groups);
- the existence of established ethno-cultural communities and their capacity to contribute to building a welcoming and hospitable environment;
- existing legislative frameworks and policies and programs for managing cultural diversity;
- the extent of understanding at community and governmental levels of the reasons for resettled refugees leaving their countries-of-origin;
- the extent to which cultural and racial diversity and tolerance is promoted at government and community levels;

Media, community and governmental attitudes

IN MOST societies there is a diverse range of views about refugee issues at the governmental and community levels.

When they are given practical expression in individual interactions and governmental and institutional practices or in the media, negative attitudes can make resettled refugees feel unwelcome in the receiving society.

Racism and xenophobia are a particular concern in this regard. As well as compromising the safety of resettled refugees, racism and xenophobia may contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression; affect access to integration resources (such as housing and employment); and

hamper their participation in the receiving society¹.

There are a number of factors which may contribute to indifference or hostility toward resettled refugees, and which may need to be managed by governments and others with an interest in refugee resettlement and human rights. Among these are:

- a general antipathy toward migration, held in the belief that refugees and immigrants will compete for scarce resources or threaten the way of life of the receiving country. This is a particular concern for those resettled refugees whose racial features or cultural and religious practices distinguish them from the dominant culture;
- perceptions that resettled

refugees are offered better government support than is available to nationals;

- public confusion about who refugees are and the nature of the refugee experience. Negative attitudes toward asylum seekers may also be extended to resettled refugees. The questioning of the motives and credibility of asylum seekers can serve as a painful reminder of resettled refugees' own experiences of not being believed or thought worthy of protection. Perceptions that asylum seekers are being treated unjustly can undermine their faith in the compassion of the receiving society.

- attitudes toward migration and resettlement at community and governmental levels;
- the approach taken by the media in the receiving society;
- the extent of support for the protection and promotion of human rights at both community and governmental levels;
- the extent to which the country has a tradition of making newcomers welcome.

Issues to consider in facilitating the development of hospitable communities

The importance of partnership and local engagement

Government has an important role in fostering hospitality by setting overall legislative and planning frameworks and providing funding to support capacity building activities in the refugee and wider communities.





CREATING WELCOMING AND HOSPITABLE COMMUNITIES AND RESTORING FAITH IN GOVERNMENT

However, the integration of resettled refugees occurs at a highly localised level in the communities, workplaces and institutions of the receiving society. The experience of resettlement countries is that it is critical to engage the co-operation and involvement of key local constituencies, in particular:

- employers and labour unions;
- local neighbourhoods;
- faith-based communities;
- school communities;
- local governments (in some countries referred to as authorities or municipalities);
- ethno-cultural groups and services;
- the media;
- human rights organisations.

Community engagement is important not only for extending hospitality to newcomers, but because it can help to build a basis of understanding and support for refugee resettlement.

Managing conflicting cultural practices

As indicated above, it is important that resettled refugees are encouraged to retain their culture-of-origin. Nevertheless there may be instances where differences in cultural practices between resettled refugees and the wider community raise cause for concern or conflict:

- Certain cultural practices may be considered either life- or health-threatening or be abhorrent to the receiving country. For instance, in some countries, laws to prohibit the practice of female genital mutilation have been introduced on these grounds (see Chapter 3.2).
- Certain cultural practices may be in the interests of some members of refugee communities, but may be considered by the receiving society to be contrary to the interests of others. For example, child discipline practices in some refugee communities may be considered harsh in resettlement countries. Similarly, some refugee source countries have views about gender relations which would be regarded in receiving societies as placing women at social and economic disadvantage.
- Some practices may depart so much from the ‘norms’ of the receiving society that they place resettled refugees in a position where the resulting conflict or isolation from the receiving society is not in their interests.

How conflicts of this nature are managed will depend both on the issue concerned and on the receiving country. As indicated

INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Promoting social inclusion and understanding in Denmark and Ireland

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| • A Danish local authority has funded refugee subscriptions or memberships to join local sporting clubs and community gardens (allotments). This scheme enables resettled refugees to meet with Danes with a common interest on equal terms. | • In the Shannon area in Ireland, refugees visit schools and local rural associations to talk about their past experiences, giving many Irish people their first experience of meeting people from different cultural and ethnic origins. |
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elsewhere in this Handbook, integration is a two-way street, with resettled refugees adapting to the ways of their new country and receiving societies learning about and adapting to the practices of refugee communities. Consistent with this notion, most receiving societies manage conflicting cultural practices with a continuum of strategies, encompassing:

- educating the wider community to increase tolerance and to accommodate the values, beliefs and practices of newcomers;
- mediation and bridge building between the refugee and wider communities;
- awareness raising and education in refugee communities.

**Initiatives to support the development of hospitable communities**

Engaging the wider community

In many countries community based groups and institutions (such as faith-based communities and unions) have played an important part in fostering welcoming and hospitality by:

- developing awareness raising activities and strategies to combat racism and xenophobia among their constituencies and in the wider community;
- fostering the participation of refugees in local institutions and organisations such as schools, clubs, associations and places of worship;
- ensuring that resettled refugees are represented in administrative and decision-making positions. For example, labour unions in a number of countries have sought to encourage the active participation of refugees and immigrants;
- taking measures to ensure that local institutions and organisations are responsive to resettled refugees;
- supporting cultural events such as festivals and special days;
- contributing to volunteer social support and sponsorship programs.





INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Community involvement in refugee resettlement in Canada

<p>CANADA has a long history of community participation in refugee resettlement, with the people of Canada being awarded the Nansen Refugee Award in 1996, in recognition of their humanitarian and compassionate response to refugees.</p>	<p>In the Saskatoon area, a coalition of volunteers works with newcomers to educate, enable and equip local residents to respond to the needs and concerns of refugees. The Coalition has established a drop-in centre providing information to newcomers and facilitating their connections with the broader Saskatoon community. The drop-in centre provides employment assistance, opportunities for social interaction and both formal and informal language learning activities.</p>	<p>program (see p. 89) by promoting the program in their communities and offering training and support to sponsors.</p>
<p>This involvement is demonstrated in the work of the Manitoba Inter-faith Immigration Council, which was formally established in 1968 to provide social and moral support to newcomers. This work is undertaken by both volunteers and paid staff, many of whom are themselves immigrants or former refugees. Membership of the Council is open to all faith groups, with the Anglican, Baha'i, Hindu, Jewish, Lutheran, Mennonite, Muslim, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Sikh and United Church faiths currently being represented.</p>	<p>The Coalition also provides professional development to health, teaching and other front-line workers on issues affecting refugees, such as the impact of torture and trauma. Through alliances with other government and non-government services, it helps to ensure that important programs and systems, such as schools and employment services are responsive to the needs of newcomers.</p>	<p>The success of both these networks has been due largely to their capacity to engage broader community constituencies in their work. While both receive some funding from government and non-government sources, much of their work continues to be undertaken by volunteers. These constituencies bring a wealth of human capital and other resources to the task of refugee sponsorship and resettlement and provide a direct link between resettled refugees and the wider community.</p>
<p>The Council provides orientation, settlement support and housing to resettled refugees as well as information on, and referral to, health care and other services. Through a volunteer program, resettled refugees are offered friendship, informal language training and basic practical support and are linked with other social and recreational activities in Manitoba.</p>	<p>Regular public and community information events are held to celebrate the contributions of both newcomers and volunteers and to raise awareness of global refugee issues as well as those facing refugees resettling in Canada. Both the Council and the Coalition play an active role in supporting Canada's private sponsorship</p>	<p>Through their personal contact with refugees, citizens gain an appreciation of the experiences and cultures of resettled refugees. This in turn helps to foster tolerance and understanding, with benefits for both resettled refugees and their new communities. The fact that both the Coalition and the Council have broad and informed constituencies also strengthens their capacity to contribute to government policy and to play an advocacy role on refugee resettlement issues when required.</p>

Capacity building in ethnic communities

In Chapter 2.3 some of the ways in which receiving countries can support the development of ethno-cultural communities, and, in particular, ethno-cultural organisations and services, for the purpose of enhancing social support for resettled refugees, are explored.

These communities and their organisations also have an important role in building hospitable and welcoming communities. They can:

- undertake public advocacy and awareness raising activities to promote understanding of refugee communities;
- act as mediators in the event of cultural conflicts between refugee communities and the receiving society;
- support refugees to become involved in decision making at the workplace, community and broader political levels;
- provide cultural advice to governments, service providers and other institutions so that they are able to respond sensitively to resettled refugees;
- support the development of programs and facilities for new arrivals to promote cultural retention and identification (e.g. support groups, cultural events, community arts projects, ethnic community centres and places of worship, ethnic radio and television programs, ethnic newspapers and newsletters);
- provide opportunities for civic participation. In this respect they provide a relatively ‘safe’ context in which resettled refugees can gain confidence and skills in participatory processes. Lessons learned in these contexts can be transferred to their participation in forums in the wider community;
- enable refugee communities to participate on a more equal footing in the receiving society through collective action.

Within refugee communities leadership styles and dynamics may have developed which were functional in persecutory and corrupt regimes (e.g. mistrust, suspicion, leadership gate-keeping), but which work against facilitating broad participation in receiving societies. Capacity building initiatives can help to address this.

Working with the media

The media has a powerful role in shaping community attitudes to a range of issues, among them refugee resettlement². In a number of countries, integration personnel have worked closely with the media with a view to enhancing broader community understanding of the refugee experience and to



Fostering hospitality in emerging countries of resettlement

THE experience of emerging countries of resettlement is that priority should be given to securing the support of community leaders and ‘opinion setters’.

In Benin, for example, once local sites had been selected, information sessions were held with district and traditional chiefs, mayors and neighbourhood leaders with the aim of promoting tolerance and understanding of refugee issues as well as seeking their collaboration and support.



My neighbours are very kind people. One day I was very sick, I had a pain in my kidneys, so my husband asked the neighbours for help. Not only they called for a doctor, but they also paid him because we didn't have enough money.

Resettled refugee



COMMUNITY



Key messages to convey when communicating with receiving communities and the media

THE TONE and key messages communicated to the media and receiving communities will need to be tailored to the country concerned.

Consider:

- placing resettlement in a global context, demonstrating that the receiving country is one of a number of countries sharing the global refugee burden;
- emphasising that refugees were compelled to leave their home countries for their own safety;
- providing information on the procedures used by the UNHCR and the receiving country to select resettled refugees. This will help to counter the

erroneous view that resettled refugees are primarily 'economic migrants' and provide reassurance that careful health and character checks are undertaken;

- emphasising what the country can offer resettled refugees (e.g. hospitality, freedom from persecution);
- explaining what supports are available to resettled refugees to help counter perceptions that resettled refugees are offered preferential treatment over nationals;
- emphasising the benefits that resettled refugees offer to receiving societies. Consider using examples of prominent refugees as well as international

research on the social and economic benefits of migration and resettlement (see Chapters 1.1 and 1.2);

- providing relevant country background information (see p. ix for sources);
- providing information on how individuals and communities can contribute to refugee resettlement.

While these messages are concerned specifically with refugee resettlement, consideration may also need to be given to addressing broader issues such as challenging myths about certain cultures or questioning racial stereotypes.

raising awareness about the benefits of resettlement for both resettled refugees and the receiving society.

Equally, however, the media can reflect negative attitudes held in some sections of the wider community, which may not only fuel anti-refugee sentiment, but also generate feelings of fear and anxiety among resettled refugees. As their primary source of information in the early resettlement period, the media will have a powerful influence on resettled refugees' perceptions of the receiving society and the extent to which they are welcome in it. This is an important factor to bear in mind when working with the media and highlights the need for integration personnel to monitor media reporting of refugee issues.

The experience of resettlement countries is that while it is not possible to control the way in which the media covers refugee issues, those supporting integration at both governmental and community levels can be prepared by:
—having accurate, succinct information prepared in advance

Working with the media to promote a welcoming and hospitable environment for resettled refugees

THINK ABOUT:

- cultivating relationships with journalists;
- strategies to build the capacity of those in key integration roles at both the governmental and community levels to work effectively with the media (e.g. providing training, developing resource manuals);
- securing the co-operation of prominent or respected individuals to act as 'spokespeople' for refugee resettlement (e.g. by preparing opinion pieces on refugee resettlement for daily newspapers; participating in radio and television interviews);
- monitoring newspaper 'letters-to-the-editor' sections and talk-back radio for opportunities to promote refugee resettlement or counter erroneous views;
- approaching training institutions to have refugee issues addressed in undergraduate curricula and professional development courses for journalists;
- using popular media such as women's magazines and television serials to communicate about refugee issues;
- providing grants to support the development of documentaries, films and drama addressing refugee issues;
- establishing awards to recognise excellence in reporting on refugee and resettlement issues.

to make available to the media. In some countries formal media kits have been developed;

- thinking carefully before soliciting media coverage of specific refugee intakes, particularly in emerging countries where the novelty value of resettlement may mean that it attracts intense interest. Resettled refugees themselves do not always welcome this coverage, particularly in countries with relatively small refugee intakes where they may be readily identified. New arrivals are ill-equipped to represent themselves in the media, especially if they are not fluent in the language of the receiving country. There is also the risk that any small problems which subsequently emerge will attract intense and possibly sensationalised media coverage and compromise long term government and community support;
- developing a media strategy. This is particularly important at the governmental level. Typically this involves establishing a committee or working group of relevant government ministries and the identification of key personnel to serve as media spokespeople. To ensure consistency in communication with the media, it is wise to secure agreement on key messages. Regular monitoring of the strategy will enable it to be adjusted in response to changing circumstances.

It's hard to overcome the sense that people see you as handicapped because of your refugee background and you constantly feel that you have to prove who you are.

Resettled refugee



COMMUNITY



Issues to be aware of in media reporting of refugee issues

JOURNALISTS are often working under tight time lines and are under pressure to prepare stories which are 'newsworthy'. Some may reflect negative attitudes held in the receiving community, or may be under pressure from media owners or editors to present refugee issues in a certain way. This may lead to:

- sensationalist reporting of

refugee related issues, often provided without a wider context;

- inaccurate and negative stereotyping of ethnic minorities;
- attributing problems in refugee communities to ethnicity without regard for other factors such as structural unemployment, social exclusion or past experiences³.

Positive reporting, meanwhile, may often be relegated to 'human interest' segments focusing on cultural contributions such as ethnic foods, music, costumes and festivals. While these are important, they are often emphasised at the expense of the economic, civic and intellectual contributions made by resettled refugees.



Understanding and welcoming through ethnic media

MANY COUNTRIES OF resettlement have supported ethno-cultural communities to develop ethnic media, such as radio and television stations or programs and newspapers and magazines.

These are an important source of information about events in other countries, promote cultural retention and provide an avenue for resettled refugees to learn about their rights and the resources available to them in the receiving country, in their own language.

INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Using popular media

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The popular Australian drama series <i>Neighbours</i> featured several episodes where child cast members offered support to a refugee. In the context of this relationship the show explored conditions in the character's country-of-origin, his reasons for flight and his conditioned fear of authorities. Similarly, the British police drama <i>The Bill</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> screened episodes exploring racial harassment of Kosova refugees and the dilemmas facing those unable to have their professional qualifications recognised in the receiving society. Women's magazines in a number of countries have run articles based on 'case studies' of refugee women. 	<p>These approaches not only reach a wider audience but also enable issues, myths and prejudices to be explored at a deeper and more personal level. Integration personnel can play a role in encouraging television, radio and magazine producers to address resettlement issues and can provide relevant research and background materials</p>
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Building capacity at the governmental level

Resettlement countries have implemented a number of initiatives to ensure that government services and programs are responsive to refugee and immigrant communities. Among these are:

- planning documents or strategies which reflect a formal government commitment to integration and/or cultural diversity and define the ways in which this will be implemented across government. Examples include Australia's *New Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* and Sweden's *Integration Policy*;
- advisory committees at senior government levels to assist in the planning, implementation and monitoring of integration and the acceptance of diversity. In many countries these committees include representation from refugee and immigrant communities;
- special policy and program units within government departments to ensure that the policies and activities of government are responsive to the needs of refugee and immigrant communities. In some cases, these units may also provide technical support and assistance to governmental officers involved in service delivery (e.g. many police departments have ethnic liaison units). In emerging countries, or countries with small refugee intakes, an alternative may be to identify and support 'integration experts' within relevant government ministries;

INTEGRATION
IN PRACTICE**Building media skills in Britain**

The British national lottery periodically engages a media adviser to provide training to ethno-cultural organisations and non-government organisations to develop skills in presenting to the media. Its focus is on promoting positive images of refugees and refugee issues.



INTEGRATION
IN PRACTICE**Refugee voice
in Sweden**

THE Municipality of Lulea in Sweden has established an immigrant council through which refugees and immigrants can have their say. Their meetings are attended by local commissioners and its proposals and comments are submitted to the full council executive.

- initiatives to ensure that people from refugee and immigrant backgrounds are represented in the public sector work force (e.g. equal opportunity programs, internships). These demonstrate the receiving society's commitment to the inclusion of resettled refugees (as well as providing employment opportunities and an avenue for refugees to contribute);
- legislation to promote equal opportunity among or prevent discrimination against individuals on the grounds of their race, ethnicity, religion or country-of-origin. Typically this legislation is concerned with access to a wide range of resources, including public places, vehicles, employment, housing, goods and services, education and land. In some countries, particular rights of refugees and immigrants are enshrined in legislation. For example in the USA the *Civil Rights Act* establishes the right of people with limited language proficiency to an interpreter when accessing federally funded services. A number of countries have also introduced legislation to promote racial and religious tolerance and prevent racism and xenophobia. Commonly, legislation in these areas also provides for the establishment of an independent body to investigate individual breaches of the legislation, review other government legislation to ensure compliance, and conduct awareness raising activities;
- becoming signatories to key international instruments to promote and protect human rights. Others have also established bodies to monitor government legislation, and activities to ensure that human rights are observed at the domestic level. Examples include Australia's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and New Zealand's Human Rights Commissioner;
- programs to promote wider understanding of resettlement and global refugee issues, and the value of cultural diversity and/or to challenge negative community attitudes toward migration and resettlement. These have used a variety of strategies, among them television and radio advertisements, posters and pamphlets, resource materials and websites.

Permanent residency and citizenship provisions

Security of residency and legal equality in the receiving country is especially important in the early resettlement period. Recognising this, most countries grant resettled refugees permanent residence and confer upon them most of the same rights and responsibilities as nationals. Common exceptions are the right to hold a passport, to vote, to be employed in certain public sector positions or to hold public office.

How does legislation contribute to creating a welcoming and hospitable community?

LEGISLATION can serve as an effective deterrent, set standards for appropriate behaviour and provide resettled refugees with recourse in the event that they are subject to unfair treatment.

Legislation also has important symbolic value, being a practical expression of the receiving society's commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of resettled refugees and demonstrating its abhorrence of discrimination and violence against them. The experience of established countries of resettlement, however, is that legislation is more likely to be effective if complemented by community education and other initiatives.

If resettled refugees are to have recourse to remedies provided by legislation, it is important that these are accessible (for example, through the simplification of procedures, translated materials, and individual support to access remedies).

INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Informing the community

EACH YEAR the Australian government produces a booklet documenting the government's response to refugee and humanitarian issues. The booklet describes the Australian resettlement program in the context of the global refugee issue and other measures being adopted by the government to promote refugee protection.

The process of becoming a citizen of the receiving society is an important practical and symbolic milestone in the integration process, particularly given that resettled refugees have lost citizenship of their countries-of-origin. It affirms that resettled refugees 'belong' in the receiving society and allows them full participation in political life. Importantly, it accords them the right to consular protection in the event that they encounter difficulties while overseas and to travel on the passport of the receiving country.

The process of securing citizenship also allows resettled refugees to state formally their obligations to the receiving society.

At the same time, however, some resettled refugees may experience some ambivalence about the process of becoming a citizen, particularly if they hold hopes that circumstances in their countries-of-origin will one day change to allow their safe return.

Significant factors to consider in relation to citizenship are:—residency requirements. While these currently range from between two to eight years in countries of resettlement, there is a general consensus that, for the reasons above, it is in the best interests of refugees and receiving countries to





INTEGRATION IN PRACTICE

Citizenship in Australia and Canada

AS PART of their commitment to welcoming refugees and immigrants to full participation in their societies both Australia and Canada actively promote, support and facilitate the process of citizenship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exempt refugee and immigrant elders from the language requirements of citizenship; • actively promote citizenship through community campaigns and other government funded programs for refugees and immigrants, including orientation programs provided prior to and following arrival; • use the process of becoming a citizen as an opportunity to extend 	welcome to newcomers. For example, Canada's recent <i>Welcome Home</i> campaign to promote citizenship welcomed newcomers into the Canadian family with messages from school children. In Australia, at citizenship ceremonies, new citizens are given an Australian native plant and information on how they can participate in Australian civic society.
Both countries:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have relatively short residency requirements for eligibility for citizenship, this being three years in Canada and two years in Australia; 		

enable them to seek citizenship as early as possible in the resettlement process;

- citizenship requirements. In almost all countries, resettled refugees (like other migrants) are obliged to demonstrate that they are of good character. In some countries they are also required to be fluent in the language of the receiving country and to complete either a written or oral test demonstrating their understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens. The stringency of these requirements varies between countries and will clearly influence how soon after arrival resettled refugees can apply for citizenship. In some countries, more flexible arrangements are made for refugee elders, recognising that they face particular difficulties in acquiring a new language (see Chapter 3.4).



PROMOTING WELCOMING AND HOSPITABLE COMMUNITIES

A SOUND INTEGRATION PROGRAM WOULD:

- have an overall framework for implementing and monitoring integration and promoting diversity across society;
- have legislative frameworks in place to promote equal opportunity, prevent discrimination and promote racial and religious tolerance;
- have measures in place to ensure that human rights are observed;
- involve resettled refugees in the planning and monitoring of integration and cultural diversity programs and strategies;
- have strategies in place to engage employers, labour unions, and local communities (in particular, faith-based communities and human rights organisations) in building hospitable communities;
- have measures in place to raise community awareness and understanding of, and support for, refugee resettlement;
- have measures in place to strengthen ethno-cultural communities and to build their capacity to provide opportunities for new arrivals to participate in cultural and religious activities and to serve as a bridge between refugee communities and the receiving society;
- offer resettled refugees permanent residence and its associated rights and responsibilities (including the right to travel) and enable them to seek citizenship at the earliest possible stage.



