



**The ATCR / WGR** ANNUAL TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS  
and WORKING GROUP on RESETTLEMENT

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**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

ONE REFUGEE RESETTLED, MANY LIVES PROTECTED



## Welcome from the Chairs

Welcome to the ninth edition of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) newsletter!

This year, we have chosen to retain the ATCR theme “One refugee resettled, many lives protected,” as an important reminder of the power of resettlement at a time when all too many people are being forcibly displaced. The theme also serves to remind us, collectively, of the need to expand opportunities for those we serve – in both the number of refugees who are resettled and in the integration support provided once they have arrived in their new home.

Thank you to UNHCR, NGO partners and other member states for having shared your stories for this newsletter. We, as Chairs, have been very impressed with the tremendous response we received from you all. This newsletter highlights notable developments and considerations for refugee resettlement in 2013: the winding down of Bhutanese resettlement movement out of Nepal; the horrifying reality facing refugees displaced from Syria; new multilateral resettlement efforts underway for groups such as the Congolese in the Great Lakes Region; and best practices for refugee integration, through employment, education, arts, and community building initiatives. The newsletter also provides an important window into the diversity of resettlement programs, reminding us of the operational efforts required to undertake successful resettlement, as well as the considerable benefits that can be accrued to both the resettled refugee and the third country host community. We hope that you find it informative and inspiring to read each other’s stories and experiences.

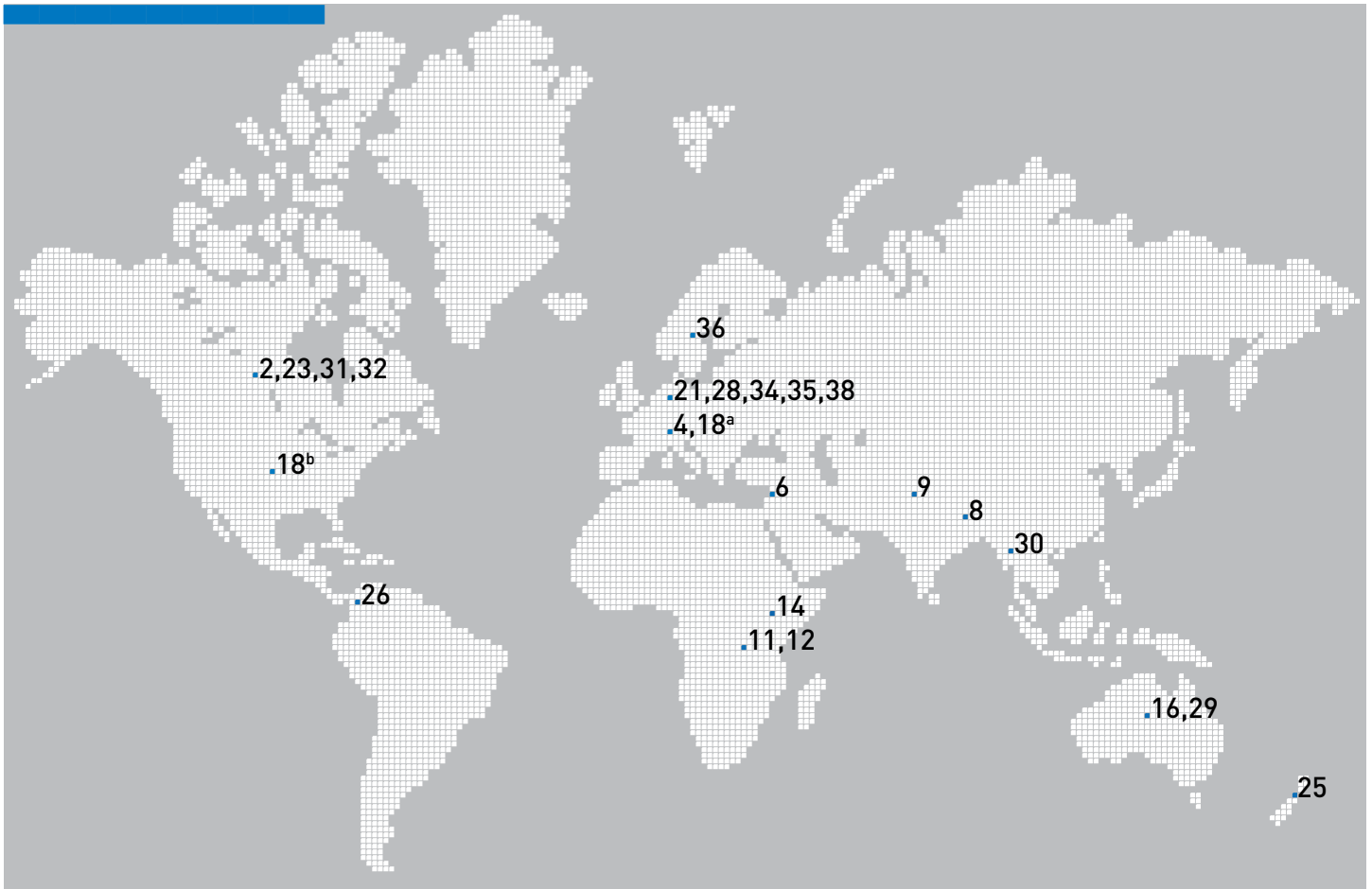
Once again, thank you for your support and generous collaboration in the lead up to the 2013 ATCR. As Chairs, we have greatly appreciated your assistance, patience and enthusiasm as we have sent out umpteen emails with questions, requests for assistance, and updates.

At a time when the number of refugees, globally, is increasing in a dramatic fashion, the ATCR provides an important reminder of what we can do, collectively, to provide an international response to those displaced.

Sincerely,

Debra Pressé  
Director  
Refugee Affairs, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Chris Friesen  
Director  
Settlement Services, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, Canada



## Contents

- |                 |  |    |   |
|-----------------|--|----|---|
| 2               | Welcome from Chairs  | 21 | Cities that say Yes!<br>Welcoming resettled refugees in Europe                    |
| 4               | Reflections from UNHCR's Head of the Resettlement Service                      | 23 | Welcome House Centre for refugees in Canada                                       |
| 6               | Refugees out of Syria:<br>A life of fear and displacement                      | 25 | New Zealand's new Refugee Centre  |
| 8               | Bhutanese resettlement referrals from Nepal reach six-figure mark              | 26 | Colombian refugees reunited in Canada   |
| 9               | Pakistan Contact Group: An update  | 28 | Refugees: Who Needs Them?<br>A documentary from the Netherlands                   |
| 11              | Training to enhance the quality of Congolese resettlement submissions          | 29 | New Land, New Life: A documentary about refugees resettled to Australia           |
| 12              | Norway's first mission to interview Congolese in Uganda's Nakivale settlements | 30 | Rohingya art exhibition   |
| 14              | U.S. funds Kakuma Transit Camp   | 31 | WUSC: A unique model of refugee sponsorship                                       |
| 16              | Videoconference interviews:<br>The Australian experience                       | 32 | From camp to campus: Arash Wared's journey from Afghanistan to Pakistan to Canada |
| 18 <sup>a</sup> | UNHCR publishes Resettlement Handbook in French & Spanish                      | 34 | Universities, higher education & resettlement                                     |
| 18 <sup>b</sup> | Reflections on refugee integration:<br>The U.S. experience                     | 35 | Integration and pathways to employment for Burmese refugees in the Czech Republic |
|                 |  | 36 | Sweden 'goes to the gemba'  |
|                 |  | 38 | Roundtable on private business engagement in the integration of refugees          |

## Reflections from Renata Dubini, UNHCR's Head of the Resettlement Service

By Renata Dubini, new Deputy Director of the Division of International Protection for Pillar III – Comprehensive Solutions, and Head of the Resettlement Service. Most recently the UNHCR Representative in the Syrian Arab Republic, Ms. Dubini was the recipient of the 2011 Excellence in Field Service Award for inspiring her colleagues to use their abilities, values and imagination to make a difference in the lives of refugees. Ms. Dubini replaces Ms. Wei-Meng Lim-Kabaa, who retired in April 2013.

Having dedicated many years to refugee protection in Latin America, Southern Europe, Africa and the Middle East, I am very excited to embark on this new journey as the Head of the Resettlement Service for UNHCR.

In my most recent assignment as the UNHCR Representative in the Syrian Arab Republic, I witnessed the extraordinary resilience of refugees while overseeing a major resettlement operation. I would hereby like to thank you for the cooperation of resettlement countries as well as pay tribute to the work of the UNHCR and IOM teams that, despite the difficulties, went the extra mile to keep the programme alive. Much more still needs to be done to rescue and assist many Iraqi and non-Iraqi refugees stranded together with Syrian nationals who have been dramatically affected by the ongoing conflict.

My new journey begins at a time of great challenge for the international community. Recent refugee statistical trends are staggering. Since 2011, millions of people fled fighting in Syria, Mali, Sudan and the DRC. Our collective capacity to respond to the suffering of those uprooted by conflict and



© UNHCR

persecution is being put to the test in unforeseen ways. As you know, newly arriving refugees join the 10.5 million refugees already under UNHCR mandate, over half of whom have been in exile for more than five years.

The enormous pressure of these realities brings difficult decisions. How do we choose between ensuring timely and effective emergency response, while at the same time investing in solutions for the millions of refugees living in protracted situations? In truth, we cannot choose one path over the other. Response to emergency and life saving needs cannot be postponed; however, we must also respond in a timely and effectively to needs of people living in protracted despair. I call on your continued assistance to do so.

I am very motivated with the opportunity of such a pertinent role in resettlement and I am very glad to join the team in Geneva during the preparations for the ATCR. I like to think that this event serves as a platform to ensure that resettlement states, UNHCR, international organizations and NGOs alike develop a common strategy for the use of resettlement as an effective protection tool for the most vulnerable refugees. In my experience, a combination of solutions within the framework of a comprehensive approach is often necessary to achieve a lasting solution to a refugee situation. The ATCR provides the grounds for information-sharing, development of creative solutions and the establishment of coordination channels which are essential to our collective goal: the protection of refugees. However, while preparing to take full advantage of the opportunity the ATCR provides us, there is still a need to focus on protection improvements we can bring to the table in July.

The expansion of resettlement opportunities for the most vulnerable is crucial. UNHCR continues to advocate for increased flexibility in selection criteria and expeditious and simplified resettlement processing, including an increased use of group submission as well as innovative methodologies, thereby assisting more refugees with the available resources. We also see additional need to support emerging resettlement states as well as encouraging other states to initiate programmes. Established resettlement states may wish to join us in our efforts, thereby contributing to resettlement growth in line with the global resettlement needs. UNHCR hopes to continue a dialogue and sharing of good practices with resettlement countries and host communities to enhance the processing and reception of emergency, urgent, and medical cases.

I would also like to highlight the important role of the NGO community on the success of resettlement around the world. From the identification of refugees to their the reception and integration, the commitment and support of NGOs, civil society, community-based organizations and business communities, is invaluable to us. Resettlement would not be what it is today without their tireless efforts in the field and in the recipient country showcasing the potential of refugee communities as productive contributors to their new societies.

I very much look forward to working with you to continue to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable refugees who need our urgent support and intervention. ■

## Refugees out of Syria: A life of fear and displacement

By Reem Alsalem, Senior Regional Public  
Information Officer at UNHCR Beirut / © UNHCR

Lara and her family know all too well the meaning of being caught in the middle – with no prospects of staying where you are, or going back to where you came from.

In 2007, Lara, her husband, her in-laws, and her four daughters fled Iraq after having received telephone threats from unknown persons. Lara is Christian, and her husband used to work with a UN Agency in Iraq. At that time, such profiles were problematic in Iraq, so they decided to flee to Syria seeking safety and shelter, and settled in Aleppo. In doing so, they joined thousands of Iraqis there, forming the largest refugee community in Syria.

They were recognized on prima facie basis in 2008. For a few years, Lara and her family had found peace. Her children went to school, and her husband was able to find a job in another Arab country.

Unfortunately, since the outbreak of the conflict in Syria, the new good life they thought they had found began to disappear. Like their Syrian hosts, Lara and her family, along with thousands of other refugees living in the country, were not spared the consequences of war. As the conflict intensified, so did their fears. Then, when the University of Aleppo, where their eldest daughter was studying, suffered a serious attack, Lara and her husband decided it was too dangerous to remain in Syria. The whole family moved to neighbouring Lebanon in 2012 and has stayed ever since.

Life in Lebanon is a stark contrast to the comfortable life they had before. With few job



*Wafta, 6, fled Syria with her mother and younger sister 5 months ago. Since her arrival in Lebanon she has barely spoken and won't engage with other children. 22 May 2013. © UNHCR/E.Dorfman*



Jordan / Syrian refugees / Turki Ali Jaber, 50, sits with his wife Fatin, 48, and daughters Remaz, 14, Sheraz, 13, and Shahad, 12, in the apartment which they have been renting in a village outside of Irbid, Jordan 1 May 2013. The family were farmers in the Homs region in Syria before the security situation pushed Turki to bring his three youngest daughters to a place of safety. When they relocated, they left behind three married daughters and three grown sons, two married and one single. Fatin holds a picture of her eldest son who served in the government military but was killed by his own army while going to check on the health of an uncle in a disputed village. / ©UNHCR / Jared J. Kohler / May 2013.

opportunities, it is extremely expensive to live, and the family struggles on a daily basis. “At the same time, going back to Iraq is not an option,” Lara explains. “The security situation in Iraq does not look good. My father and brothers, who never left, recently had to sell their shop and are keeping a low profile. They are afraid and told us not to come back,” she adds.

UNHCR has been helping refugees residing in Syria, not only Iraqis but also Somalis, Afghans, Eritreans among others, who have encountered serious security problems, or have become particularly vulnerable, but who at the same time cannot go back home or find a new life in a third country. Many of them have already moved to neighboring countries. In 2012, 2,345 refugees of different nationalities, who are either residing in Syria or used to live there, were submitted for resettlement by UNHCR. Close to 68,000 refugees continue to live in Syria – many of them in very difficult living and security conditions. It is therefore important that support for the resettlement of the most vulnerable

among them, and those with compelling protection needs, continues.

The same holds true for some Syrian refugees. While the overwhelming majority have found relative safety and protection in neighboring countries (1.4 million as of April 2013), the safety of some continues to be at risk, even outside of Syria.

Karim, aged 30 is one of those. In addition to being a political activist, Karim is a member of the LGBTI group. It was partially due to his sexual orientation that Karim was detained and brutally abused in detention. In July 2012, following his release, he and his partner fled to Lebanon. Nevertheless, their safety remains at risk as homosexuality is outlawed by the state and is frowned upon by society. Though he and his partner try to make ends meet, they live in constant fear of their sexual identity being discovered, and the consequences that this may bring. “Being a gay Syrian political activist makes me a minority within a minority. It cannot get more complicated than this.” ■



Rewati Maya Darjee with her husband and two sons. The family will soon be departing for resettlement in the United States. © UNHCR/N.Gurung

## Bhutanese resettlement referrals from Nepal reach six-figure mark

By Nini Gurung in Kathmandu, Nepal / © UNHCR

April 26, 2013 – The resettlement of refugees from Bhutan reached a major milestone this week, with 100,000 people having been referred for resettlement from Nepal to third countries since the programme began in 2007. Nearly 80,000 of them have started new lives in eight different countries – an important step towards resolving one of the most protracted refugee situations in Asia.

“This is an incredible achievement in the history of this refugee programme and for UNHCR,” said Diane Goodman, UNHCR’s acting representative in Nepal. She thanked the Nepalese government, resettlement and donor countries, and partner agencies, commenting also on the courage and resilience of the refugees.

Rewati May Darjee will soon join the tens of thousands of refugees who have received a new lease on life in resettlement countries. Together with her husband and two sons, she travelled from Beldangi camp in eastern Nepal to the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu on Thursday, on a plane chartered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In the IOM transit centre in Kathmandu, she and her family will be given a final medical examination and an orientation course. Next Wednesday, they will take the final leg of their journey to their new home in Atlanta in the United States.

Dressed in new clothes and looking a little apprehensive, Rewati reflected on what the future might bring, “I am happy that we are finally going to have our own identity in a new country and not spend our lives as refugees in the camps,” said Rewati. “The camps are emptying quite fast; almost



everyone has gone or is in the process of going. I miss my friends who have already left the camps and so do my children.”

Since the resettlement programme began six years ago, the UN refugee agency has been interviewing refugees and referring them to resettlement countries for consideration. Once the refugees are accepted by resettlement countries, IOM conducts health assessments, organizes cultural orientation courses and transports the refugees to their new homes.

A number of steps are involved from the time a case is submitted to a resettlement country to the time of departure. Resettlement countries interview the refugees, medical examinations must be done, exit permits issued, cultural orientation conducted and travel arrangements made.

A large number of humanitarian workers are involved in this programme and the success is a testament to their dedicated efforts. Working at IOM, Silki Agrawal begins her day at dawn, escorting refugees from the camps to the IOM office and then to the airport. “We are directly or indirectly contributing to help refugees start their new lives,” she said.

UNHCR staff member Tulshi Limbu was just a child when she saw the refugees arriving in Nepal in the early 1990s. “I was astonished to see their challenging situation in terms of food and shelter. After spending 20 years in the refugee camps, resettlement is a great option in helping them start their lives afresh. I feel very proud that, somewhere, my small efforts were a part of this successful operation,” she said.

The acceptance rate of UNHCR’s referrals in Nepal by resettlement countries is the highest in

the world – at 99.4 per cent of total submissions. The United States has accepted the largest number of refugees (66,134), followed by Canada (5,376), Australia (4,190), New Zealand (747), Denmark (746), Norway (546), the Netherlands (326) and the United Kingdom (317).

Referring to the number of submissions to date, IOM Chief of Mission in Nepal Maurizio Busatti said, “We look back at these 100,000 stories with resolve and inspiration. We pay tribute to the courage of these women, men and children and to the generosity of those who welcome them at the other end.”

Of the original population of 108,000 refugees originating from Bhutan and living in Nepal, some 38,100 remain in the Sanischar and Beldangi camps in eastern Nepal. Most of them have expressed an interest in the resettlement programme. ■

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## Pakistan Contact Group: An update

Submitted by the Government of Australia

Afghans in Pakistan and Iran represent the largest and most protracted refugee situation that UNHCR has been involved in. Pakistan has been a country of first asylum hosting millions of Afghan refugees for nearly four decades, including over 1.7 million Afghan refugees who are currently registered with the Government of Pakistan. According to the Government’s estimates, an additional 1 million unregistered Afghan refugees reside in Pakistan. UNHCR has facilitated voluntary repatriation for more than one million Afghan refugees since 2006; however, returns have scaled down in recent years

given the fragile security situation and limited socio-economic prospects in Afghanistan.

Following the May 2012 International Conference on Afghanistan in Geneva and the adoption of the Quadripartite Regional Solutions Strategy for Afghanistan (endorsed by UNHCR, the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan), UNHCR and the Government of Pakistan developed, and are implementing, the Afghan Management and Repatriation Strategy. The strategy provides a comprehensive approach to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and focuses on voluntary repatriation of Afghans to Afghanistan, improved conditions for Afghan refugee populations in Pakistan, and increased and coordinated resettlement of vulnerable Afghan refugees. The Government of Pakistan has also recognised the need to regularise the status of some categories of Afghan refugees who are not able to return.

There is wide recognition that resettlement of Afghans from Pakistan has not received due attention in recent years, given the almost exclusive focus on support for voluntary repatriation. UNHCR and resettlement states, however, have identified Afghans in Pakistan as a key priority situation that would benefit from focused and coordinated resettlement, going forward. Data from UNHCR's Population Profiling and Verification Survey in 2010-2011 indicates that some 136,000 refugees are in need of resettlement, including more than 4,200 who will need resettlement in 2013.

At the request of UNHCR, Australia agreed to lead the coordination of international refugee resettlement activities for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. As a first step, Australia established a Contact Group comprising resettlement countries and UNHCR in Islamabad, similar to the Iran

Contact Group in Tehran. UNHCR developed a Terms of Reference for the Group that was shared with resettlement states.

The Pakistan Contact Group was 'launched' in October 2012 during a side meeting at ExCom that focused on the Quadripartite Solutions Strategy. The side meeting included representatives from the Governments of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. By launching the Contact Group during ExCom, the Group conveyed a strong message to Pakistan that the Contact Group efforts would be an integral part of the Solutions Strategy.

Through our Ambassador in Islamabad, Australia engaged key Government of Pakistan interlocutors to advise them of the founding of the Group and to reiterate the international community's desire to work with Pakistan to share the responsibility of Afghan refugees by increasing resettlement.

The first meeting of the Pakistan Contact Group took place in December 2012 in Islamabad. Chaired by Australia's Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Peter Heyward, the meeting's participants included UNHCR regional representative Neill Wright and representatives from the U.S., Canada, the UK, Japan and New Zealand. The Contact Group has since held two follow up meetings, with Sweden, Brazil and Norway joining as new members. IOM also participates in these meetings, given that discussions focus on logistical issues.

The participation of additional states in the Group demonstrates to the Government of Pakistan the willingness of the international community to proactively share and manage the Afghan refugee situation in support of the Solutions Strategy. This will also help UNHCR and partners to advance

discussions with the Government of Pakistan so as to achieve objectives for this priority situation.

The Contact Group has provided an opportunity for UNHCR to provide updates on its activities, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region where UNHCR is involved in outreach identification. Notable challenges discussed at these meetings have included:

- Difficulties securing exit permits;
- Referral matters, e.g. using videoconferencing for interviews, and e-health facilities; and,
- Incorrect reporting on resettlement programs and impact on the relevant resettlement country and UNHCR operations.

At its last meeting in April 2013, the Contact Group discussed the importance of maintaining and enhancing protection space in Pakistan given the impact of troop withdrawal in 2014 from Afghanistan. It is expected that internal displacement will increase in Afghanistan as a result of the troop withdrawal, which will reduce interest in voluntary repatriation. UNHCR's primary concern, therefore, is to preserve asylum space in Pakistan. ■

## Training to enhance the quality of Congolese resettlement submissions

Submitted by UNHCR

In 2012, UNHCR introduced a multi-year plan of action to resettle some 50,000 Congolese (DRC) refugees from the Great Lakes region over the next four years as part of efforts to develop a common

sub-regional approach to the resettlement of this refugee population. Recognizing that maximizing the acceptance rates of these refugees' cases is critical to achieving this goal, in May 2013 UNHCR organized a week-long training entitled "Enhancing the quality of resettlement submissions of Congolese (DRC) refugees" in Nairobi.

Participants included 25 resettlement staff from Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and southern Africa who are involved in preparing Congolese (DRC) cases for resettlement. The training was the product of a collaborative effort between UNHCR and resettlement partners, as presentations and workshop sessions were facilitated by UNHCR staff and consultants, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), and the Canadian and Australian High Commissions in Nairobi.

The training sessions were aimed at increasing the capacity of UNHCR staff to effectively and expeditiously prepare resettlement submissions for Congolese, as submission targets and acceptance rates are directly affected by the quality and quantity of resettlement submissions. A number of topics were addressed in the training sessions, including: interviewing in the context of trauma, interviewing to ensure credibility, anti-fraud awareness, the role of Best Interests of the Child Assessments in resettlement, and enhancing the quality of Resettlement Registration Forms (RRFs).

Participants engaged in in-depth discussions and exercises related to each of these themes. They learned new interviewing techniques for sensitively eliciting information about specific needs related to trauma, addressing credibility concerns by understanding the impact of trauma on memory,

and resolving complex family composition issues during the resettlement interview.

Through case studies presented by UNHCR, participants also identified ways to ensure integrity, quality, and efficient resettlement processing through fraud awareness and prevention. They further learned from the Canadian and Australian High Commissions' practical techniques for assessing the validity of identity documents.

Presentations by UNHCR and PRM provided participants with further guidance on incorporating Best Interests of the Child Assessments into resettlement referrals. UNHCR and USCIS also discussed strategies for effective writing to enhance the quality of information related to refugees' biodata, claim, and resettlement needs in both standard and abridged RRFs.

The overall feedback on the training was very positive, and participants commented on the value of the information they received. They were also appreciative of the variety of topics and the diverse perspectives of the presenters and facilitators throughout the week. They agreed that the topics were timely and relevant. As one participant summarized in her evaluation, "It was clear that everyone had put a great deal of effort into organizing it, and the effort paid off with a really interesting, insightful, and useful week." ■

## Norway's first mission to interview Congolese in Uganda's Nakivale settlements

Submitted by the Government of Norway

The Norwegian mission was excited to enter Uganda's Nakivale settlements in March 2013, as the first country to conduct in-camp resettlement interviews of Congolese refugees. As the sun rose quickly over Nakivale, one could easily imagine this vast landscape hosting more than 64,000 refugees, with Congolese being the largest nationality with more than 32,000 individuals. Nakivale is Uganda's oldest and largest refugee settlement, covering over 180 square kilometers. Settlements are scattered throughout the lush landscape and can be easily mistaken for local villages.

The Congolese arrive here in still increasing numbers, after walking for weeks through the unwelcoming forests of DRC. An overwhelming number of women and children hang around the reception centres for new arrivals, waiting for their refugee status and an allocation of land. These persons are extremely vulnerable, not least due to the mere fact that their lack of male support is visible in the way they construct their huts and houses around Nakivale.

Entering the reception centres, this is however not your first impression. Children flock around, watching curiously, smiling and playing as they try to catch your attention. When the dust settles, you might nonetheless notice their dirty faces, filthy clothes and the pressing sense of poverty resting over their existence.

The refugee caseload presented by UNHCR fit Norway's profile well, with a particular focus



*A female headed household, easily spotted by the construction techniques.*



*Children of all ages fight for attention at the reception centres in Nakivale.*



*All children over the age of seven have the right to be heard and are therefore given the opportunity to be interviewed separately.*

on women and girls at risk. High quality RRFs and a strong focus on family composition during registration allowed for efficient interviews by the mission and targeted use of DNA testing. Information about the use of DNA testing is included in our plenary briefings for refugees. Interestingly, this resulted in a few persons coming forward with additional or clarified information about their family relations. Such cases were still accepted, as long as the new information was found credible.

Norway's accepted caseload included 13 unaccompanied minors, mainly orphaned siblings. In addition to UNHCR's Best Interest Determination, Norway always makes an individual evaluation of a child's best interest. All children over the age of seven are thus given the opportunity to speak to the interviewer separately.

Norway accepted a total of 111 persons from Nakivale, with an addition 64 persons selected from Kampala. Although Norway's 2013 quota for Congolese refugees in Uganda was 150 persons, Norway's subquotas have certain flexibility thus enabling acceptance of all 175 persons.

Before resettling to Norway, all refugees accepted from Nakivale must attend a four day cultural orientation programme in Mbarara. IOM Oslo reported that the first baby of the group has already been born, with one of the bicultural trainers acting as a midwife. The first families will arrive in Norway mid-June, with municipalities ready to assist. Several Norwegian municipalities have experience working with Congolese refugees, as this is not the first time Norway has set aside a subquota for this group.

While selecting refugees from remote areas such as Nakivale can present logistical challenges, Norway



## U.S. funds Kakuma Transit Camp

Submitted by Larry Bartlett, Government of USA

Following the escalation of violence in the Dadaab, Kenya refugee camp in late 2011, the U.S. embassy deemed the camp unsafe for refugee processing. This effectively ended the U.S. resettlement program from Dadaab and left approximately 16,000 UNHCR-referred individuals awaiting interview.

Once it became clear that the situation in Dadaab was unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future, the U.S. provided funding to UNHCR to build transit facilities to support large-scale movements of refugees from Dadaab to Kakuma Camp in order to continue resettlement processing.

UNHCR designated a portion of land in the Kakuma III section of the camp to be used as a transit center to house individuals during interview by U.S. immigration officials and while they completed other processing steps such as medical exams and pre-departure orientations.

The U.S provided funding to UNHCR for the construction of brick shelters and classrooms that can be reused once a family departs, and funded IOM to manage the three-day bus journey from Dadaab to Kakuma. Refugees who are disabled or otherwise infirm for the three-day bus journey are flown to Dadaab.

The U.S. is approving movement to Kakuma for applicants who have passed initial security checks in order to minimize the length of time refugees would have to stay in Kakuma. Those refugees who are not approved for U.S resettlement will be moved back to Dadaab by IOM, at U.S. government expense.

strongly encourages other resettlement countries to conduct similar missions in the future. The location of the settlements does complicate UNHCR's ability to reach out and to welcome foreign missions. The 1.5 hour drive from Mbarara to the settlements on dirt road -- scattered with potholes, herds of cattle and the occasional monkey -- was, however, professionally organised by UNHCR together with an escort from the Ugandan police.

Being in Nakivale settlements provided us with an exclusive and direct insight into the plight and everyday challenges of the refugees, an understand that could not have been matched by conducting interviews outside the settlements. The challenge of interviewing in Nakivale was easily outweighed by this experience and the professional attitude and support from UNHCR staff. ■



Kakuma Camp Transit Facility in Kenya



Kakuma Camp Transit Facility in Kenya

The first movement of some 700 refugees from Dadaab to Kakuma took place in November 2012 and cases from this group have since begun to depart to the U.S. The second group of 1,000 individuals were transported in April 2013 and were adjudicated soon after their arrival at Kakuma. Construction of transit facilities is almost finished and once complete will house about 2,000 persons. While the U.S. paid UNHCR to construct these facilities principally to enable processing for U.S. resettlement, we invite other countries to consider their use if space is available. We ask that countries coordinate with UNHCR and with the refugee section at the U.S. embassy in Nairobi, should countries be interested in making use of the facilities. ■



Kakuma Camp Transit Facility in Kenya

## Videoconference interviews: The Australian experience

Submitted by the Government of Australia

Following the Netherlands' success in conducting interviews using videoconferencing facilities with refugees at the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania in 2011, UNHCR Resettlement Service called upon states to consider including videoconferencing in their resettlement processing, particularly in situations that present challenges or are not readily accessible.

Encouraged by the success of the Netherlands, Australia was keen to try videoconferencing in our resettlement operations. Iraqi refugees in Syria and refugees in Dadaab refugee camp Kenya presented good caseloads to try videoconferencing, given the large numbers and difficulties accessing these caseloads due to constraints imposed by the host government (in the case of Syria in 2011) and inability to travel due to the security situation (in the case of Dadaab).

Australia's mission in Amman has responsibility for processing Iraqi refugees in Syria and Jordan. This was fortuitous given that Syria would deteriorate some months later into a large-scale humanitarian crisis presenting major operational challenges. Our mission in Nairobi processes all our refugee caseloads from the East and Horn of Africa and has coverage for 48 countries. A key factor for our mission in Nairobi taking on videoconferencing was that travel to a number of these countries is not recommended. Also, videoconferencing presents a good option from the point of view of financial savings, not to mention the practicality of travel in a vast region.



*A videoconferencing interview with Ethiopian clients in Dadaab. Photo submitted by the Government of Australia.*

Since September 2011, Australia has interviewed 3,000 applicants using this facility. We expect that this arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future given the current volatile security situation in Syria. At this point in time, videoconferencing is the only option available to applicants in Syria.

Our mission in Nairobi first began videoconferencing in order to process an emergency rescue visa for a client in Dadaab in September 2012, as there was a travel advisory against travelling to that part of Kenya. Since then, Nairobi has continued to interview clients in Dadaab via videoconferencing, at about 5 cases a week. Currently Nairobi is using videoconferencing to interview Ethiopian refugees in Dadaab. The mission also interviewed DRC nationals in Tanzania (as a once-off) when UNHCR had temporary video equipment in that country.

Videoconferencing in Syria requires a polycom Digital Video Conference (DVC) unit that runs off the internet. The unit requires a minimum internet speed of 512 kilobits per second, with a stable and static internet provider address. UNHCR calls into the mission's DVC via the dedicated internet



provider address. In Nairobi, our officers use the UNHCR office and their facilities, with calls made over UNHCR's secure system.

Amman reports that videoconferencing works very well: "The picture and sound quality is, at most times, excellent, and its operation is only affected when the internet has been cut off in Syria. The mission is able to undertake a full and complete interview with the client over the DVC as if the interview were face to face. In fact there are very few limitations."

UNHCR gathers client documents and scans these through to the office in Amman before the commencement of each interview using a high quality resolution. In most cases our mission is able to determine whether the documents are genuine or not. In cases where there are concerns, the mission clarifies these details over the DVC and may request that original documents be sent to the mission directly. Our mission has reported very few technical glitches.

In Africa, videoconferencing is only available in two locations, Dadaab in Kenya and Massawa in Ethiopia. The Nairobi mission is able to significantly expedite processing of clients, as there is no waiting period for travels to these locations, particularly in relation to emergency referrals. Nairobi's experience is that in some instances, interviews by videoconference can take longer than they would face to face. Some 200 cases have been interviewed by Nairobi thus far.

Our mission in Amman has commended the UNHCR office in Syria for their cooperation and support. UNHCR has contributed significantly to the efficient and successful operation of these processes and for the large numbers of refugees who

have been interviewed. Our mission in Nairobi has commented that UNHCR has been equally accommodating in terms of allowing use of their resources, interpreters and printing and scanning of forms. The mission has also commented that IOM has been helpful in relation to coordinating clients which ensures that they arrive for interviews.

Comments from our missions in relation to the partnership with UNHCR include:

- "We have been able to interview some 3,000 refugees who would otherwise have not had any option in Syria."
- "Considering UNHCR is operating within a war zone, there have been very few technical glitches."
- "UNHCR has been extremely accommodating and without their assistance it would not have been possible to interview such large numbers."
- "UNHCR has appreciated that we are willing to videoconference to ensure that clients in places where resettlement teams are unable to travel are still being able to be resettled."

Refugee clients have also provided positive feedback and have commented that, as they have no other alternative, being able to 'tell their story' via videoconferencing has made a difference for which they are grateful. Refugee applicants in Africa have been quick to 'embrace the technology.'

Despite the success of this technology, some challenges remain:

- Longer than usual interview times, in some instances;
- Sometimes a reticence on the part of refugee applicants to discuss sensitive issues;
- Inability to establish family relationships due to poor image quality (in Africa); and

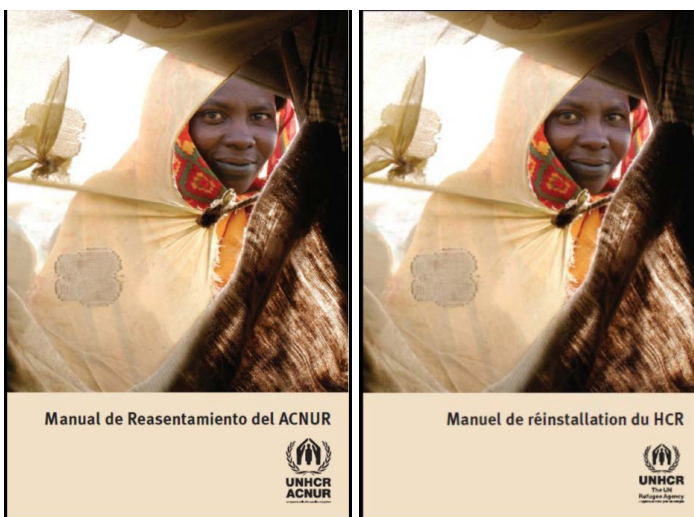
- Black-outs during interviews due to a drop in internet quality (in Africa).

As we continue to take refugees and their families from areas that are difficult to access, our missions are of the view that it would be beneficial to expand videoconferencing, in particular to other locations in Africa where there are heightened security risks. Australia is also exploring interview videoconferencing for applicants in Quetta, Pakistan. ■

## UNHCR publishes the Resettlement Handbook in French & Spanish

Submitted by UNHCR

UNHCR is pleased to announce that the 2011 Resettlement Handbook has been translated into French and Spanish. The handbook advises UNHCR staff on policy and procedure and is a key



*Le Manuel de réinstallation du HCR and el Manual de Reasentamiento del ACNUR are both available online : [www.unhcr.org/resettlementhandbook](http://www.unhcr.org/resettlementhandbook)*

reference tool for resettlement states and NGOs. These translations ensure that French and Spanish-speaking resettlement partners have easy access to the handbook's content, and to the online resources linked to the handbook.

A limited number of French and Spanish copies have been printed. If you have questions or wish to request copies, please contact the Resettlement Service at [HQRSGRND@unhcr.org](mailto:HQRSGRND@unhcr.org) or UNHCR offices in resettlement countries. ■

## Reflections on refugee integration: The U.S. experience

Submitted by Erol Kekic, Director, Immigration and Refugee Program, Church World Service, United States

Refugee resettlement is frequently described as a tool of refugee protection and a durable solution. Yet, to date there are few tools available to measure the “durability” of such solution globally, and particularly in the U.S. context.

CWS took a poll among our staff, the practitioners of resettlement, about their perceptions of resettlement and integration. We asked the following questions:

- In the context of a durable solution, is integration into the U.S. society the ultimate goal of the resettlement program?
- How do we as practitioners know if we achieve this goal?
- At what point in time (of a refugee's journey) does s/he feel part of the new community, and why?

But what is integration? There is currently no one definition or agreement on what integration means and there are different interpretations at the all levels. In the U.S. alone, in 50 states there probably are 500 different environments to integrate into. So we agreed to look for commonalities rather than differences.

We examined the Ager Strang Framework on Indicators of Integration that focuses on common understanding of integration (<http://web.archive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/dpr28.pdf>) associated with the social rights of refugees as rooted in 1951 Convention.

The Framework argues that while the Convention does not apply to refugees with status equivalent to nationals in their country of resettlement, its focus on social rights - employment, housing, education, health – describes the concept of integration. Therefore, articulating refugee rights defines the foundation of refugee integration. Refugees arrive to the U.S. with a “refugee” status and are eligible to adjust to a “Permanent Resident” after one year, and to citizen after five years – the equalization of rights with the native born. By this definition, the U.S. meets all benchmarks of refugee integration.

But what happens between the time when refugees arrive and the time when they have an opportunity to become U.S. citizens shapes their sense of belonging and the level of their “integration.” While citizenship in itself may indicate integration, we thought that engagement in civic life of the receiving community (by registering to vote, voting, participating on school boards and committees, etc), would possibly be a better indicator of integration, but harder to measure.



Photo courtesy of Erol Kekic, World Church Service, U.S.

The U.S. is the only major resettlement country does not take the “integration potential” of refugees into consideration when making the selection of cases, and this is a critically important component of our program – it is a life saving operation, available to the most vulnerable regardless of their level of education, employability, etc.

But at the same time, we recognize the limits and realities of absorption potential of the receiving communities in the U.S. In the absence of a more robust support mechanism for refugees and those working with them, what are the chances of successful integration?

If integration is achieved when refugees retain parts of their culture while taking on aspects of the host community’s own tradition – then both the host community and refugees have responsibility for integration (Ager/Strang). So while the emphasis is usually on refugees to “integrate,” that is only possible if the segments of host society, including public and private sectors, religious institutions, health and education systems – all participate in the process. And that is where one of the most serious obstacles to refugee integration post-resettlement lies – in a country as diverse geographically and

politically as the U.S., it is rather difficult to reach all sectors of society to be on board with integrating refugees.

In order to measure integration outcomes for refugees, one would have to start with a baseline – the outcomes of the host community – and that raises a question: If one is integrating into a community, what are the standards and the expectations of that society that provide some basis for cohesion? CWS defined integration as: a long-term process, through which refugees and host communities communicate effectively, function together and enrich each other, expand employment and economic opportunities, and achieve mutual respect and understanding.

What we understood is that some basic indicators must be identified as benchmarks along the refugees' journey from the moment they arrive to the U.S., until they are able to fully participate in the civic life of the society they live in. Some of these indicators could be grouped based upon the Framework, but in the U.S. context – one of a transient, constantly changing society, where people pursue their pathways to happiness where and how they chose – there is an obvious need to go beyond basics. Different states offer different benefits through programs designed to “integrate” and some simply offer more than others – making integration difficult to measure. The missing link is a central coordinating point, tracking progress over the years and constantly changing the system to facilitate faster and more thorough integration.

### **Conclusions:**

If the ultimate goal of resettlement is integration, and if full integration into the U.S. society benefits both refugees and host communities, more

intentional investment to boost core domains of integration would be monies well spent. The foundation is there with the U.S. laws, but the nature of the program could use a facelift.

Resettlement is a business of managing expectations – those of refugees arriving and those of host communities. When we conduct cultural orientations in Africa, we deal with questions of “rights” in America and where they fall for men, women and children. We rarely have the opportunity to do the same with entire host communities in the U.S. That is why we believe that community structures, including churches, schools, volunteer groups play an incredibly important role of “ambassadors” between the new and existing members of the community. Without their direct engagement, resettlement can hardly result in integration.

Also, the basic indicators of integration – employment, housing, education and health – all demand action EARLY in the resettlement process. Robust investment in early services is likely to result in earlier integration. The U.S. program is rooted in access to social rights and based on core American values of hard work and independence. The program is conceptualized in a way that meets basic criteria required for refugees to achieve full rights equal to those of natives, and by doing so, integrate. The process by which that happens, however, is long, fragmented and largely depends on local circumstances, sometimes including personalities and political climate at the local level. More needs to be done to unify this process if refugees are ever to achieve their full potential in the U.S. and benefit not just themselves but our society at large.

What we as practitioners can do to start measuring the “speed” of integration requires some fresh



Photo courtesy of Erol Kekic, World Church Service, U.S.

## Cities that say Yes! Welcoming resettled refugees in Europe

Submitted by: Rachel Westerby, City Coordinator, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)

Resettlement in Europe is growing. The past two years have seen Germany and Belgium join the ‘family’ of European resettlement countries, boosting European resettlement capacity by 400 persons in 2013 alone.

Although national governments establish resettlement programmes and decide which refugees will be admitted onto their territories, it is local authorities and communities that provide welcome and support to refugees once they arrive. The success of European resettlement programmes thus depends on the commitment and support of municipalities, cities, and regions, and of local communities and citizens.

By building a resettlement network of European local and regional authorities and their civil society partners, ICMC’s SHARE Project acknowledges the crucial importance of local and regional actors in increasing and improving European resettlement. The UK city of Sheffield, the lead SHARE city, currently receives 90 resettled refugees every year. If 50 European cities were to follow Sheffield’s example, then Europe’s resettlement capacity would be increased by 4,500 places every year, almost doubling Europe’s current resettlement offer.

So what does it take to make a city say ‘Yes!’ to resettlement? The SHARE Project seeks to answer this question in the new SHARE publication “A City Says Yes! - Reflections on the experiences of the Save Me campaign to promote refugee resettlement in Germany.” Co-produced by ICMC and PRO

thinking and innovation. We already collect information about the progress our clients make, but data tends to be separated by the funding source and rarely “mixed and matched.” We will have to place differences aside and create a clear measurement of the success of integration into the U.S.

If resettlement is an individual experience, integration is also influenced by a number of factors, many of which are personal. It is difficult to claim one exact point in time when “integration” happens. Nevertheless, looking at commonalities among different groups and locations where they settle offers a good glimpse at the prospect of integration as a time-bound idea. More work will be needed to correlate various factors impacting the length of the integration process (CWS is currently undergoing the second phase of its research in partnership with Dr. Ager and Columbia University. A larger study is also in consideration). ■

ASYL, an independent human rights organisation based in Frankfurt, the publication gathers the tools and approaches of 'Save Me', a grassroots campaign that began in 2008 in Munich and now has branches in just under 60 towns and cities across Germany.

The rationale of the campaign is that if many cities say 'Yes!' to the admission of refugees via a resettlement programme, national and state policies will have to address the issue in response. Local 'Save Me' groups build public and political support for resettlement by recruiting local people as mentors who pledge their time to support resettled refugees after they arrive, and by lobbying municipal and city councils to declare their support for resettlement and for establishing a local resettlement programme.

As of 2013, over 7,000 volunteers have pledged their support to the campaign, and 51 city councils have passed resolutions in which they state their support for a national refugee resettlement programme and their willingness to receive resettled refugees in their towns and cities. 'Save Me' has been particularly successful in engaging support from across the political spectrum and outside of the 'usual suspects', such as that from churches, trade unions, students, theatre groups, cultural institutions, NGOs, political activists and others.

Following the establishment of the German quota resettlement programme in 2012, 'Save Me' continues to advocate for an increase from the current 300 places each year, and for the improved integration of resettled refugees into German society. 'Save Me' mentors and volunteers provide direct support and friendship for resettled refugees, and continue to publish information, hold events and run activities to raise public awareness about refugee protection and resettlement.

The 'Save Me' approach has great value for a Europe in which a common agreement on resettlement numbers does not yet exist. In a time of prolonged financial crisis and difficult choices in Europe, the 'Save Me' model can create public support and political will to offer protection to those most in need. Its grassroots, local nature creates welcoming and engaged local communities in which resettled refugees can be both well received and supported. It builds local support for refugee protection, directly engages citizens in refugee assistance, and establishes the positive and cooperative relationships between local actors that will benefit the successful integration of all refugees and newcomers in European towns and cities. 'Save Me' also gives voice to local perspectives at a national level, promoting local people, cities and towns as advocates for refugee protection in Europe.

In early May 2013, and to mark the launch of the "A City Says Yes!" publication, the SHARE Project brought 100 resettlement actors and stakeholders drawn from European institutions, city and regional authorities, international organisations, NGOs, media and resettled refugees together in Brussels for a half-day event. Co-hosted by the Committee of the Regions, the institution representing regions and cities in the European Union, and chaired by the Mayor of Lisbon Mr. Antonio Costa, the agenda included contributions from Rui Tavares MEP, the Deputy Mayor of Aachen Hilde Scheidt and Abdulkareem Abdulkareem, an Iraqi former engineer resettled to Munich in 2009 and featured in the 'A City Says Yes!' publication. Speakers also included representatives from PRO ASYL, IOM, the Portuguese Refugee Council, the Eurocities network, ICMC, the European Council on Refugees & Exiles, UNHCR, City of Sanctuary and others.

In addition to launching the new SHARE publication, the event agenda also provided a platform to explore further the role of local and regional actors in mobilising support for refugee resettlement and influencing resettlement and integration policy. Speakers presented concrete examples of movements and initiatives to build awareness of refugee protection amongst local populations and strategies to create welcoming communities.

ICMC Europe's "Cities that Care, Cities that SHARE - the SHARE Project" is an 18-month programme to build a resettlement network of European regions, cities, municipalities and their civil society partners. SHARE is co-funded by the Pilot Project on Resettlement (2011) of the European Commission.

To find out more about the SHARE Project, download a copy of the 'A City Says Yes!' publication and the final report, visit [www.resettlement.eu/page/share-project](http://www.resettlement.eu/page/share-project)

For more information about SHARE, please contact Rachel Westerby, City Coordinator at ICMC Europe (city.coordinator@icmc.net). ■

## Welcome House Centre for Refugees in Canada

By Chris Friesen, Director-Settlement Services, ISSofBC, Canada. Originally published in Issue 18 (May 2013) of the Kensington – Cedar Cottage Neighbour community newspaper.

Amal, married and mother of three daughters and one son, was living in Baghdad when the U.S.-led bombing began and Saddam Hussein's government fell. She witnessed her 27-year-old brother, one of the first sectarian war victims in Iraq, being shot in the head in his car. She is still haunted by what she saw.

As the violence increased, she and her husband arranged for human smugglers to take their family to Syria and onward to Turkey. In Turkey they received UNHCR refugee status and were interviewed by Canadian officials for resettlement to Canada.

In 2011 they boarded a plane bound for Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada. When the plane landed in Toronto en route to Vancouver, Amal told her children, "Here the fear stops; don't be afraid anymore." Amal and her family stayed two weeks at Immigrant Services Society of BC's (ISSofBC) Welcome House before settling into an apartment. Now, the children are attending school and she and her husband are enrolled in ESL classes and working at odd jobs. Amal defines her success by her children's success: "In Canada there are so many opportunities."

Amal is among thousands of refugees who had to flee their homes and seek safety in Canada. She had to navigate throughout the City of Vancouver to locate all of the resources they needed to help them through their adaptation and settlement phase,



including applying for a bank account and social insurance number, primary healthcare and trauma support services, supports for their older children, first language support services, legal advice and introductory English language classes.

Transitions like Amal's are about to get easier: ISSofBC is building a new facility, a fully integrated regional service hub that will bring together organizations, public institutions, government services and programs under one roof to address the immediate needs of refugees and immigrants arriving in the province.

ISSofBC's vision for their new "Welcome House Centre" is simple: locate all the supports that a refugee would need during their first year in Canada under one roof in close proximity to transit, a Sky Train station. This 58,575 square foot facility will include 28 units (160-200 beds) of first (2 week) and second stage (up to one year) housing units; a primary health care clinic; a refugee trauma support and treatment centre; child minding space; immigrant refugee youth drop-in space; a food bank; community kitchen/multiple meeting spaces; free law clinic; first-language settlement support staff offices; ESL classes; a teaching facility linked to several post secondary institutions; a credit union banking kiosk; and ISSofBC corporate service offices.

A multi-purpose government outreach office will include staff from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Ministry of Social Development, and Service Canada. Construction of the facility is slated to start in late 2013 for a June 20, 2015 opening on World Refugee Day. Future co-location tenants will include the Inland Refugee Society, Settlement Orientation Services, the Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture, and Mt Pleasant Family Place's



Circle of Care and Connection Early Childhood Development Refugee program.

Formed in 1968, ISSofBC is the oldest, not-for-profit immigrant serving agency in British Columbia. The organization pioneered what is commonly referred to as “settlement services” and is a founder of many of BC’s immigrant-serving agencies. Today it is one of the largest multicultural immigrant serving agencies in Canada, serving over 30,000 immigrants and refugees annually, with 430 staff in 14 sites, 1,000 active volunteers, and a \$23 million annual operating budget derived from three levels of government, community foundations, United Way and social enterprise. ■



## New Zealand’s New Refugee Centre

Article submitted by the Government of New Zealand.

The Government of New Zealand has reaffirmed the six week reception programme for refugees in the whole-of-government Refugee Resettlement Strategy launched in December 2012.

New Zealand has operated a refugee quota since 1987, when Cabinet endorsed an annual intake of quota refugees. New Zealand now resettles 750 refugees each year as part of our international commitment to UNHCR.

Refugees resettling in New Zealand spend their initial six weeks at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, where they receive an orientation, English language lessons, a comprehensive health assessment and other settlement support services.

Last month, the Minister of Immigration, Hon. Michael Woodhouse, announced commitment of operating expenditure to rebuild the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre in Auckland, NZ.

The Mangere Centre, led by the Refugee Quota Branch of Immigration New Zealand, also houses agencies such as Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand Red Cross Refugee Services, Refugees as Survivors, and Auckland Health Board Services.

The Centre has played a crucial role in helping refugees adapt to their new life in New Zealand, but many of the ageing buildings were beyond repair. The facilities were built during World War II and accommodate up to 160 individuals. The new facility will be designed to accommodate up to 192 beds, and will include provision to accommodate up to 300 individuals.

“The decision to rebuild the centre demonstrates the Government’s strong commitment to preparing refugees for New Zealand life and their move into the community,” Mr. Woodhouse said.

The government is contracting the private sector to construct the new facilities, with the government leasing the buildings back over the long term. The new funding is part of the costs to lease and

maintain the new buildings. Mr. Woodhouse said he hoped the arrangement will see new and upgraded buildings by the end of 2014. The new facility will be built in stages to enable “business as usual” operations to continue during the construction period.

New Zealand’s Refugee Resettlement Strategy is aimed at delivering better outcomes for refugees settling in New Zealand, including increasing the number of refugees in paid employment and increasing their educational achievements.

In 2012-2013, New Zealand achieved its resettlement quota, with 751 persons resettled, including 7 from Africa, 539 from Asia and the Pacific (mainly Bhutanese and Burmese), 97 from MENA and 108 from the Americas. In addition to the refugees accepted under the refugee quota, New Zealand resettled 94 Afghans in April 2013 under a special assistance package offered to Afghans employed as interpreters by the NZ Defence Force Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. In total, New Zealand accepted 30 interpreters and 64 dependents (wives and children).

In recognition of their settlement needs, the interpreters and their families were offered the same services and support provisions on arrival to New Zealand as those granted residence under the refugee quota programme, including completion of the orientation programme at Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre along with the May refugee quota intake. The interpreters and their families are being settled in Hamilton and Palmerston North and will continue to be supported for their first year in New Zealand by the New Zealand Red Cross Refugee Services. ■

## Colombian refugees reunited in Canada

© Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Article written by Julie Bell. Originally published in the Winter 2013 edition of *A Common Place*.

Julie Bell is senior writer/editor for MCC Canada.

Joanie Peters is a photographer in Winnipeg, Man.

On Sept. 29, 1996, as Marly Yanez and her family gathered in their home in northeast Colombia for a birthday celebration, armed men stormed in and began shooting. Yanez, who was 9, watched in horror as her mother was killed. “They said she was working for the government,” Yanez says. “But the only thing my mom did was sell food. She sold food to everyone. She was innocent.”

Caught in Colombia’s long-running armed conflict between the government and paramilitary and guerrilla groups, the family’s sense of safety and home was shattered. Fearing further retribution, Yanez’s father sent Yanez and her three older sisters to separate locations to live with relatives and her brother to another region of Colombia. “And then we didn’t even have family,” she says. For years, she and her sisters lived in fear, hiding their identities and moving frequently. Her brother, who became a police officer, was killed.

Yanez says things began to change for her when she and her husband, Arbey Gutierrez, were granted refugee status by the Canadian government. They arrived in Calgary, Alberta, in July 2007.

It was a bittersweet time. Yanez was thrilled by the prospect of new opportunity in Canada, but haunted by feelings of responsibility for her sisters left behind in Colombia. She says the family had vowed that the first one to make it to safety would



Photograph by Joanie Peters. © Mennonite Central Committee.

clear the way for the others. “When I came to Canada with my husband I was the lucky one. I was the first one to get a better lifestyle and I had to help the others.”

Within days of arriving in Calgary, Yanez was going from church to church. She asked for help with bringing nine members of her family to Canada – her three sisters, their husbands and three children. “We met lots of people who said we are sorry for your situation, but we have a small church and we cannot bring so large a family,” she says. At the same time, she was working long hours as a cleaning woman to help support her family in Colombia and consoling her sisters as they waited to come.

In 2009, after almost two years of searching, she heard about MCC and found the MCC Alberta office in Calgary. Orlando Vasquez, now MCC

Alberta’s program director, says MCC Alberta staff understood Yanez’s distress. Refugee families “have survived war and persecution in their home country,” he says. “Then they come here and have relatives overseas going through that problem and they don’t have a way to help.”

Since 1979, MCC Canada’s refugee assistance program has enabled congregations and other sponsoring groups to fund one-year sponsorships for more than 70,000 people resettling in Canada. The program matches sponsors with refugees who qualify for resettlement in Canada and helps both parties with information, training and other supports. MCC can’t help meet the needs of every refugee. Due to recent legislative changes, for instance, today Yanez and her sisters would no longer be eligible to apply for refugee status in Canada while living in Colombia. But throughout the years, MCC has worked alongside refugees to help them understand

their options under current law, learn about available resources and connect with sponsors when possible.

At first, staff at MCC said they might be able to help bring one couple to Canada. Yanez was devastated. “For me to choose just one was very difficult,” she recalls. “I said all of them are in danger.” Yanez persisted, asking MCC to reconsider and saying she would pay \$5,000 of the sponsorship costs. Moved by her determination, MCC staff members searched for sponsorship options, including approaching a Mennonite church more than 600 miles north of Calgary. The La Crete Christian Fellowship (LCCF) has an emergency assistance fund for refugees.

Jake Elias has been a member of LCCF for almost 20 years and was treasurer when the fund was established. He says it’s designed for cases such as Yanez’s. “MCC is the relief wing of our church and it does great work. They shouldn’t have to rely on donations from individuals. We churches have to do our part,” he says. The LCCF fund covered the bulk of the costs of bringing Yanez’s family to Calgary. Yanez contributed \$5,000 from her income.

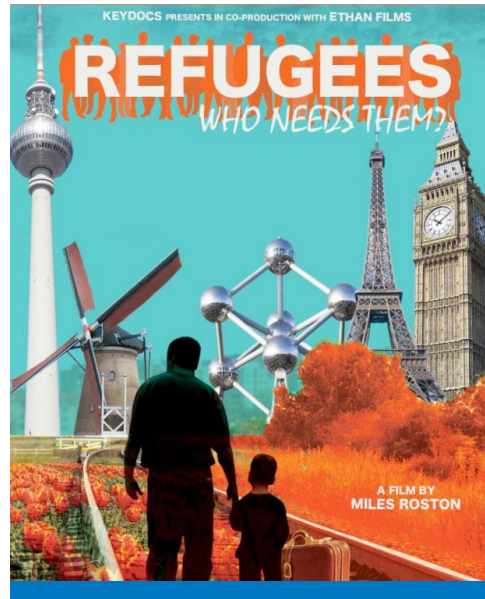
In July 2010, the nine newcomers arrived – co-sponsored as refugees by Yanez and the LCCF. “I wasn’t alone anymore,” Yanez says, recalling that moment. “I was feeling like this is really my country, because my family is here.” As she sits in her home, surrounded by family, Yanez describes MCC and LCCF as gifts from God.

“The best thing that ever happened to me is to find them,” Yanez says. “Many churches said there’s nothing we can do. MCC didn’t say no. They said we will see. We will try to find a solution. And they did. What they did I will never forget.” ■

## Refugees: Who Needs Them? A documentary from the Netherlands

Written and directed by Miles Roston

Produced by KeyDocs. Released May 2013



As Europe descends into fiscal crisis, the hard line against immigrants and refugees has tightened. Nowhere more is this true than in the Netherlands, now in the grip of anti-immigration and anti-refugee rhetoric that has made the country a pariah on the European continent. Into this world come invited - or resettled refugees: Fathi an activist escaping death threats from Gaddafi, Fasil - a journalist from Ethiopia sentenced to life for condemning fraudulent elections, Li Zhu - a Falun Gong Buddhist sentenced to prison and beatings for demonstrating. As they campaign for justice for their countries, they battle a hostile climate in their new home.

The trailer for “Refugees: Who Needs Them?” can be found online: <http://keydocs.nl/en/movie/refugees-who-needs-them> ■



Deng Thiak Adut, a former child soldier, now a lawyer in Sydney, Australia.

## New Land, New Life: A documentary about refugees resettled to Australia

Submitted by Paul Power, CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia

The Horn of Africa Relief and Development Agency (HARDA), an Australian NGO which works to support refugees and migrants from Horn of Africa countries, has just produced a new documentary that highlights the inspiring stories of five African Australians who were resettled as refugees. Entitled *New Land, New Life*, the film documents their escape from persecution and violence, their efforts to establish a new life in Australia and their many contributions to their new country.

Among those featured in the documentary are Deng Thiak Adut, a former child soldier from South Sudan who arrived in Australia unable to read or write and is now a criminal lawyer; Girma Feyissa Dabi, who walked for 26 days to escape Ethiopia after his father was imprisoned and tortured and who is now a finance manager for Mitsubishi

Australia; and Idil Abdullahi, a former refugee from Somalia who was resettled under Australia’s Woman at Risk program and now works with community organisations as an arts officer as well as exhibiting and selling her own artworks.

*New Land, New Life* was funded by the Australian Government through its Diversity and Social Cohesion Program. The documentary can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3tqm4u6\\_Qo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3tqm4u6_Qo) ■



## Rohingya art exhibition

Submitted by the Government of Ireland's Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, Department of Justice and Equality

The Rohingya community collaborated with local artist Elsie Nolan and were supported by St. Catherine's Community Services Centre and Carlow County Development Partnership. The project was funded by UNUM, the Carlow Enterprise Board and the European Refugee Fund supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and POBAL.

The artwork was developed by the Rohingya community, originally from Burma, who were resettled in Carlow, Ireland in June 2009. The



Mr. Robi Alam presents his artwork.

artwork focuses on their culture and their journey to Ireland.

More images from the Rohingya art exhibition can be found online: [www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/resettlement-irishresettlementevents-en](http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/resettlement-irishresettlementevents-en) ■



Ms. Noor Jahan presents her artwork.

## WUSC: A unique model of refugee sponsorship

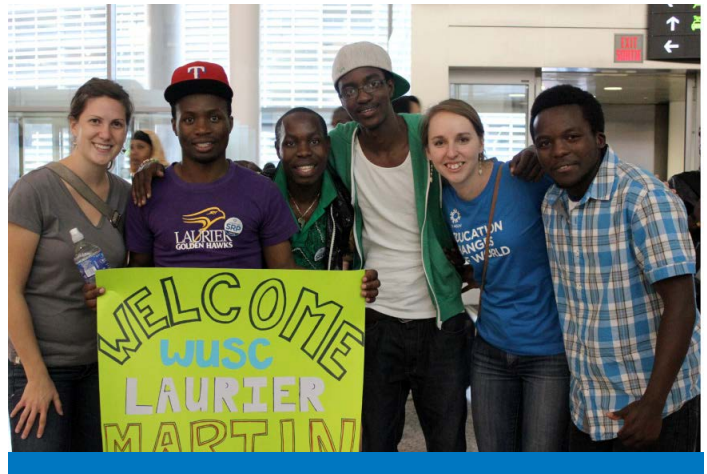
Submitted by Michelle Manks, Senior Program Officer, World University Service of Canada

The scene of a refugee student touching down in Canada for the first time and being greeted by smiles and welcome signs is a heartwarming scenario, but it doesn't tell the whole story. Very few people know the amount of effort and dedication put into fundraising, public engagement and training before the student even leaves the camp.

For 35 years, World University Service of Canada's Student Refugee Program (SRP) has helped young refugees achieve their educational goals in Canada. Through a unique youth-to-youth sponsorship, the SRP is the only one of its kind that combines post-secondary education with resettlement. The success of this program can be found through WUSC's extensive training and engagement in Canada and in the camps.

WUSC's student-led campus groups are the driving force behind the SRP. They not only raise the necessary funds to bring refugee students to their campus, they're also dedicated to raising awareness about refugee issues on campus and in their community. Fund and awareness raising events have included mock refugee camps, guest speakers, movie nights, dance-a-thons and much more.

This unique model of refugee sponsorship has allowed students in Canada and in refugee camps to connect with one another. Sponsored students are assured they will not only have financial support, but academic and social support during their first years in Canada. The sponsored students in turn



teach young Canadians the realities of life in refugee camps, changing their perspective on the world.

While raising funds for the program makes up a large part of the Local WUSC Committees activities, what happens once the sponsored student arrives? WUSC provides in-depth capacity building to equip Canadian students and faculty with the skills and knowledge necessary to support their sponsored students throughout the school year. Students receive training in cultural and educational integration, campus and community mobilization, employment access and volunteer training.

WUSC's presence in refugee camps for over 30 years provides consistency and hope for refugees. We've learned that the SRP helps to motivate students to stay and perform well in school, engage parents to support education, and provides a tangible avenue for refugees to tap into their potential.

Through the years, we've noticed that males were outnumbering females for sponsorship. As a result, WUSC along with its partners provides in-camp educational programs and resources to help girls and young women stay in school, increase their self-confidence and achieve their academic goals.

Coming to a new country for post-secondary education can be a challenging time for any student, much less a student refugee. Through pre-departure training, WUSC ensures that the incoming refugee students are well-equipped with the skills and resources needed to transition into studying at a Canadian university or college. This 18 month training includes language training and TOEFL preparations, essay writing training, computer classes, and Canadian life courses. ■

## From Camp to Campus: Arash Wared's Journey from Afghanistan to Pakistan to Canada

Submitted by Michelle Manks, Senior Program Officer, World University Service of Canada.

When Arash was 11 years old, the Taliban forced his family to escape Afghanistan to a refugee camp in Peshawar, Pakistan. "Our plan was to stay in the camp until there was a better option for us," says Arash. "But none came."

While in the camp, Arash learned about World University Service of Canada (WUSC) and the Student Refugee Program. As the only youth-to-youth sponsorship program in the world, the SRP helps students come to Canada as a permanent





resident while attending a Canadian university or college. “The SRP motivated me to study. If I kept my grades high, I could be one of the lucky ones awarded the opportunity of a post-secondary education in Canada.”

Over the next several years, Arash worked full-time to help support his family. At the same time he also tried to complete secondary school courses while studying English. “Everyone knew that this was a chance for a better life – a way out of the refugee camps and an opportunity to reach my full potential. The day I was selected by WUSC was the happiest day of my life.”

After a long flight, Arash arrived at Toronto’s Pearson airport where he was greeted by students from the University of Toronto WUSC Local Committee. The student-led committee was there to help Arash adjust to his new life in Canada and support him financially during his first year of study.

Living and studying in a new country can be trying for any person. For Arash, it proved to be a particularly challenging and confusing time as his first week of classes coincided with the 9/11 attacks: “It was difficult, considering how Afghanistan was being portrayed in the media, in addition to the culture shock of living and studying in a new country.”

Arash was beginning to wonder if coming to Canada was the best decision for him. Luckily, Jessie Thomson, Chair of the UofT Local Committee invited Arash to stay with her family during the holidays in her small hometown of Kincardine, Ontario.

Jessie’s family lived on a farm that reminded Arash of his home back in Afghanistan. While spending



time with her family, Arash began to see his Canadian life in a new light. “I had the opportunity to meet farmers and other members of [Jessie’s] rural community. Through our conversations, I was able to see how similar people are, no matter where we come from.”

The time in Kincardine was a turning point for Arash. In the New Year he came back to school with renewed strength and determination to work towards his educational goals.

After graduating in 2006 and working for a few years, Arash went back to school to study international law at the University of Ottawa where he graduated this spring.

“Without the SRP I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

WUSC’s Student Refugee Program has been helping young refugees achieve their dreams for 35 years, providing hope, resources and access to post-secondary education at Canadian universities. Find out how you can learn more and get involved at [wusc.ca/supportsrp](http://wusc.ca/supportsrp).

Learn about Arash and Jessie’s amazing story: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYo-6NzdRD8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYo-6NzdRD8) ■

## Universities, higher education & resettlement

Submitted by the European Resettlement Network

Among those identified by UNHCR as in need of resettlement are many refugees who completed their secondary education or were pursuing higher education studies when they left their country. Research with refugees and the experiences of service providers indicate that, amongst refugees who have completed secondary school, there is strong desire to attend university. Significant numbers of refugees are also highly educated professionals with a desire to re-establish their lives and professional identities. However, refugee access to higher education (education beyond secondary level) remains limited - opportunities for refugees in countries of first asylum to pursue higher education are scarce, and the educational and professional needs of higher educated refugees do not play a prominent role in resettlement programmes.

In its 2012- 2016 Education Strategy (<http://www.unhcr.org/4af7e71d9.html>), UNHCR formulated a new education strategy as a core component of its protection and durable solutions mandate. The new education strategy aims to ensure that opportunities for refugees to participate in post-secondary education are expanded in the coming years. In this promising process, the role of universities and multi-agency cooperation in refugee resettlement process is set to grow.

Worldwide there are various programmes and projects in which higher education institutions, often in collaboration with other agencies, are addressing the needs of higher educated refugees and advancing their access to higher education. As some

examples, universities are engaged in the support of higher education for refugees through a number of ways, including: provision of scholarships and bursaries, orientation and support schemes, hosting threatened scholars, provision of distance education programmes for refugees, and the volunteer work of students active in the field of refugee issues.

The European Resettlement Network's website provides links to these types of projects relating to higher education, refugees and resettlement. These pages are envisaged as a resource for resettlement practitioners and other actors having a stake in higher education for refugees, and a place to share good practice models. Topics include:

- Supporting refugees to access higher education
- Supporting refugees at universities
- University students supporting refugees; and,
- Resources - reports, media articles, past projects & bibliography

You can also watch two short films about refugees, universities and higher education in the Netherlands produced by Foundation for Refugee Students UAF. While the information gathered on these pages is not exhaustive, we hope it gives an overview of the many different ways in which universities can alleviate the barriers that refugees experience in accessing higher education, promote refugee participation in higher education and contribute to advancing the role of higher education in refugee resettlement.

The European Resettlement Network's website can be found here: <http://www.resettlement.eu/page/universities-higher-education-resettlement-0> ■

## Integration and pathways to employment for Burmese refugees in the Czech Republic

© Burma Center Prague

Last year's Human Rights Day, 10 December 2012, had a significant meaning for some refugees of Burmese (Myanmar) origin in Malaysia. On that day, seven families of the Kachin and Chin ethnic groups (25 persons in total) landed in Prague as part of the Czech government's resettlement programme, to start a new beginning under the protection of the Czech Republic. Families were sent directly to the Integration and Asylum Centre in Ústí nad Labem town, to be provided six months of intensive Czech language classes, social and cultural orientation courses and other adaptation training courses before moving to integration flats across the country.

Newly arrived refugees from the third wave of the Czech resettlement programme were also warmly welcomed by resettled refugees who themselves had arrived the Czech Republic from 2008 to 2010. In cooperation with the Czech Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR Czech Republic and the Municipality of Brandýs nad Labem/Stará Boleslav, local NGO Burma Center Prague organized a pre-Christmas gathering for all resettled refugees in the Czech Republic on 15 - 16 December 2012 in Brandýs nad Labem/Stará Boleslav. Including the newly arrived refugees, the community of resettled Burmese in the Czech Republic today numbers some 120 people.

The gathering of refugees also had another purpose: a practical workshop for resettled refugees on job hunting, simulation of a job interview, and communication with local authorities. A total of 54 adult and youth refugees who arrived to the Czech

**Zaměstnáním azylantů:**

- pomůžete přežít rodině z Barmy v nelehké situaci
- získáte finanční prostředky na krytí mzdových nákladů po dobu půl roku
- zdarma si ověříte schopnosti a předpoklady vybraného pracovníka
- zaudíte si pracovníka podle svých potřeb bez zvýšených nákladů
- v případě spokojenosti můžete pokračovat v zaměstnávání ovládnutí pracovní síly

Podle Městské úřadu azylantů můžete pokračovat v zaměstnávání bez mzdové podpory není časově omezená, můžete se na nás obracet průběžně.

Město Praha azylantům může zajistit pouze v příštím měsíci listopad 2012 až srpen 2013. Nejpozdější nástup do zaměstnání je pak březen 2013. Pokud máte zájem o zaměstnání osoby s krytím mzdových nákladů z prostředků projektu, neváhejte nás oslovit co nejdříve, v pořadí čísla 2013 budou přidělovat noviny zaměstnavatelů. MPOV jako zprostředkující subjekt programu OP LZ.

**Kontakty**

Barmské centrum Praha  
Dělnická 54, 170 00 Praha 7

Kontaktní osoba:  
Mgr. Michal Merhaut  
merhaut@burma-center.org  
775 682 740

**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

Mission: Posilování program a pracovní integraci azylantů podporuje UNHCR ČR.

**ESF**  
Evropský sociální fond  
Operační program  
Lidské zdroje a zaměstnanost

**OP LZ**  
Operační program  
Lidské zdroje a zaměstnanost

**Podpora**  
Podpora vašeho budoucnosti

**Hledáte zaměstnance, který Vás nic nestojí?**

Barmské centrum Praha, o.p.s. nabízí zaměstnavateli krytí mzdových nákladů při zaměstnávání azylantů z Barmy.

**Co nabízíme zaměstnavatelům**

Nejčastěji požadované profese pro azylanty dle výstupů z diagnostik jsou:

- automechanik
- číšník
- čistič
- dělník
- dřevník
- kuchař
- kadeřník
- klenčí
- majitel
- obsluha vysokozdvížného vozíku
- pekař
- pomocné práce
- pomocný kuchyň
- prodávák
- řidič
- skládkový dělník
- svářeč
- truhlář
- údržbové práce
- záhradnická práce
- zvončák práce

**Leaflet about the ESF project to support the refugees' labour market integration © Burma Center Prague**



A Karen refugee operating forklift



Pre-Christmas event for resettled refugees in Brandýs nad Labem/Stará Boleslav

Republic between 2008 and 2010 are participating in the project

“Towards the Better Integration of Burmese Refugees on the Labour Market” was supported by the European Social Fund and implemented by the Burma Center Prague. During this two-year project, refugees have undergone an assessment of their potential by using specific psychological diagnosis methods sensitive to cultural background, language abilities and different working experiences of the target group. They have also attended lectures on the local labour market, practical workshops to improve their presentation and communication skills, and various vocational training programmes – such as forklift operation, driver's education, cooking and bartending, with job-related Czech language support. Eight refugees who successfully completed the training got jobs for six months thanks to a subsidized employment programme that was also part of this project.

From May 2013 to April 2014, Burma Center Prague will continue implementing a similar project to improve the integration of the third wave of resettled refugees into the labour market, with the financial support of the European Refugee Fund and UNHCR Czech Republic. In addition to these activities, Burma Center Prague is in regular contact with local communities where refugees have been settled, to help with their continued integration in new societies through awareness-raising activities in schools, churches, and community centres. A precondition for successful integration is the host society's better understanding about needs and obstacles of refugees, situation in their country of origin and survival conditions in the first asylum country. ■

## Sweden "goes to the gemba"

Submitted by the Government of Sweden

As part of the Swedish Migration Board's implementation of a work philosophy inspired by Toyota's lean production, staff are asked to 'go the gemba' to learn more about the process in which they are working. To 'go to the gemba' means to search the origin of any problem, preferably by 'go and see' visits.

Accordingly, resettlement staff at the SMB now go to see what happens when refugees travel to Sweden. Teams of two or three persons travel to host countries, meet up with refugees about to depart, and accompany them on their journeys to Swedish municipalities. The ambition is to learn more about pre-departure arrangements and the actual transfer, from the refugees' perspectives. Once in Sweden, the companions follow the refugees to their new homes, to the supermarket, and to initial meetings with registration services and municipality staff.

So far, two journeys have been undertaken – one to Nairobi, Kenya in February where three employees of the SMB followed a group of 50 Somali refugees from the IOM transit center to their new homes in northern Sweden; and one to Kampala, Uganda in May where two employees accompanied a single parent with five children to a municipality in the south.

### A new sense of understanding

All five employees who have gone to the gemba so far have been excited by the opportunity and speak of inspiring and heartwarming experiences. Not only has it given the SMB the opportunity to find out more about the exit and transfer process, enabling it

to be developed and improved, but each person has also earned a new sense of meaning, as they bond with the refugees.

"It has given me a whole new sense of understanding of the process in which the refugees depart," says Suad Ali, working part time at the resettlement team in Norrköping while studying at the university, and who went to the gemba in Nairobi. "As I am myself Somali, I was able to go 'undercover', and get an insight into some of the refugees' experiences of for instance getting shuffled around at the airport," Suad explains.

### Grasping the whole picture

Anne Tumlin, another employee who has just returned from a trip to and from Kampala where she accompanied a family on their way to their new home, was equally enthusiastic. "We got the opportunity to visit the family in their home in Kampala before we left for the airport," she explains. "What an amazing experience! After dusting off my French I was able to chat with them about their expectations. It was truly a life changing situation when they arrived to a rather large apartment in the central parts of the small Swedish town where they were resettled!"

Lean manufacturing, lean enterprise, or lean production, often simply, "Lean," is a production practice that considers the expenditure of resources for any goal other than the creation of value for the end customer to be wasteful, and thus a target for elimination.

Lean stems from the Toyota Production System, originally established in the aftermath of the WWII. It has expanded from the car industry to many other sectors and markets worldwide. Essentially, lean is

centered on preserving value with less work. Central parts are therefore to identify what creates value for the customer/client, for instance by seeking the source, 'going to the gemba', and to improve the process accordingly, and continuously.

Genba (also romanized as gemba) is a Japanese term meaning "the real place." Japanese detectives call the crime scene genba, and Japanese TV reporters may refer to themselves as reporting from genba. In business, genba refers to the place where value is created; in manufacturing the genba is the factory floor. It can be any "site" such as a construction site, sales floor or where the service provider interacts directly with the customer. In lean manufacturing, the idea of genba is that the problems are visible, and the best improvement ideas will come from going to the genba. ■



## Roundtable on private business engagement in the integration of refugees

Article submitted by The European Resettlement Network seeks to engage partners and stakeholders in refugee resettlement, protection and integration, as well as to build the multi-stakeholder approach that is crucial for the success of resettlement programs. This includes partners from the private sector.

Resettled refugees are accepted by governments to come directly from refugee camps or other refugee situations in developing countries. Like refugees who come through asylum procedures, resettled refugees are eager to integrate into their new communities in Europe.

Integration of refugees is a two-way process where both the refugees and the host community must make an effort to make it work. It is often not without challenges, but it should ultimately lead to the refugees feeling that they have re-established their lives, and that they belong to their new society. While learning the language, receiving an education and settling in their new neighborhoods are the first steps of integration, finding work is another important way in which refugees can begin to live independently and contribute to their new society.

On 12 December 2012, the European Resettlement Network organized a roundtable meeting involving governments, NGOs, and private businesses that play or are interested to play a role in helping refugees to find employment.

The goals of the Roundtable were to:

- introduce refugee resettlement and related integration challenges of refugees in the EU to

private businesses that could engage in the process of facilitating employment of resettled refugees through training, internships, job placements or direct employment;

- introduce the European Resettlement Network and its website ([www.resettlement.eu](http://www.resettlement.eu)) to partners and explore future activities as part of the Network's goals;
- exchange good practices between employment services, NGOs and private businesses to support refugees in finding employment or starting their own business;
- feed into the EU Resettlement Network repository of good practices related to supporting refugees' efforts to find employment;
- seek further engagement of private business engagement in the integration of resettled refugees;
- explore new national partnerships between businesses, employment services and NGOs.

The meeting brought together 45 representatives from private companies, including large corporations such as Manpower and Accenture, governments, NGOs, and refugees from across Europe. Presentations and contributions highlighted good practices, challenges and partnerships between private companies, NGOs and public or state employment services that have been effective in supporting refugees in their quest for employment in Europe.

Pär Larshans of Max Hamburgers in Sweden made a strong case for social responsibility, which has been one of the three objectives of the fast food chain for the last ten years. Larshans emphasized that hiring resettled refugees within Max Hamburgers restaurants is not done out of charity, but because it is regarded as beneficial from a business perspective. Max needed new restaurant managers that would stay with the company for longer periods,

despite work in the restaurant business not being particularly well paid. The company started a programme to employ migrants and refugees who demonstrated managerial potential, recruiting at entry level but supporting recruits to develop within the organisation through a structured leadership programme. The company maintains a partnership with the Swedish Public Employment Service, in which Max recruits refugees with limited employment experience and Swedish language skills, and the Employment Service covers the cost of ongoing language education.

In addition, the roundtable included accounts from the refugees themselves, who have experienced first-hand the often challenging path towards employment. Fatuma lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for 19 years and was resettled to Sheffield in the UK with her family in 2010. Fatuma now works as a care assistant in a home for the elderly for over a year. She started as a volunteer, but is now a fully paid staff member. She is currently studying to become a nurse, and hopes to graduate within years. The company she is working for will endorse her qualifications that will, in turn, help her to enter college. Fatuma explained that other Somali refugees have experienced great challenges in finding employment in the UK, so much that many wish to leave the country.

The roundtable introduced refugee resettlement and some common integration challenges of refugees in the EU to private businesses that are in a position to become involved in the process of facilitating refugee employment. It facilitated the exchange of good practices between employment services, NGOs and private businesses that support refugees in finding employment or starting their own business, and fed into the EU Resettlement Network repository of good practices related to supporting refugees' efforts

to find employment. To build on the outcomes of the roundtable, further engage private businesses in the integration of resettled refugees, and explore new national partnerships between businesses, employment services and NGOs, UNHCR and ICMC are planning a follow-up event for late 2013 in the framework of ICMC's SHARE Project.

Tips and advice on how to start and maintain partnerships with private businesses include: the importance of first impressions when approaching private businesses, as this is crucial for future interactions; and the need to create ambassadors in the business community and to "reward" employers for their engagement.

The roundtable was organized by UNHCR and IOM in the framework of the IOM-UNHCR-ICMC "Linking In EU Resettlement project" (September 2011 – January 2013), which aimed at strengthening resettlement in Europe by expanding the expertise of European practitioners in all stages of the resettlement and integration process, and established the European Resettlement Network.

For more information on the European Resettlement Network, the 'Linking In' project and the SHARE Project, please visit [www.resettlement.eu](http://www.resettlement.eu). ■

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