

The Commissioner's Foreword

THIS VOLUME GREW FROM A SEED PLANTED IN APRIL 2001 in Norrköping, Sweden, at the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees*, hosted by the Government of Sweden. Several hundred government officials, UNHCR staff, NGO representatives and resettled refugees gathered there for intensive discussions on how to help resettled refugees to integrate in their new countries. One of the ideas was to produce a book to share experience and good practice across international borders.



The result is this Handbook to guide the reception and integration of resettled refugees. Its production was a truly collaborative effort, with NGOs, governments and UNHCR staff contributing in many different ways. It would not have been possible without the generous financial support of the Government of Australia and the long, hard work of experts at the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture in Melbourne, Australia, to whom UNHCR is extremely grateful.

Resettlement is a vital durable solution for many refugees around the world. It offers protection and a new beginning to tens of thousands of men, women and children, many of whom have suffered atrocious forms of persecution. However, resettlement is a complex and difficult process, which does not end when a refugee steps off the plane in his or her new country. On the contrary, that is just the start of the integration challenge.

UNHCR's new *Agenda for Protection* calls upon states to put in place policies to ensure that resettlement runs in tandem with a vigorous integration policy. Language training, education, vocational training, employment, support for family reunification – these and many other activities are the building blocks of integration. And while resettlement is a way of protecting refugees and a tangible sign of responsibility-sharing by states, there is no doubt that refugees also make important contributions to their new societies.

I hope this Handbook will prove useful for government and NGO officials in countries setting up resettlement programs for the first time. Since the environments in which refugees resettle are extremely diverse, this should not be considered a 'how to' manual. Instead, it is intended to assist those who are developing programs for resettled refugees by sharing a wide range of practices from five continents. I am sure that both 'old hands' and newcomers to refugee resettlement will derive inspiration from this volume. Together we are working to provide refugees with a chance at a new life.

Ruud Lubbers

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