

Resettlement: Protecting Refugees Sharing Responsibility



Alessia Passarelli / Doris Peschke (eds)

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Protecting Refugees
Sharing Responsibility**

Edited by Alessia Passarelli and Doris Peschke/CCME

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e-mail: info@ccme.be

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Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe - CCME

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UNDERSTANDING RESETTLEMENT IN PRACTICE

Doris Peschke
CCME/Brussels

The number of refugees and asylum seekers has decreased worldwide over the past five years, from 13 million to 9,2 million¹. So far the good news. However, the majority of refugees continues to live in refugee camps in Asia – 3,3 million – and Africa – 3 million, many in the poorest countries of the world. Only few find durable solutions, a perspective to rebuild their own lives in safety and dignity, the majority remains behind, waiting for a change in their home country to be able to return, for a chance to leave the camp and live their life in the country of first asylum, or for resettlement to a safe country.

The United States of America and Canada, but also Australia and New Zealand, run well-established resettlement programmes, offering the chance for a new start for refugees. Six out of 25 European Union Member States, and Norway, offer resettlement as well, but on a more modest level.

Since 2002, the debate on refugee resettlement has provided valuable background information: the European Commission commissioned a feasibility study and launched ideas for an EU resettlement scheme. The European Council on Refugee and Exiles, ECRE, looked into the possibilities and risks for resettlement programmes in Europe. And CCME organised a conference to understand resettlement in 2004.

Following the various initiatives, CCME launched the project “Understanding resettlement in practice: capacity building for action!” The project had two aims: to make resettlement better known, and to understand the different approaches in current resettlement programmes.

How does resettlement work in practice?

Is there only one way to resettle refugees? How do the various stakeholders involved in resettling refugees cooperate? What is – or can be – the role of NGOs in resettlement? These were some of the questions elaborated in a first conference in November 2005, before different delegations went off to visit Finland, as one of the six EU Member States resettling refugees, North America, the US and Canada, as countries with well-established resettlement programmes, and Kenya, a country of first asylum, where many refugees are hosted, but not provided with durable solutions.

The delegations reported to a conference held in July 2006 in Brussels. Throughout the project, a newsletter shared insights from the visits and important information on refugee resettlement with NGOs and churches, persons in the European institutions and governmental agencies.

This booklet features as a starting point the overview on resettlement provided by UNHCR to the conference in November 2005. The topic has been chosen as it analyses the reasons why Europe should be more involved in resettlement. The booklet ends summarising the points which can be used to advocate for resettlement among the EU member states: ten political steps toward a wider resettlement scheme in Europe. The booklet then highlights the experiences of the study visits, each of them focusing on specific aspects of resettlement.

This booklet and the whole project would not have been possible without the support granted by the European Refugee Fund of the European Commission. CCME is also very grateful for the close cooperation with UNHCR Brussels and Geneva offices as well as the offices in Nairobi which were extreme-

¹ UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2005

ly important to facilitate the study visit to Kenya.

A special thanks goes to the Canadian delegation to the EU and to the Immigration and Refugee Program of the Church World Service USA for their active involvement in the conferences and for supporting the study visits to North America and Kenya.

CCME is grateful for the cooperation with the European Council on Refugees and Exiles which joined the delegations attending the

capacity building visits.

Last but not least, CCME wishes to thank all project partners who participated at various levels in its implementation: Refugee Service of Diakonie-Evangelisches Hilfswerk Austria, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Service for Refugees and Migrants of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy and the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice in the United Kingdom.



Finland landscape,
CCME delegation,
March 2006
(photo Alessia
Passarelli)

WHAT ARE THE DURABLE SOLUTIONS?

Alessia Passarelli

Resettlement, Local Integration and Voluntary Repatriation are all durable solutions for persons in need of protection, for refugees. The status of a refugee is a temporary one; it is a provisional response to an immediate problem which needs to be solved.

Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin occurs when the situation and the factors which forced the refugees to flee and to seek asylum in another country are no longer there, so the refugees can go back home feeling safe and regain their lives. Unfortunately this option is not possible for every refugee; sometimes what they have been through is so deeply rooted in their minds that going back to their country of origin is not an option anymore.

Local integration takes place when refugees are able to integrate in the country of asylum. As the situation in the country of origin cannot always be solved in the short run, and the foreseeable future might remain so dim that settling in the country of asylum becomes a better option.

In some countries, refugees are able to integrate themselves because the host country provides them with access to services and access to the labour market or to land, while in others they remain confined to camps where they depend on assistance from the international community. This is, for example, true of Kenya, where refugees are stuck in camps, in some cases more than 15 years.

Among the durable solutions **Reset-**

tlement is the least known and most misunderstood instrument of protection, especially in Europe. Resettlement is often confused with repatriation or return, while in reality it is the movement of refugees from the country of first asylum, where for several reasons local integration is not possible, to a third country where they can rebuild their lives.

Sometimes when refugees' lives are at risk, resettlement to a safe country is the only way to protect persecuted or endangered people – for example, they might be denied basic human rights in their country of refuge. Resettlement may also be used for survivors of torture, injured and traumatised refugees who are unable to obtain treatment in their country of refuge.

Resettlement is scarcely known in Europe and rarely used as tool of protection – actually only six European countries are resettling refugees from various parts of the world: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.

In Europe resettlement is sometimes regarded as a risk for the asylum system. It has to be understood that resettlement is not an alternative to spontaneous asylum seeking and it may never be a system of profiling refugees in accordance to their nationality or religion in order to create a more or less valuable categories of refugees. Resettlement is based exclusively on protection needs of the refugees and compliments the other durable solution: asylum and local integration.

RESETTLEMENT AS A DURABLE SOLUTION²

Judith Kumin

UNHCR Regional Representative in Brussels

On behalf of UNHCR, let me first of all commend CCME for organizing this conference. We very much welcome your interest in refugee resettlement, and we appreciate this occasion to discuss how we can – together – make the best possible use of this important tool of refugee protection.

We also welcome this conference because it is a chance to throw a spotlight on resettlement. Resettlement, defined as the process of selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they initially sought refuge to another country which has agreed to admit them, with a long-term or permanent residence status, is not a new practice. But resettlement is frequently misunderstood and undervalued, and it is still not very well known in Europe, especially among politicians.

Although refugee resettlement is as old as the UNHCR, is one of the three durable solutions to refugee problems, and is indeed mentioned in our statute (although using the rather outmoded language of ‘promoting the assimilation of refugees within new national communities’). Resettlement is little practiced in the European Union today. Of the 25 EU Member States, only six have ongoing resettlement programmes, for a total of just a few thousand refugees each year.

The fact that European countries have in the past participated in a number of major resettlement operations tends to be forgotten. After the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, large numbers of Hungarian refugees fled into Austria and

Yugoslavia and from there were resettled to many Western European countries. In 1972, when Uganda’s entire population of Asians who were expelled by order of President Idi Amin, they were taken in not only by Britain but by other countries as well. The following year, when Chile’s President Salvador Allende was overthrown, several European countries – including Tito’s Yugoslavia – participated in an international resettlement effort. Over a period of 10 years, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, a total of around 175.000 Indochinese refugees were resettled to a dozen different European countries from first asylum countries in Southeast Asia. And in the 1990s, a number of European countries participated in the effort to resettle Iraqi refugees who fled from Southern Iraq into Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War.

These and other examples show that when there is political will, Europe is quite capable of admitting refugees for resettlement, even in large numbers. They also show that the experience can be extremely positive, not only for the refugees but also for the countries and communities which take them in.

I would like to address three questions, first and most importantly: why should countries engage in resettlement? Secondly: what is the state of refugee resettlement today? And finally, what do we expect from Europe?

To answer the first question, **why engage in resettlement?** I would like to start with a story.

Fifteen years ago, in 1990, I was working in UNHCR’s office in Yugoslavia, in Belgrade. This was before the dramatic changes in Eastern Europe. Nicolae Ceausescu was still terrorizing Romania, and Ramiz Alia –

² Presentation to the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe Conference “Understanding resettlement in practice” 9-12 November 2005, Brussels

successor of the dictator Enver Hodxa – was still ruling Albania. One morning I came to the office quite early and in the courtyard there was a young man, cold, ill-dressed, speaking Albanian. Ten years later, I encountered this man again, I'll call him George, in a book published in Canada by a Bulgarian refugee, Ivaylo Grouev, entitled *Bullets on the Water: Refugee Stories*³.

George had participated in Albania's first anti-regime demonstration, which took place in the country's second-biggest city, Shkoder. The demonstration left two people dead. He and other participants decided to try to flee the country after the demonstration. Their plan was to cross Lake Shkoder on a homemade raft, to reach the Yugoslav side. But they were detected on the water by Albanian border guards, who shot at them. Many people were killed. George fell into the water and managed to swim to the Yugoslav shore. He was eventually picked up by the police, driven to Belgrade, and left during the night in the courtyard of UNHCR's office. At that time, no refugees were allowed to settle in Yugoslavia, certainly no Albanians. All had to be resettled. George was accepted for resettlement by Canada, which is how his story came to be in the book.

Let me read you a few passages from his story:

"We were living in the heart of Europe at the end of the twentieth century, but in fact we were living in a totally different world and space. Fences, just like a concentration camp, surrounded the whole country. Soldiers, dogs, and fences with high-voltage electricity were the only way to stop people from escaping.

When you are born behind fences and are isolated from the outside world, the desire to escape automatically becomes part of you...

...Each of the two rafts was supposed to carry fifteen people. In our raft we had four children... I was at the front... We drifted

three hours in complete silence and then we approached the border... We all stopped breathing. We continued to drift, hoping that we had just successfully passed through the border and had entered Yugoslavian territory, when suddenly two spotlights illuminated us. ...And then we saw the shores full of Albanian Frontier Guards, soldiers with machine guns...

...Suddenly the soldiers began to shoot at us from both sides... I saw the rain of bullets on the water. I heard the screams and cries of the children... I do not know why, but at that moment... I was completely calm. I heard a cutter approaching us. ...Then I understood something unusual was going to happen. A young officer was standing at the front of the cutter and ordered us to throw the paddles overboard. We presented a miserable picture: people paralyzed by horror and cold and screaming children. ...He looked at us and without saying anything he began to shoot...

...The raft turned upside down and we all fell into the ice water... I wanted to get air, to breathe, but the raft was above me. That was the last thing I remembered...

...I woke up in a room. A meal was on the table. A poor peasant house and a man I had never seen before. ...I realized that I was in Yugoslavia... I was transferred to Titograd and later to Belgrade. I spent months in a camp headed by the UN. There I learned what had happened. Four people were killed, one of them an eight-year-old child...

...My parents did not have any information about me for four months. I received refugee status. I wanted to go to Canada and I was accepted... The immigration officers asked me where I would like to go. I said, "Wherever. I do not mind." "Have you heard about Newfoundland?" asked the officers. I said, "No. I never heard about it." "It is an island on the Atlantic Ocean." They showed me Newfoundland on the map. I thought it would be something like Albania or Greece... I said, "All right, I will go there!"

I came to St. John's. Now I am studying English. This fall I hope to be at the university. I am alone but I am not unhappy. I enjoy life, even though it is rough for a 19-year old

³ Ivaylo Grouev, *Bullets on the Water: Refugee Stories*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 2000

to be completely on his own. I know I am a strong person and I can overcome many things, even loneliness, which is one of the greatest 'exams.'

I am not complaining... I am happy to be alive... And almost every day I say to myself: 'Hey you, you are living a second life.'

People think that I am a child, an immature person. Probably they have reasons, but they are not aware of my experiences. And I prefer to leave it that way... Society does not have a great sense of curiosity about somebody's fate."⁴

George's story, I think, gives us the most obvious and most fundamental answer to the question "why engage in resettlement". Resettlement provides refugees with security, a legal status, and a chance to build a future for themselves and their families. This applies to individuals who are facing specific legal and physical dangers. But it also applies to refugees who have been living in limbo in refugee camps for many years, without any prospect of a durable solution.

A second, more political argument in favour of resettlement is that it allows States to help each other: it is a tangible expression of international solidarity and of responsibility-sharing. Resettlement is an exercise of partnership, where States, UNHCR and civil society work together to reach a humanitarian outcome. Although resettlement is a core element of the regime of international protection of refugees, it remains a discretionary act on the part of States. This is why it is so important to develop the necessary political will to engage in resettlement.

In addition, and this is a third argument in favour of resettlement, it opens a window

through which citizens in countries far removed from situations of war and persecution can gain a better understanding of the plight of refugees. A recent poll in the Netherlands showed that 46% of the population would like to help personally in assisting and guiding refugees when they arrive in the Netherlands. Mechanisms which allow for the direct engagement of individual citizens in helping resettled refugees – such as Canada's private sponsorship system – have proven to be enormously successful.



IOM Transit Centre, Nairobi, June 2006 (photo Alessia Passarelli)

A fourth argument in favour of resettlement is the fact that history shows that refugees, including resettled refugees, can be an asset for their new countries. Refugees bring with them important skills as well as diversity which, when appreciated and utilised, is a distinct social, cultural and economic benefit for the resettlement country.

Finally, resettlement can help to open up political space for refugee protection in countries of first asylum. As such, it has a strategic importance. The most dramatic example of this goes back to the Indochinese experience. In the 1970s and 1980s, the countries of Southeast Asia only stopped pushing refugees back to sea when it was agreed that all refugees would be resettled elsewhere. Of course, we do not believe that access to safety in countries of first asylum should be con-

⁴ Ibid, pp. 4-9.

tingent on a promise of resettlement. But it is widely recognized that resettlement can create benefits, directly or indirectly, for refugees other than those being resettled.

Closer to home, UNHCR promoted the resettlement of Bosnian refugees out of Germany in the 1990's, not only because Germany had admitted hundreds of thousands of Bosnians and a burden-sharing effort was fully justified, but also because Germany was threatening forcibly to return Bosnian refugees at a time when we thought such action was premature. We hoped that by reducing the burden on Germany, the political pressure for forcible returns would diminish.

In other words, the use of resettlement as a solution for some refugees has the potential to help to achieve more protection for a larger number, or to improve the asylum conditions in the countries where they reside. Resettlement should therefore not be seen in isolation. On the contrary, the complementary nature of the three durable solutions – voluntary repatriation, integration in the country of first asylum and resettlement – is such that they can function simultaneously, in the framework of comprehensive strategies to address refugee problems.

In the interest of transparency, I should admit that resettlement is not without its critics. The critics will say that resettlement is a drop in the ocean. At most, 1% of the world's refugees might get a chance at resettlement each year. They will say that resettlement is time-consuming and expensive, that it tends to siphon off the "cream" of any refugee population, because resettlement countries want only the best, and that it creates tensions and the risk of fraud in refugee camps where there are always more people than there are resettlement places. These objections are not without some merit. But all can be addressed through proper management of resettlement operations.

The second question I want to address is: **what is the state of refugee resettlement today?**

Today there are just 14 countries, on four continents, which co-operate with UNHCR in implementing resettlement programmes: In Asia, both Australia and New Zealand have

longstanding resettlement programmes. In North America, Canada and the United States. In South America, Argentina, Brazil and Chile are new countries of resettlement. In Europe the list is expanding, but it is still shorter than we would like. It consists of the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Ireland and the United Kingdom. This year there are around 90.000 resettlement places available, but more than 90% of these places are in just three countries: Australia, Canada, and the United States. One of UNHCR's ongoing goals is to increase both the number of places available for resettlement and the number of countries which participate.

There are some positive signs: Ireland has agreed to increase its resettlement quota five-fold (from 40 to 200 persons), and has selected refugees with strong protection or other special needs. Resettled refugees are entitled to a solid integration programme. Spain, although it does not yet have a formal resettlement programme, has been responding positively to UNHCR appeals on a case-by-case basis. Belgium is considering establishing a resettlement programme, and Germany has shown more receptivity to this idea than has previously been the case.

Most resettlement countries establish annual numerical targets for resettled refugees, in accordance with their laws and financial allocations. UNHCR tries to ensure that the country programmes maintain a strategic balance with respect to worldwide resettlement needs, and respond to particular protection problems. We encourage States to establish programmes which are flexible enough to respond to the diversity of needs and rapid enough to respond to emergency situations.

Resettlement is above all a protection tool. It is designed to respond first and foremost to the needs of refugees who cannot safely stay where they are. But it is also a durable solution for refugees who do not have a prospect of being able to build new lives in their country of first asylum.

UNHCR's resettlement criteria and procedures are contained in our Resettlement Handbook, which was endorsed by UNHCR's Executive Committee in 1996. If a refugee

falls under one of the following 8 categories, he or she may be eligible for resettlement:

- 1) Refugees with legal and physical protection needs;
- 2) Survivors of torture and violence;
- 3) Medical needs;
- 4) Women-at-risk;
- 5) Family reunification;
- 6) Unaccompanied children and adolescents;
- 7) Elderly refugees without support where they are;
- 8) Other refugees for whom no other durable solution is available.

itate the integration of refugees, including those who are resettled.

It is widely recognized in Europe today that there is an ongoing need for attention to integration issues. While this applies generally to migrants in Europe, we believe that the situation of refugees is in many ways unique, and justifies particular integration support. The European Commission's new Communication on integration of third-country nationals⁵ does not address the particular needs of refugees. We will soon be issuing UNHCR's comments on this Communication, and making a number of



Dadaab refugees camp, Kenya, June 2006 (photo Patricia Coelho)

In spite of the clear protection nature of resettlement, some resettlement countries are increasingly resorting to selection criteria that are based on integration potential rather than protection needs. An approach that emphasizes integration potential, rather than protection needs, may result in putting the lives of vulnerable refugees at risk when no other solutions are available to them. Moreover, this approach may create confusion between the two very different categories of refugees and economic migrants.

The third question I wish to address is: **what do we expect from Europe?** In a nutshell, UNHCR would like to see much more active European participation in resettlement efforts, and enhanced efforts to facil-

suggestions to promote refugee integration. And we would like to draw attention once again to the Handbook on integration of resettled refugees, which UNHCR published in 2002 together with NGO partners and with the support of a number of resettlement countries.

To come back to the question of what we expect from Europe: As I noted earlier, a handful of European countries – the Nordic countries and the Netherlands – have been longstanding resettlement partners. Another handful – the UK, Ireland, and soon, we hope, Spain – are starting up new resettlement programmes. But Europe has the potential to do much more.

⁵ COM (2005)389 of 1.09.2005

For this reason, we have welcomed discussions about the possibility to establish a common EU Resettlement Scheme. For the time being, this proposal is limited to the inclusion of a resettlement component in the Regional Protection Programmes (RPPs) proposed by the European Commission. The Commission's Communication on Regional Protection Programmes⁶ says that these programmes should include "[a] resettlement commitment, whereby EU Member States undertake, on a voluntary basis, to provide durable solutions for refugees by offering resettlement places in their countries." This proposal is welcome – as long as it is clear from the outset that resettlement is a complement to and not a substitute for national asylum policies.

Given that resettlement is a core function of UNHCR, we are pleased that the central role of UNHCR in identifying resettlement needs, proposing operating procedures and coordinating quotas has been recognized. UNHCR has signalled its readiness to assist in the design and implementation of a common EU resettlement scheme. But we feel strongly that a common EU resettlement scheme should not simply be the sum of the present national programmes. The aim should be to increase resettlement to the EU and thus to bring added value to global resettlement efforts and to have a real impact, both in terms of protection and in terms of burden-sharing. Of course, the resettlement component of any Regional Protection Programme will need to fit with the overall protection strategy in the particular country or region concerned.

While an EU resettlement scheme would initially be linked to a specific Regional Protection Programme, we think that it is important to maintain the objective of a wider programme, which would not be restricted to a geographic region or specific nationality or nationalities. In the future, one might even think more creatively of the possibility of having a central body at EU level to co-ordinate the selection of refugees for resettlement and their allocation among participating Member States.

Let me be very frank and say that we have been following discussions on resettlement at the EU level with a lot of interest but the signals we are getting are not terribly positive. The Commission had initially hoped to produce a binding instrument on resettlement, then settled for a Communication on resettlement. It does not now look as if either of these will be forthcoming. The Commission is now working on a proposal for an amendment to the European Refugee Fund to allow for the use of ERF funds to support national resettlement activities. Even that proposal may not be uncontroversial. We understand that some Member States are not in favour of using European Commission finances to fund national resettlement schemes. Others want to restrict this possibility to the limited context of resettlement attached to Regional Protection Programmes.

Before concluding, let me turn to the question you are likely to be asking yourselves: What role can NGOs play?

In the implementation of resettlement programmes by the traditional countries of resettlement – Australia, Canada and the United States –, NGOs can and do play an important role, both at the level of identification of candidates in countries of first asylum, and in the reception and settlement process in countries of resettlement. We would like to see European NGOs play similarly important parts. At this point in time, we also need your continued strong support in advocating for resettlement to become an integral part of European refugee policy.

In my view, serious European engagement in refugee resettlement requires a paradigm shift. In the traditional countries of immigration, refugee resettlement has always been part of the overall immigration policy. But in Europe, proactive immigration programmes are still very rare, and there continues to be a lot of misunderstanding about what resettlement is and how it works. Together we should do whatever we can to generate support for resettlement at the political level, and among the general public. I see this conference as a contribution to that effort.

⁶ COM (2005)388

INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES: FINLAND

Alessia Passarelli/Yeteshawork Berhanu

Finland is one of the 14 states that conduct regular resettlement, and also one of the few European countries of resettlement along with Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK. The Ministries of Interior, Directorate of Immigration, of Foreign Affairs, of Education and of Social Affairs and Health are the relevant authorities administering immigration and refugee issues.

Finland started to resettle refugees in 1973 after the Pinochet coup in Chile. From 1973 to 1977 a total of 182 Chilean refugees were brought to Finland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland covered the expenses for ten refugees. The task of receiving and caring for the refugees was given to, and undertaken by the Finnish Red Cross.

Finland accepts for resettlement refugees or persons otherwise in need of international protection determined by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). On the basis of the resettlement needs presented by UNHCR and in co-operation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour annually presents a proposal to the Government concerning the regional allocation of the quota. The refugee quota in Finland is established in the State Budget and approved by the Parliament. The annual quota has been 500 for some years until it was raised to 750 in 1998 with the aim to raise it to 1.000 refugees.

In the past years, Finland has given the priority to vulnerable persons, particularly women at risk with their children. Finland has resettled a considerable number of Somali and Sudanese refugees.

THE INTEGRATION ACT

The concept of immigrant integration became established in Finland when the Integration Act (493/1999) entered into force in 1999.

The objective of the Act is “to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures that help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society” (section 1). Integration is defined as “the personal development of immigrants, aimed at participation in work life and the functioning in society while preserving their language and culture; and the measures taken and resources provided by the authorities to promote such integration” (section 2).

In the Finnish language a new word has been developed for integration: “Kotoutua” is derived from the Finnish word “koti” (meaning home). Integration thus means “beginning to feel at home”. “Kotoutuminen” is a very pleasant word; but the task of integration, which is mainly assigned to the Ministry of Labour, is a complex process involving the individual refugee, the host society and government officials.

Integration is understood in a sense that the immigrant acquires knowledge and abilities that help him/her to live in Finland and take part in the working life as an equal functioning member of society. Thus, the knowledge of customs as well as such professional skills needed to support oneself and one's family are regarded as priority.

Integration does not solely mean the adoption of Finnish customs. One's own language and culture, previous studies and work experience are remarkable assets that should be put to use also after moving to

another country. As integrating into society differs as persons are different, the integration law only defines the framework in which everyone can plan their integration in Finland. What is expected from the immigrant is above all an active responsible attitude concerning his/her own situation.

In Finland the Ministry of Labour develops integration legislation and the integration system for immigrants, including the promotion of employment opportunities for immigrants starting with the reception of refugees and asylum seekers. All permanent residents in Finland are inhabitants of a municipality to which they pay taxes from their income. The Municipality, according to the law, is responsible for arranging suitable training and activities for immigrants.

Each municipality compiles an integration programme that includes the aims, procedures, and resources for integrating immigrants into society. The programme requires an extensive cooperation among local authorities, immigrants, citizen organizations, religious communities and representatives of the working life such as trade unions. On one side the municipality compiles an integration programme, on the other side the immigrant draws up an integration plan with a representative of the municipality and/or of the employment office. The integration plan lasts up to three years and is made on an individual basis. During the three years time, the immigrant receives a monthly allowance based on the basic unemployment benefit. The integration plan generally con-

A REFUGEE'S POINT OF VIEW

How was the first contact with the Finnish community?

Everybody was expecting us to come, but the meeting with the Finnish community was very difficult, first of all we did not know the language and they did not know ours. Few people spoke English and even them, I think, they were told not to speak English with us so we could learn the language quickly. In few days we had to know how to introduce ourselves, how to say thanks, how to greet during the morning, how to greet during the day and so on... We had to learn that quickly because this was part of the daily relationship with other people and in this way we opened some kind of connection with these other people... The positive thing is that if they see that you are interested to learn the language they encourage you.

It was difficult but after all it was for our benefit, in fact, we learnt the language quickly and in few months.

Do you consider yourself integrated into the Finnish society?

Well, in a process of being integrated. For me integration is to find your own place in the society. You can feel part of the society when you understand how people live, their standard of life and their culture. At the same time a crucial point is how they can also understand how we think and what our culture is about. I see integration as a two-way process. In some places we have the "family friends", people whom you can spend time with: Women can learn what women do in Finland and the same happens for men. I think this is the best way for integration, learning from the daily life. Nevertheless it is something that should not be planned but it should be automatic. Unluckily, this does not happen everywhere.

Which are the main problems faced by Sudanese in Finland?

You know, the main problem is resettlement itself. Resettlement takes a long time and it has many

parts. It is a two-way responsibility: the government and the local authorities on one side and us on the other.

Understanding the life in this part of the world and knowing how to balance between our own experience and the new life in this society is a problem as well. We have the problem of the winter, the language. Sometimes you have the problem feeling that you are not welcomed in some places. You feel that people are not happy that we are here; just like that, even if they do not say anything but you can feel it from how they look at us. It takes time for us to think we are really at home.

Another problem, but it depends on each family, is how to live our lives here in Finland as family: wife, husband, children, how to divide responsibilities and how to do things correctly, and what does it mean for a person to be free, what does freedom mean here... as this concept of freedom has created many problems among Sudanese here. It is true, the life we had before was

different. Traditionally there are responsibilities that people know that are for men and some responsibilities that people know are for women, but now here it is different and everything should be done together.

Personally I think we should find a way in the middle. Understanding it is the only solution to overcome and solve problems.

What do you think about resettlement?

I would say that it is good to give to other people in need the opportunity to live another kind of life somewhere else, in a peaceful place. The kind of resettlement we have in Finland is a good one, because it is done by the authorities/officials and in this way everybody is equal, everybody has the same privilege; although there are some differences if you are in the small or big cities.

*Interview with
Samuel Nhialluak,
Jyväskylä, Finland 2006*

sists of language studies (Finnish or Swedish, depending on region of residence), learning about Finnish society and culture, vocational training. After the three-year integration plan, the immigrant is entitled to the same services as any other person who may seek employment assistance.

COOPERATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

The cooperation and exchange between the various municipal offices and services for refugees and immigrants is generally well established in Finland. A high level of professionalism exists and impressive programmes are developed in the various municipalities. The TRACK project in Lahti or the HELMI project in Jyväskylä aim at training and acquisition of skills and knowledge through joint efforts of various offices.

And yet, the language criteria for taking up employment are extremely high and difficult to be met even for persons with a good educational background. While the integration plans are impressively tailored to indi-

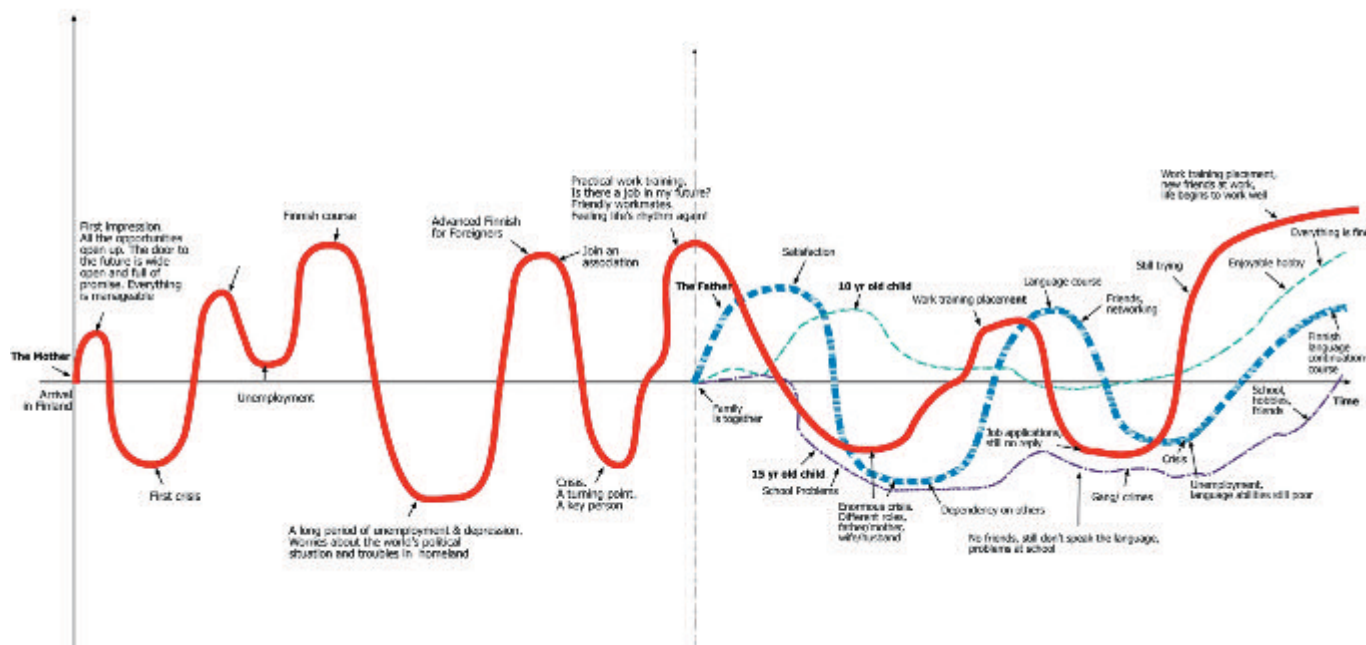
vidual needs, in practice the process into ordinary life and work seems far more complicated for many refugees.

Against this background, regular meetings, e.g. of refugee and migrant women with Finnish women have been organised in the parish of the Lutheran Church in Tampere. The Lutheran parish in Lahti is organising meetings of men with a mentoring system for which it recruits male Finnish volunteers to accompany and meet regularly with refugees. These meetings provide fora for exchange on every day life, make friendship and help each other. Here refugees --are able to contribute and not only to receive, and most of all, to facilitate encounter between Finns and refugees.

THE INTEGRATION TIME LINE

The city of Tampere receives 70 refugees per year. Like in most big cities the efforts to integrate immigrants by the municipality and employment office are augmented by NGOs and projects. The Kotopolku project of the Finnish Red Cross is of particular

INTEGRATION-SPAN



"The integration Time-Line illustrates an immigrant's family integration as a process in which good and bad experiences exist.

The purpose of the integration Time-line is to help the immigrant from his or her own experiences and assist him or her in creating better life strategies in within the new society.

Making one's own time line is intended to encourage immigrants to be actively involved in their own lives and to make long term plans and create their own vision for the future. Finnish Red Cross, Kotopolku Project"

interest. The objectives of this project are:

- promoting integration of immigrants by providing information about Finnish society;
- organising language courses to further the integration process;
- helping immigrants in searching for practical work training placements;
- assisting in forming and activating immigrant groups; planning new integration services;
- assist immigrant associations in their activities; supporting cultural activities with assistance in planning and organising.

The project has developed an Integration Timeline that illustrates an immigrant's integration as a process with good and bad experiences, with ups and downs, enthusiasm and frustration. A counsellor helps the client (immigrant) to chart the various activities, attempts or efforts made by the immigrant to find his/her place in society starting from his/her first day in Finland. The individual timeline is compared to an average timeline, which has been derived from studies in the past years.

The purpose of the Integration Timeline is to help refugees to understand and deal with frustration in the integration process: after the initial start with great enthusiasm and efforts, often a time of setback follows as expectations are not met. By helping immigrants to understand their own integration timeline, it is possible to encourage them to be actively involved in their own lives and to make long term plans and create their own vision for the future and to overcome the feeling of having failed.

EQUALITY OF SERVICES: THE CASE OF WEST UUSIMAA

Since 1995 five municipalities in the south western part of Finland, West Uusimaa, predominantly Swedish speaking, have collaborated in immigrant affairs: Inkoo (5.150 inhabitants), Pohja (5.000 inhabitants), Karjaa (9.000 inhabitants), Tammisaari (14.500 inhabitants) and Hanko (9.900 inhabitants). From 2002-2005 this region has received a total of 78 refugees.

The task of Immigrant services of these municipalities consists of:

- Reception of new refugees.
- Basic preparations and arrangements for their life in society: housing, health care adult education, school for young people, day care for children.
- Support, information and help to find their way in the Finnish society.
- Support the integration of migrants in the society – to find a meaningful role and a place in society.

It is important to underline that in this framework:

- All migrants are received as "clients" regardless of the status and how long they stayed in Finland.
- All sorts of problems faced by refugees and migrants can be taken up by the immigrant office.

At the same time, any issue should principally be taken care of by the competent ordinary institution – not to isolate the immigrants from the rest of the population. Thus the ordinary institutions have received training and support to be able to address refugee and migrants' concerns.

Core of the work of the service is to hold regular meetings with persons from employment offices, schools, medical services to exchange and discuss issues. Each refugee or migrant has a card containing services received to monitor his or her path. Children have their own teams, the so called 'kid teams'. They cover all immigrant children and young persons who attend school or day-care centres, charting their situation and their need for support and other measures. The municipal chief education officers, school social workers, many headmasters and teachers as well as remedial teachers participate in these teams. The immigrant office takes the case of each and every immigrant and refugee, and work in collaboration with the concerned institutions to meet the needs and demands of immigrants. The underlying principle is the equality of treatment: employment, housing and medical services address issues and shortcomings, give advice to refugees and migrants in the same way as for Finns. The

application of the principle of equal treatment proves to be effective: according to Börje Mattson, in charge of the migrants' services, the employment rate of immigrants is higher than in other regions and comparable to that of Finns.

OBSERVATIONS

In Finland the national government has the competence to decide on the resettlement quota for every year. However, as the responsibility for integration rests with municipalities, the government has to find an agreement every year for the allocation of refugees. To reach the agreement in the coming years for a higher number of refugees may be facilitated by more information on the situation of refugees in countries of first asylum as well as countries of origin. The Finnish Refugee Council may be a helpful partner organisation in this, as it focuses on the regions of origin.

Each municipality has autonomy in terms of defining how many refugees they can receive every year, and in applying programmes and methods to provide assistance and services to refugees and migrants. They draw up their own local integration programme, for example regarding the teaching of Finnish or Swedish to foreign and illiterate people.

This situation has indeed very positive aspects: municipalities benefit from a high level of flexibility, and they can effectively adapt to their specific context finding the best solutions to the challenges they face. However, the municipalities have also financial autonomy, and this can sometimes result in an unbalanced distribution of resources for resettlement and integration: not all the municipalities dispose of the same financial resources to implement their activities within the three years period. The services they can provide, such as language or trainings courses, are consequently limited, hence forcing the refugees to long periods of inactivity. In this last case the refugee easily encounters frustration and loss of motivation, being caught between the impossi-

bility to fulfil his or her integration plan, and the awareness that this plan has usually a very clear deadline after three years.

While the standard three years integration plan is meant to provide the refugees with the necessary tools to enter the labour market, in practice they often do not have access to it and according to the refugees themselves this is one of the biggest challenges for the resettlement programme in Finland. The economic recession that began in the early 1990s in Finland has had implications for the integration processes of many immigrants: as a consequence of the economic recession a considerable part of the Finnish population has left the smaller municipalities to find jobs in the big cities. Why, then, are refugees resettled in small municipalities if it is even more difficult to find a job?

Small municipalities have been facing the problem of population decrease, partly due to the demographic situation of an ageing society, but also due to internal migration to bigger cities. This diminishes their ability to provide ordinary basic services – from schools to social services. Welcoming refugees is for some of them one of the possibilities to re-vitalise their communities.

The positive aspect of this policy is that it is indeed easier for the refugees to integrate and to be welcomed into a smaller community. But, if it was not simple for Finnish people to find employment in those contexts, it is evidently much more difficult for the refugees. In this light, the current policy is very effective for refugees to integrate, but at the same time there is still a room for improvement concerning their access to the labour market.

It is important to underline that not only the cities' immigrant services and employment offices are involved in helping refugees to socially and economically integrate but NGOs and Churches in Finland are very active in this field, and the level of expertise and motivation in providing services to refugees is very high.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT?

While cooperation within municipalities is generally good, enhanced networking and exchange of experience and information among the stakeholders, especially among municipalities, on a national level would be beneficial to disseminate the good results carried out by the different local projects. An example would be to develop common books and methods on teaching Finnish or Swedish to foreign and/or illiterate people instead of each municipality having its own. Networking would also help in promoting and coordinating good projects such as the HELMI project in Jyväskylä, which promotes the integration of refugee and immigrant children and their parents into Finnish society. In its mentoring programme this project gives opportunity to the newly arrived young immigrants, the support and counsel of experienced young immigrant. Another project to be mentioned is LATU in Lahti. In cooperation between immigrants, authorities, enterprises and organizations working with immigrants, the LATU project aims at promoting employment opportunities for immigrants in the Lahti area as well as improving their quality of life.

The orientation programmes for refugees prior to departure to Finland are given by the International Organisation on Migration IOM, Helsinki office. Undoubtedly IOM has

great experience and knowledge about pre-departure courses and with the information from the municipalities provides insights into the situation in Finland. However, more information for the municipalities prior to the arrival of refugees may be an asset. In addition, evaluation of the orientation courses with the partners involved in reception and integration of refugees may be helpful to improve and adjust the courses.

As NGOs and municipalities play an enormous and vital role in the refugees' integration, they could also be more involved at all stages of the resettlement programme including the identification and processing of cases which so far rests entirely with the government. Involvement in the discussion of selection criteria, more information about and participation in the selection procedures, as well as in the design and possibly implementation of the orientation courses for selected refugees prior to their departure may facilitate more understanding of the refugee situation among municipalities and NGOs. This would broaden the view of persons involved in the various projects at local level and may facilitate a more active role of refugees as well. Such an approach could broaden the ownership of the resettlement programme in society and thus also lead to more active involvement of society at large.

ENCOURAGING SELF-SUFFICIENCY AMONG REFUGEES

The USA resettlement model

Alessia Passarelli

The USA has the most established resettlement programme alongside the Australian and the Canadian ones. In terms of numbers, the US model is the largest programme.

The particularity of this model is the involvement of NGOs at basically all stages of resettlement. It is fair to say that in the USA a resettlement programme would not exist without NGOs and, in particular, churches; their role is a key and crucial one. It is interesting and challenging to study the role of NGOs in view of a possible future European resettlement scheme.

The involvement in the resettlement process includes the identification, selection, referral processing and finally reception and placement as well as integration activities in the United States.

DETERMINING WHO IS RESETTLED

The USA State Department (Foreign Office of the US) is in charge of the political side of the resettlement programme, e.g. suggesting the resettlement quota each year – although also on this specific issue the State is challenged by the NGOs' coalition, the Refugee Council USA, which each year presents recommendations for the US Refugee Admission Program. In cooperation with the President, the Department decides the annual quota for the refugees to be received in the US through the programme.

In the year 2006 the official ceiling proposed by the State Department was 70.000 refugees. However, this quota had to be amended as the Congress did not provide sufficient funds for carrying out the programme – the actual number should now be around 40.000 – 50.000 refugees.

Nevertheless, the quota, which had drastically decreased after the criminal attacks of 11th of September, is steadily increasing year after year. While the quota is debated every year, it is remarkable that the programme as such has never been questioned. It is regarded as a strong humanitarian commitment of the United States.

CRITERIA FOR REFUGEES' ADMISSION

The State Department also selects the first countries of asylum from which refugees will be resettled: this decision takes into consideration vulnerability needs, but at the same time also security and foreign policy concerns. Applicants for refugee admission to the US must meet the following criteria:

- To be in line with the definition of "refugee" contained in the US Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
- To be among those refugees determined by the President to be of special humanitarian concern to the United States;
- subject to certain statutory exceptions and waivers, to be otherwise admissible under the INA;
- not be firmly resettled in any foreign country.

To be resettled to the USA a refugee has to fall into one of the following priorities:

Priority 1: Individual Referrals by UNHCR or a U.S. embassy

This priority includes persons facing compelling security concerns in countries of first asylum and needing international protection. It also includes former political prisoners, women at risk, victims of torture or violence, physically or mentally disabled

persons, persons in urgent need of medical treatment not available in the first asylum country, and persons for whom other durable solutions are not feasible and whose status in the place of first asylum does not offer a satisfactory long-term solution.

The U.S. Department of State, in consultation with other executive agencies, UNHCR, overseas posts and the NGO community, identifies groups of special humanitarian concern. Only members of the specifically identified groups are eligible.

Priority 2: Group Referrals

The "P-2" category is the group of special interest or of special concern to the US government, e.g. groups like the Somali Bantu or Sudanese youth. NGOs have a tremendous role to play in alerting the US government of such cases: being in the field and delivering services, NGOs find themselves in the middle of the process and they are in a good position to really know which cases are in need of resettlement as a durable solution and which cases may be more urgent than others.

Priority 3: Family Reunification Cases

Qualifying family members include: spouses, unmarried sons and daughters under 21 years of age and parents of persons lawfully admitted to the USA.

For years, "P-3" has been a backbone of the US refugee program with several larger caseloads dating back from the Indo-Chinese refugees to those from the former Soviet Union and groups from the Balkan. The "pipeline" was very healthy and families were kept together. However, family reunification has become stricter in the past years and sometimes families have to wait a considerable time to be reunited.

THE ROLE OF NGOs IN RESETTLEMENT TO THE US: THE EXAMPLE OF CHURCH WORLD SERVICE (CWS)....

Resettlement in the US is a public-private partnership with a major emphasis on private. There are nine NGOs, called "Volags"

(Voluntary Agencies), a majority of them faith-based, who implement resettlement: Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program (CWS IRP), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Immigration and Refugee Service of America (IRSA), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), World Relief Corporation (WR), U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the State of Iowa.

...in referrals

As mentioned above NGOs have an important role also for the refugees resettlement programme in referring and interviewing cases. The Overseas Processing Entity or Joint Voluntary Agencies are not present all over the world but in specific places where the need is high, i.e. East and West Africa. These two offices are run by CWS in cooperation and on behalf of a number of organisations. If JVA or OPE are not present on the ground and in particular locations, the US consular representative or an embassy assumes an active role. It is important to point out that in any case it is the government which takes the final decision on the selection.

...in settlement assistance

Each NGO has its own network across the country. CWS for instance has 44 affiliated offices which provide services. Each of these affiliates has the responsibility for the refugees who are resettled in their area. Each local office is responsible for keeping its agreement with CWS regarding the services provided to the refugees.

...in relation to the government

The Department of State contracts directly the nine resettlement agencies. It provides a small settlement grant: 850 USD per refugee (425 for the voluntary agencies administrative expenses, 425 as pocket money for refugees). Refugees have access to public medical assistance for the first eight months. The main reason for this

short period of support is that the programme is to help refugees to become employed and economically self-sufficient as soon as possible after their arrival in the U.S. The nine organisations involved in the programme have a specific target: around 90% of refugees resettled under their responsibility must find a job within the first 180 days. Targets are discussed with the government on an annual basis.

A concrete example for resettlement assistance: the “Match Grant Programme” in Atlanta

As help and support provided by the government are very limited, there are extra programmes run by some of the voluntary agencies which try to offer an alternative to the basic assistance programme.

The Refugee Resettlement and Immigration Services of Atlanta (RRISA), affiliate of CWS and EMM, for example, implements two different programmes. Refugees can choose between “**Refugee cash assistance**” provided by the State for a maximum of 8 months until the day they start to work, or the “**Match Grant Programme**” provided by the NGO up to three months and including two months of house renting. The refugees have to choose one programme to apply for.

1. The Refugee Cash Assistance

lasts eight months.

This programme provides this amount of money (per month):

155 USD for 1 person

235 USD for a 2 member family

330 USD for a 4 member family

It does not provide any rent assistance.

2. The Match Grant Program

lasts only three months.

This programme provides this amount of money (per month):

200 USD for 1 person

400 USD for a 2 member family

480 USD for a 4 member family

It provides also two months of rent assistance.

If refugees sign in for this programme, they are obliged to get the first **acceptable**

job they are offered. Acceptable means that the salary may not be lower than the minimum legal wage, which is 5,15 USD in Georgia, and the workplace has to be reachable by public transport.

Unfortunately this programme cannot be applied to all refugees resettled to the USA, because the funding by the State is not sufficient to offer the service to everybody who would want to benefit from this programme.

SPONSORSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Refugees are initially helped by the community, often by faith-based or religious communities, mainly through sponsorships. The sponsor can be a community group, such as a church congregation, who accepts to provide or ensure the provision of reception and placement services to refugees. Whether by donating a piece of furniture or by helping a refugees prepare for a job interview, members of sponsoring congregations help to provide assistance to those in need. A sponsor's overall goal is to assist refugees in becoming self-sufficient as soon as possible. However, refugee sponsors have three general responsibilities as:

• Guides

As guides, sponsors play a key role in ensuring that refugees become self-sufficient. Sponsors supply initial food and clothing to refugees and arrange for housing. They introduce refugees to US culture and acquaint them with important aspects of life in USA. They encourage them to gain access to community services, including health care. They assist refugees with job applications, school registration etc.

• Friends

Most importantly, sponsors are friends to refugees. Sponsors are among the first to welcome refugees into their new community and to offer them emotional support and encouragement as they leave behind their homeland and adjust to the US cul-

ture. On the other side the sponsors also learn about and share in the cultural heritage of refugees and support honouring their customs and traditions.

• and Advocates

As advocates, sponsors act to ensure that a refugee family is not exploited, discriminated against or taken advantage of in the workplace or in their personal lives. Helping refugees to face the difficult challenges of adjustment to life in the US and in building a hospitable environment for their resettlement makes a world of difference for refugees trying to find a place they can call home.

OBSERVATIONS

The way in which the system works in USA is different from every other resettlement programme, particularly compared to those in Europe.

A major emphasis is put on the concept of self-sufficiency. The underlying concept is that being self-sufficient as soon as possible is the fastest and the smartest way to be resettled and integrated in the receiving country. In a positive understanding self-sufficiency means “walking on one’s feet as soon as possible” or having the control of your own life. As a matter of fact, being self-

REFUGEE’ STORY

I am Sharif-Ali Hashim and have 16 years of formal education. I speak excellent English, Italian, Arabic, Somali and Swahili. Before relocating to the U.S., I worked as a teacher in Mogadishu, Somalia and as a salesperson in the Persian Gulf.

In 1991 when the war erupted in Somalia, I escaped with my family and ended up in a refugee camp in Mombassa, Kenya. There were 23,000 refugees in the camp. The Somali Benadir community within the camp elected 19 members among themselves to help organize daily camp activities and to work with the outside world for relocation. I served as vice-chairman and chairman of this group. After four and a half years in the camp, my family was among 3,400 who were granted resettlement in 24 states throughout the U.S.

In 1996, I arrived in the United States and was resettled in Richmond, Virginia. After one week I began working with the Virginia Council of Churches, an affiliate of

Church World Service, as an interpreter with the Somali community resettled in Virginia. I then was promoted to a case manager, then to an employment specialist.

In July 1996, a conference was held in Washington, D.C. for the Somali Benadir community to determine their needs as they adjust to life in the U.S. At that meeting I was elected president of the Somali Benadir Community in the USA. In 1999, the Office of Refugee Resettlement held a meeting where the Benadir community came together to evaluate their progress over the past 4-year period. At this meeting I was re-elected to another 6-year term as president. During my tenure in office, I have been a part of more than 30 conferences covering refugee resettlement issues. Mr. David Derthick, Refugee Training Coordinator for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Nairobi, Kenya, said, “I have worked with Sharif across a wide variety of important and sensitive issues, and I always found him to be straight forward and will-

ing to take appropriate action.”

In 2000, my family and I moved to Columbus, Ohio, where I began work with Church World Service/CROP Ohio Regional Office as a project professional doing community development and fund raising.

In 2003, I began working with Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS), an affiliate of Church World Service. At CRIS I have held numerous positions working with not only my own Somali community, but refugees from many other countries.

Refugees coming to the U.S. face many challenges. My responsibility is to help each person stand on his own feet. I do this by meeting them upon arrival at the airport, serving as a translator, and giving them orientation about how to adjust to life in the U.S. I also provide transportation for health screening and to the Department of Family and Job Services to complete paperwork to apply for benefits. I also help them with job interviews and finding employment and locating hous-

ing. The biggest challenges refugees face when arriving in the U.S. are the language barrier, transportation and cultural adjustment.

As president of the Somali Benadirs, I am able to help my community with their cultural adjustment by visiting homes, talking by phone, listening to concerns, offering direction and guidance, and keeping the lines of communication open.

I feel very fortunate to have the position that I have with CRIS as I am able to help not only my Benadir Community but people from all over the world as they are able to fulfil their dreams here in America, the land of opportunity.

By Sharif-Ali Hashim,
Columbus, USA,
April, 2006

“I am really happy for the opportunity we have to be resettled to the USA, but, please, do not forget those left behind”. Refugee accepted for resettlement at Dadaab refugee camp – June 2006

sufficient is equal to having a job in order to pay the rent of the house; to having the opportunity to send your own children to school: in other words is equal to not being dependent on the State. This approach can also lead to the conclusion that having a job, therefore being self-sufficient, automatically means being integrated into the society. There is some merit in it, as having a job is already a big step into the society which is supposed to be the new home of the refugee. Nevertheless the job itself does not guarantee an automatic integration into the US society. The opportunity to attend language courses is also important and what has been done by NGOs and civil society in this regard is highly significant. Sponsors make a difference in improving the quality of life of the refugees, in constituting a bridge between two cultures and promoting a successful integration model.

The refugee assisting NGOs in the US are committed to support refugees based on strong humanitarian values and in many cases a faith-based background. NGOs active in resettlement believe strongly in the USA resettlement system: they see the concept of self-sufficiency as an opportunity given to refugees to re-start their life from zero and to focus from the very beginning on standing on their own feet.

The USA is one of the few countries which does not take into consideration the integration potential of the refugees in the selection process at all. They accept refugees based solely on the resettlement criteria, including most vulnerable cases such as people with physical disabilities and HIV/AIDS. It has to be pointed out, however, that since 9/11 the situation has changed substantially and there are groups of people at risk who are excluded from access to the USA for security reasons despite being in urgent need of protection. Because of the length and the complexity of the security check process since 9/11, it happens that urgent cases, which would be referred as P1 priority according to the US programme, are resettled to Australia, Canada or to the European Nordic countries, or they are not resettled at all.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE USA RESETTLEMENT MODEL

It is not possible to apply the US model as such for any future EU wide resettlement scheme. The labour market(s) in Europe has different rules and it would not be easily transferable; however the emphasis on the importance of being or becoming self-sufficient or self reliant may be taken as an important principle: for refugees to be able to decide for themselves about their life and their future is enormously important and respects their dignity. The second principle in the US scheme is that of equality: jobs have to be taken, but there is a minimum wage and it has to be reachable. Safeguards comparable to those existing in European societies are important to be applied to refugees.

The role NGOs play at all stages of the resettlement programme is a key point of reference for Europe. Only one of the six current resettlement programmes in EU member states has a considerable involvement of NGOs. The involvement and participation, and thus the knowledge of NGOs about the refugee situations in countries of first asylum is an important factor for the motivation to be actively involved in assisting refugees. Information is shared within and across the organisations involved in resettlement, and there is a lot of knowledge about the procedures and the reason why persons are resettled from a specific region at the local level.

NGOs have the direct contact with the civil society, they have the knowledge and the experience to help the refugee best and they are also the ones who assist the refugees once arrived in the USA.

The ownership of the USA refugees' resettlement programme by NGOs and faith-based organisations enhances the ownership of refugees' resettlement by the society at large. This ownership is important for the integration of refugees, but it may also be the reason why the US program is so large and successful.

PARTNERSHIPS IN RESETTLEMENT - COMBINING EFFORTS OF STATE AND PRIVATE SPONSORS

The example of Refugee Resettlement to Canada

Torsten Moritz

In current discussions on resettlement, one issue is receiving increasing attention in the nongovernmental community as well as among EU Member States: how can non-state actors contribute to making resettlement an option for more countries in Europe and how can non-state actors help to improve resettlement schemes in those countries in Europe already active in resettlement. The example most commonly referred to in this context is Canada, one of the countries with the longest history of resettlement schemes as well as with one of the biggest resettlement schemes globally⁷. The Canadian model is characterised by a strong involvement of nongovernmental actors in the system of resettlement – through sponsorship or mentoring of resettled refugees.

Examining the Canadian model can offer a number of important insights into the possible role of nongovernmental actors for resettlement into EU Member States. It clearly shows that the effort of governmental and nongovernmental actors should not exclude but rather complement each other.

The Resettlement programme is administered and governed by the governmental service “Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)”. In its work, CIC relies on a number of different partners at the various stages of resettlement. In all of the stages private persons and organisations play an important role.

IDENTIFICATION OF REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT

Central partners in this process are:

1. UNHCR. Like in many other resettlement countries UNHCR is the single most

important partner for referral. UNHCR regularly refers cases or whole “case-loads” to CIC for resettlement, based on its assessment of resettlement needs of the individual or the group. Often the referred cases are already under the protection of the UNHCR, e.g. as refugees in a UNHCR camp in a country of first asylum.

2. Other referral organisations in a country of first asylum, e.g. Canadian visa officers in Canadian representations abroad: a second source of referral are organisations, which due to their operational involvement on the ground might know about refugees eligible for resettlement. This can happen from within Canadian governmental agencies, for example via an officer of a Canadian mission abroad. Other referral organisations in the country of first asylum might include refugee support or other civil society organisations working on the ground, including religious organisations. They will bring the particular cases to the attention of CIC Canada.
3. Sponsoring groups: this refers to groups in Canada who want to sponsor a refugee. Sponsoring groups usually commit themselves to providing settlement assistance to refugees for one year from the date the refugee arrives in Canada. This assistance can take the form of accommodation, clothing and food. Groups can either be well-established organisations such as churches or migrant support organisations but also be a group of five committed individuals who decide ad hoc to sponsor a refugee. Usually when the sponsoring group is also the referral organisation, it will get to know about the refugee to be spon-

⁷ Over the last decades Canada has been among the top three resettlement countries globally.

sored through relatives and/or friends or people from a similar ethnic group (e.g. persons who previously were in the same refugee camp).

Referral option 2 and 3 indicate that private groups and individuals play an important role in identifying and referring refugees for resettlement. In the case of sponsorships, private groups are also essential in assisting refugees after arrival in Canada. In a limited number of countries refugees can also present themselves to Canadian embassies with a request for resettlement.

In all of the three above-mentioned cases, it is CIC who will finally decide if the refugee or the refugee group is accepted for resettlement to Canada. CIC will base its decision about eligibility for resettlement on the question if the refugee is either a “Classical” Convention Refugee living abroad or falls under the so-called “Country of Asylum Class” or “Source Country Class” (both country of asylum and country of origin classes refer to a slightly wider definition of refugees, see: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/resettle-who.html>). The decision can be taken on the basis of information provided by the referring organisations/groups (such as a file) or/and in most cases on the basis of a meeting of CIC officials with the refugee(s) concerned⁸. Refugees will also be subject to a security and criminality check.

ASSISTANCE AFTER RESETTLEMENT TO CANADA

Canada has a number of programmes to help refugees to settle in after arrival in Canada. These programmes among others take care of: accommodation; clothing; food; medical needs; help in finding employment and becoming self-supporting as well as interaction with the host community. The different programmes are all providing these different forms of settlement support but differ according to who provides what and why.

⁸ see chapter “The need of protection: the case of Kenya” on determination procedures

1. Government-Assisted Refugee Program

This programme involves refugees who are Convention Refugees Abroad or members of the Source Country Class. Their initial resettlement in Canada is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or Quebec⁹. In many cases the government will ask nongovernmental actors to act as a “service provider organisation” (SPO) which helps with integration and settlement. It will however fund these integration programmes through government funds. Support can last up to one year from the date of arrival in Canada, or until the refugee is able to support himself or herself, whichever happens first.

2. Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) Program

The JAS is a joint effort by a sponsoring group and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to support a refugee who is requiring special assistance and can only be resettled if the additional support of a sponsor can be assured. Refugees sponsored under the JAS program are those who have special needs that will likely result in a longer or more difficult period of integration. This can for example mean: large number of family members; trauma resulting from violence or torture; medical disabilities and the effects of systemic discrimination. Under JAS, CIC provides financial assistance to cover the cost of food, shelter, clothing and essential household goods, while the sponsoring group provides the extra bit of support needed beyond that: orientation, significant settlement assistance and emotional support.

3. Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

This programme involves refugees whose resettlement in Canada is supported by groups of individuals or organisations in Canada. In this case the group will assume the responsibility of meeting all the support needs of the refugee for his/her first year in Canada (see underneath).

⁹ Based on the Canada-Quebec accord, Quebec selects those refugees to be resettled to Quebec independently.

Over the last 10 years the Canadian government has resettled annually between 7,500 and 10,000 refugees and their dependants according to category 1 and 2. In addition, between 2,100 and 3,500 refugees and their dependants arrived through private sponsorship (In addition between 10,000 and 20,000 refugees annually landed directly in Canada to claim status¹⁰).

PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP IN CANADA

The private sponsorship of refugees is a well-established programme, which since 1979 has helped almost 200,000 refugees to come to Canada, who otherwise would not have received refugee protection. While the programme is open to new groups wanting to sponsor a refugee, a number of issues are considered before a group decides to sponsor.

Who May Sponsor a Refugee?

Both established organisations and individuals may sponsor refugees under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. Sponsoring groups must be made up of Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are at least 18 years old.

Sponsoring groups commit to providing settlement assistance (such as accommodation, clothing and food).

There Are Three Types of Sponsoring Groups:

1. Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and Their Constituent Groups

A number of organisations across Canada have signed sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada to facilitate the sponsorship process. They may sponsor refugees themselves or their constituent groups may sponsor refugees with their approval. E.g. a local parish belonging to a Church, which is a SAH, might decide to be the support group in real life but the national church office will officially act as a sponsor for them.

2. Groups of Five

A group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents can sponsor refugees living abroad. Each member of the group must:

- be at least 18 years of age;
- live in the community where the refugee will live; and
- personally provide settlement assistance and support.

They can decide to specifically get together to sponsor a single refugee, but a group can also decide to act as a sponsor on a continuing basis. In order to be able to sponsor, a Group of 5 must provide a settlement plan, which specifies who will be responsible for which part of the refugee's settlement in Canada. In addition, group members must prove that among them they have the money to sponsor a refugee for one year (i.e. members have to provide information about their income and assets).

3. Community Sponsors

Other groups interested in sponsoring refugees may consider a community sponsorship. This type of sponsorship is open to organisations, associations and corporations who

- have the necessary finances to provide adequate settlement assistance, and
- provide evidence that they are able to support the refugee and his/her family socially and emotionally;
- be based or have representatives in the community where the refugee will live.

Community sponsors can sponsor a maximum of two refugees per year.

In all cases, the groups will formally apply to sponsor a refugee and should be informed within 30 days if their sponsorship has been accepted.

THE LINK BETWEEN REFUGEES AND SPONSORING GROUP

With all three kinds of sponsoring groups, the sponsoring group and sponsored refugee get in touch in two different ways:

- either the group decides to sponsor a specific refugee about whom they know and

¹⁰ <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2005/overview/01.html>

whom they have suggested/referred to CIC for resettlement. In this case, the refugee will already have been known to them before they decided to sponsor and they will have followed the case for a while, e.g. while the eligibility for resettlement was checked.

With these cases, a considerable amount of time can elapse between the decision and application to sponsor a specific refugee and the arrival of the refugee, sometimes several years. In a significant number of cases, the refugee is not considered eligible: as s/he does not meet the criteria to be considered a refugee, s/he will therefore not be resettled to Canada. These cases are causing strong disappointment among sponsoring group and the refugee in question, who both put hopes and energy into the whole process. Canadian visa officers have also indicated frustration about having to turn down cases suggested by sponsorship groups.

- The group can also decide to sponsor a refugee without a specific case in mind and then ask for a referral of a refugee who has already been identified as eligible for resettlement. In this case they will receive a refugee profile from CIC, outlining some general info about the refugee, and decide if they want to sponsor this refugee. In this case the sponsoring group does not know the refugee, but has only a few general indications and the time between decision to sponsor and arrival of the refugee can be fairly short. Sponsoring groups can also request to sponsor refugees with a specific profile, e.g. a Mennonite parish in Ottawa is specifically interested in sponsoring single mothers from the refugee population, as they feel that mobilising adequate support is possible for them.



CCME delegation visiting COSTI Immigrant services, Toronto, Canada, April 2006 (photo Torsten Moritz)

OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OUTSIDE SPONSORSHIP

Service provider organisations

A number of community organisations play an important part as implementing partners (so-called “service-provider organisations”) in the government assisted programme: these organisations offer professional services supported by the community: they provide temporary accommodation for about one month, i.e. assisting in looking for housing, a job and other – home – service provider program provides integration services. These organisations are community based, e.g. churches, neighbourhood organizations, cultural associations. Their work for refugee integration is however primarily funded by the government (local and state).

Volunteering to be a host

The **Host Program** relies on volunteers and aims at welcoming newcomers just starting their lives in Canada. The logic is to “be a friend” and help newcomers adjust to a new way of life.

Volunteers are carefully matched with a newcomer or family. They may have common interests or might work in the same profession. In addition to helping newcomers, this is an opportunity for the volunteer hosts to make new friends and learn about other cultures.

Volunteers meet the newcomers individually, but there are also organized activities for all to enjoy, such as social events, chat sessions and other get-togethers. The more both sides get to know one another, they can plan their own activities and make their own schedule.

Joint activities can include simple things like helping refugees learn how to use the transit system, open a bank account, use a bank machine, where to shop or even how to find a job. Volunteers help refugees to become part of the local community and an active member of Canadian society.

Positive aspects of community involvement and sponsorship

Due to the strong community involvement in resettlement and integration there is a widespread notion that Canada’s economy and society are richer because of immigration and that Canada’s obligation to protect refugees is nothing but fair. This results in a feeling that all Canadians have a part to play in helping immigrants and refugees to adapt to life in Canada. Many Canadians have had direct contact with newly arrived refugees and have personally heard or read about their experiences, which contributes to a generally welcoming climate towards refugees.

CHALLENGES FACED BY REFUGEES IN CANADA

Despite the fairly positive welcome of refugees in Canada, a number of difficult issues remain: most widely the recognition of qualifications obtained prior to the move to Canada, especially university degrees, remain a problem. As a consequence, refugees, just like other migrants, are often employed in lower-skilled jobs than those they could fill with their education. Unemployment remains a problem among refugees as well.

Family life can be a most rewarding but also difficult area of life in Canada: the concept of family in Canada is often different from the one that refugees knew in their own culture – while refugees are usually resettled with their nuclear family, or allowed to bring this nuclear family with them, many refugees are very unhappy that they are not allowed to bring the wider family.

A practical problem which causes frustration among host community and refugees is that many refugees after initial settlement all over Canada move to the Toronto area, where most migrants live and ethnic communities are well-established. This is often leaving host communities outside Toronto disappointed and contributes to difficulties for refugees to make ends meet, as Toronto is too expensive to live, especially if the move to Toronto is not crowned by employment.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN RESETTLEMENT: LESSONS TO LEARN FROM CANADA

Viewing the Canadian experience from a European perspective, it is certainly fair to say that despite difficulties which refugees encounter, it can be seen as a kind of “model” for refugee protection and resettlement. An enormous advantage of the Canadian practice of community involvement in resettlement is that in many aspects it corresponds to the different needs of the refugees as well as the hosting community: the differentiated approach between “ordinary” refugees under government sponsorship and joint sponsorship for cases of special needs makes it possible that the specific support needed by refugees is taken into account. On the other hand, the community involvement and direct interaction enables the local community to relate to the refugees as friends or acquaintances rather than strangers. The fact that calls for private sponsorships often relate the story of the refugee prior to departure to their future hosting community makes it easier for the hosting community to develop empathy towards the refugee and to see how their needs could be met. In addition, many communities feel that being in contact with a refugee makes it possible for them to relate to events around the world and to understand the world much better. Similar experiences might be made in Europe. An element, which is certainly more difficult to develop in a European context is the notion of Canada as a nation of immigrants. Here the Canadian self-concept of “we have all been immigrants” would be more difficult to be transferred into a European reality, which is widely dominated by the myth of a more or less homogenous nation state.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

While the Canadian model offers a number of inspiring experiences, a few areas need to be recognised in which improvement would be needed. As outlined above, there is often a different logic between a group wanting to

sponsor a refugee and officers of CIC: while the first one will often mainly recognise the individual situation of a refugee and his/her protection need, visa officers will have to base their decision on the protection need of a whole refugee population. The time which elapses, while sponsors are waiting for the decision of CIC is very frustrating. The number of rejections of visas is also extremely frustrating and disappointing, as it reaches up to 50% of all submitted applications in some years. Sponsoring communities often feel that the desperate situation of the refugee as well as their sponsoring commitment is not taken seriously in these cases, especially if the refugee is personally known to them. At the same time visa officers report that they would rather spend their time being able to grant refugee protection than refusing it. Initiatives such as the Refugee Sponsorship Training Programme (RSTP) aim at clarifying with sponsoring groups as early as possible, who can be sponsored, in order to avoid disappointment. Identifying refugees to be sponsored via a referral from CIC is an obvious solution, even though this does not solve the issue of a specific group being committed to a specific refugee or refugee community.

An issue after resettlement is the careful monitoring of emerging needs of refugees and the adequateness of services available. It is obvious that refugees supported under the joint assistance programme do have identified special needs. Privately sponsored refugees will usually also receive a fairly complete set of services. This leaves the “ordinary” government-sponsored refugees in a situation, where their general needs are catered for, but where they will not have as intensive support as the other groups. Service providers are therefore in a crucial role in anticipating emerging needs of refugees, which are not per se receiving additional support.

While the role of community organisations and CIC is fairly clearly defined, the role of municipalities seems fairly unclear. As towns are usually the place where refugee integration takes place in practice, a better coordination between CIC and municipalities would help to foster local integration.

THE NEED OF PROTECTION: THE CASE OF KENYA

Alessia Passarelli

Kenya is among the most stable countries in the East African region. For decades it has taken in refugees escaping armed conflicts in surrounding countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The reality of most refugees in Kenya is characterised by being stuck in camps for more than a decade. Despite the fact that Kenya is a signatory country to the 1951 Refugee Convention, its Protocol and the African Refugee Convention, there is no national asylum law and the government's policies towards refugees have become more restrictive in recent years. Examples of this are the requirement for refugees to live in camp settings and the withdrawal of the right to work. There is no possibility of local integration for refugees in Kenya. Most refugees stay in camps in extremely difficult conditions. One other consequence is that while officially there are no refugees in urban settings, in reality there are somewhere between 50.000 and 150.000 refugees living in Nairobi in irregular situation and in precarious conditions, with the constant risk of arrest.

According to the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Appeal 2006 of January 2006, 243.320 refugees were in the country in particular from:

- Somalia 154.300
- Sudan 69.000
- Ethiopia 13.300
- Other refugees 6.720

The majority of them are hosted in two main refugees camp: Dadaab and Kakuma.

Kakuma is situated in Turkana district near the Sudan border. The camp hosts around 82.000 refugees. Sudanese consti-

tutes the largest group followed by Somali, Ethiopian, Rwandese, Burundian and Congolese refugees among the others. The focus of this article will mainly be on Dadaab.

DADAAB

The town of Dadaab is located in the region of Garissa in the North East of Kenya, about 80 km from the border to Somalia. There are three refugee camps in Dadaab: Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera. The region surrounding Dadaab consists of semi-arid desert, sparse vegetation and it has no surface water. Before the establishment of the camps in 1991 and 1992, the area was used exclusively as rangeland by nomadic livestock owners.

The camps host about 130.000 refugees, mostly Somalis who represent 97,5% of the population; in addition there are also Burundian, Congolese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Rwandan, Sudanese and Ugandan refugees.

UNHCR is responsible for the protection of and the provision of assistance to refugees in close cooperation with its implementing partners. CARE Kenya, UNHCR's main implementing partner in Dadaab, is responsible for camp management, food distribution, water and sanitation, education and community services. The other partners comprise the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) providing medical care; Handicap International (HI) is organising medical referrals to Garissa Provincial Hospital; GTZ RESCUE is managing firewood and the environment; and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) is promoting reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and care and peace

education. The World Food Programme (WFP) provides food for the refugees. The Government of Kenya is responsible for the overall management of the programme and for the security of refugees and humanitarian workers while the Kenya Red Cross Society carries out tracing activities within the camps.

Situation of refugees:

- The Kenyan Government maintains a strict encampment policy and confines refugees to the camps, as local integration is not considered to be a durable solution for refugees in Kenya;
- Voluntary repatriation is usually not possible considering the situation in the neighbouring countries and in their country of origin;
- There is a security problem in the camp, especially for women. GTZ runs a firewood project in Dadaab to protect women from becoming victim of violence while they are looking for wood in the surroundings;
- Discrimination of disabled persons is an issue of concern;
- Food rations are often insufficient, particularly as UN agencies had to cut them due to the lack of funding;
- Lack of employment and activities within the camp. Refugees are not entitled to work, they have to stay in the camp;
- Refugees are entirely depending on humanitarian aid.

Identification and processing of cases

Identification and referral is a crucial phase of resettlement; a phase where partnership with NGOs can be crucial. Traditionally UNHCR has been mandated for identification and referral of refugees to resettlement countries and is major actor on the ground, sometimes operating with NGOs as implementing partners. UNHCR referrals are particularly important for the resettlement programmes of the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. The USA, Canada and Australia have additional systems which foresee referrals from different entities.

State authorities may select resettlement cases:

- on dossier basis in their respective capitals,
- by sending selection missions to asylum countries, or
- through immigration officers posted in the countries of asylum.

Identification: the example of the USA

Increasingly, NGOs and resettlement countries advocate for more direct involvement of NGOs in resettlement case submissions and processing. While the involvement of NGOs at such an early stage is not at all common practice, it presents a potential for improving the system. The strongest role for NGOs is currently the case preparation for the USA. It is thus worthwhile to have a closer look at their practice in Kenya.

The USA Resettlement Programme has 9 Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs) worldwide and Nairobi is the largest one, run by the Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA), through the Church World Service (CWS) since 1991. It covers 22 countries in East, Central and South Africa with 130 staff members, most of them locals. JVA is an operational organisation formed by 10 agencies in US which receive resettled refugees.

The work of JVA can be summarised by:

- Case preparation;
- Pre-screening or preliminary interviews;
- Case file preparation¹¹;
- Case presentation to the Department of Homeland and Security (DHS). The latter make the final decision as to who is recognised as a refugee and eligible for resettlement to the USA.

JVA conducts three interviews per refugee before submitting the case to the DHS. If the case is a referral from UNHCR, the refugee has already passed at least one previous interview. Although the approval rate of submitted cases to DHS is about 82%, the refugee will undertake yet another

¹¹ see E. Kekic, NGO involvement in the resettlement programme, in: Claassen/Peschke (eds): Making Refugee Resettlement Work, pp 45ff

interview process before finally being resettled to the USA. The process is very long and can take up to 18 months.

The high number of interviews which the refugee has to go through is determined by the difficulty in identifying cases, especially with regard to family composition and verification of the date of birth. Most of the refusals of resettlement applications are based on a lack of credibility of the refugee.

JVA works with three operational partners:

- UNHCR which refers the biggest number of cases, 95% of all cases are UNHCR referrals;
- US Immigration Officers who travel around to interview and adjudicate cases submitted from 22 countries;
- International Organisation on Migration (IOM) which is in charge of transport, medical screenings, pre-departures activities like e.g. cultural orientation.

In addition to the organisations mentioned above, JVA collaborates with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) which helps preparing resettlement cases to be submitted to Governments, with whom HIAS has independent relationships. In 2005 HIAS submitted 105 cases for resettlement.

Role of Civil Society in Nairobi

Although officially there are no refugees in urban settings, in reality there are somewhere between 50.000 and 150.000 refugees living in Nairobi in irregular situations, often in precarious conditions and at constant risk of arrest. Also in this specific situation, NGOs play a significant and crucial role in providing services to those forgotten refugees who do not exist for the government. These NGOs are not necessarily resettlement agencies but it happens that they refer cases for resettlement to JVA or directly to the DHS.

Among these are:

- **HIAS** (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society): providing protection and psychosocial assistance; preparing resettlement cases for submission to governments; accompanying people to subsequent interviews (JVA and states); training

partner NGOs to identify vulnerable refugees; no referrals from camps;

- **Mapendo** (Great Love): founded in 2002 to create a safety net for people in Africa who are fleeing violence and do not have access to humanitarian aid. Mapendo has a medical clinic in Nairobi for people without any UNHCR assistance;

- **JRS** (Jesuit Refugee Service): JRS runs programmes focussing on education and literacy as instruments of protection; psycho-social programmes to accompany vulnerable persons, victims of torture, violence and abuse; counselling, medical help and shelter for refugees in slums, pastoral care, advocacy work;

- **"Refugee Consortium"** formed by different NGOs and founded by JRS addresses refugee protection problems. The Lutheran World Federation and local churches are strong partners.



Dadaab refugees camp, Kenya, June 2006 (photo Alessia Passarelli)

OBSERVATIONS

The refugee situation in Kenya is very complex. There are 243.320 refugees in the country out of which only 4.632 were resettled in 2005.

Kenya is situated in a region where several conflicts have led to the highest number of uprooted people in the world. Confronted with the high number of refugees, the government of Kenya decided to accommodate them in camps, allowing humanitarian aid, but not to offer them a possibility of local integration.

There are no opportunities for refugees in refugee camps, no job possibilities and no hope for a better future. Refugees are confined in camps and moving outside can result in the loss of the refugee status with a high risk of being arrested by the local police.

Local NGOs could play a significant role in organising activities in the refugee camps. Setting up such activities could create some employment opportunities; it could provide refugees with skills and hope, and – most importantly – help that they are not totally dependent on international aid.

The situation in the urban area is not better for refugees considering that officially – with few exceptions – refugees should not be staying outside the camps.

Due to their specific expertise and knowledge of the refugees' population in Kenya

the role of NGOs' in identifying vulnerable cases and individual refugees facing protection problems is crucial in cooperating with and supporting the work of UNHCR.

In 2005, UNHCR resettled 4.632 people: 374 from Nairobi, 1.877 from Dadaab and 2.381 from Kakuma. In 2006, UNHCR plans to resettle 2.000 from Dadaab and 2.150 from Kakuma; 2.500 to the USA, 400 to Canada and 250 to Australia. Resources are the biggest challenge for the Resettlement Programme as the most vulnerable people are the most difficult to resettle.

The role and capacity of UNHCR in referring cases should be strengthened to avoid confusion in the identification process and to avoid the risk of fraud or duplication.

Unfortunately the number of refugees selected for resettlement is still limited taking into consideration that there are 243.320 refugees in Kenya. In addition, refugees who already were forced to leave their country see themselves stuck in camps where they do not control their own life and are depending on humanitarian aid.

For all these reasons Europe cannot stay aside but should take its responsibility for the world refugees' and resettle more refugees. This would offer them the opportunity to rebuild their life in dignity in Europe.

MAIN COUNTRIES OF RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES (2005)

USA	53.813	Ireland	117
Australia	11.654	Brazil	76
Canada	10.400	Chile	46
Sweden	1.263	Argentina	34
Finland	766	Iceland	31
Norway	749	Mexico	29
New Zealand	741		
Denmark	483	TOT	80.796
Netherlands	419		
UK	175		

* Source: Governments.

Table source: Refugees By Numbers, 2006 edition.

WHY EUROPE SHOULD RESETTLE MORE REFUGEES?

Doris Peschke

Refugee resettlement to Europe is still not very high on the political agenda. This is partly due to the fact that the concept is not well known, but also due to the fear that it may further undermine the existing asylum system. Other reasons may be that EU Member States focus still on tightening borders to prevent irregular immigration and the lack of knowledge about the refugee situations today in other regions of the world.

While in some regions conflicts could be resolved and persons return to their country of origin, there are still conflicts in many regions where people do not have choices: They flee to save their lives.

There are a number of reasons why European states, particularly EU Member States, should resettle more refugees:

1. The number of asylum seekers reaching Europe has declined considerably over the past years, thus reducing Europe's share and contribution in providing international protection to refugees. Providing protection is an international responsibility which requires sharing of responsibility.
2. Refugee resettlement is an act of solidarity with those countries taking in the majority of refugees today. While these countries need direct material and technical support, as the majority of refugees are likely to stay in their region of origin, resettlement can help reduce possible tension and conflict in these countries.
3. Refugees with a high risk of persecution or harassment need to find safety and protection.
4. Refugees with complicated and serious medical needs, or with disabilities, would have a chance for adequate treatment

and possibly training in EU Member States and be able to live in dignity.

5. Durable solutions – voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement – are complementary to each other. None excludes the other. If strategically used, e.g. by resettling one group of refugees, the other refugees may find protection in the country of first asylum and be allowed to integrate locally. If more countries take their responsibility, providing protection will be easier for every single one.
6. The European Union with a common policy on asylum and to some extent repatriation ought to complement this with a EU resettlement scheme.
7. An EU scheme could facilitate the necessary mechanisms and instruments required for resettlement – partnership with UNHCR, communication, exchange, cooperation with countries of asylum and NGOs. Within an EU scheme, the Member States would be able to identify which country is most suitable to address special needs.
8. A joint approach would enable particularly smaller EU Member States to participate fully without the need to create complicated and costly structures.
9. Resettlement provides the opportunity for good, coordinated and quality reception and integration programmes.
10. Resettlement can facilitate and broaden public understanding of all refugees, their plight and the situations they flee. Involving NGOs at all stages of resettlement would allow EU Member States to expand their resettlement capacities.

APPENDIX 1:

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APPENDIX 2:

Conclusions and recommendations

of the CCME consultation “Making resettlement work” - 2004

The conference “Making resettlement work” held in Brussels in April 2004 concluded:

1. Worldwide, there are more than 17 million asylum seekers, refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as an estimated 25 million internally displaced people in 50 countries. The majority of refugees live in Africa, Asia and Latin America, hosted often by poorer countries close to conflict regions. The international community has the responsibility to provide protection for displaced persons and refugees.
2. International instruments for the protection of refugees need to be strengthened. While conflict resolution and subsequent repatriation are the preferred option, conflict resolution is often not achieved in short time spans. Enhancing international protection requires:
 - Strengthening the capacity for protection in the countries of asylum; and at the same time,
 - increasing considerably the capacity for refugee resettlement to more countries.
3. Refugee resettlement, involving the granting of permanent or long-term status in a resettlement country, is important as an instrument complementary to asylum for providing international protection for persons in need of it. It cannot be a substitute for other forms of durable solutions for displaced persons, like integration in countries of asylum or repatriation. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the competent international organisation with mandated responsibility for international protection which must be recognised as central to refugee resettlement. The need exists:
 - For governments to strengthen UNHCR’s capacity to develop and implement the instruments of protection, including more refugee resettlement;
 - To further strengthen the cooperation with and involvement of non-governmental organisations in resettlement activities.
4. Refugee resettlement should first and foremost provide protection to persons in need. However, as history shows, refugee resettlement is often linked to foreign policy considerations. As cooperation between various countries is involved, Foreign Policy departments ought to be involved. However, humanitarian principles of protecting persons have to be the priority and foreign policy aims need to be balanced with the objective of providing protection. Promoting the ratification and implementation of the Geneva Refugee Convention by more countries constitutes an important element of foreign policy approaches.
5. The information provided on the European Commission’s plan for EU involvement in refugee resettlement is very much appreciated. The conference expresses the hope that the EU Council will decide quickly to
 - Establish an EU wide resettlement scheme, possibly with the creation of a European Resettlement Office;
 - Agree to flexible and appropriate targets for resettling refugees. Initial levels could be low, but in order to have real impact with regard to international responsibility sharing, they should significantly increase. Relatively consistent or steadily rising numbers will be necessary to maintain operational capacity.
 - Accept broad and flexible criteria for selection of people for resettlement.
 - Strengthen the capacity for resettling particularly vulnerable groups, i.e. persons in need of medical treatment, single mothers with their children.

6. The conference appreciates the European Commission's intention to make refugee resettlement part of a broader programme which shall include strengthening the capacity of refugee protection in other regions. A comprehensive approach will however have to address
 - the global disparities of wealth and the necessary expansion of development cooperation to reduce poverty. Refugee protection schemes thus should not compete with but rather complement development schemes.
 - Enhancing protection capacities in other regions must be coupled with a considerable intake of refugees by the more wealthy countries to be credible and coherent. This point is of considerable importance as the debate on refugee resettlement for EU member states has been linked to its potential to reduce the number of asylum seekers in Europe. Particularly the debate in the Council on "safe third countries" and "first countries of asylum" raises concern about the sincerity of the fulfilling the international obligation to provide protection.
7. From the experience of refugee resettlement shared at the conference, successful refugee resettlement requires:
 - Public awareness of the need of protection for displaced persons;
 - Creating conditions for welcoming refugees and strangers.
8. NGOs can and should be part of refugee resettlement at various levels:
 - Post-arrival: After arrival of refugees, NGOs could be involved in providing a variety of informational, residential and orientation services to resettling refugees. Services could range from immediate arrival assistance to longer-term guidance and counselling to facilitate integration.
 - Selection: NGOs have proven to be reliable partners for UNHCR and governments for identification and selection of people for refugee resettlement. Therefore, for European NGOs working with refugees, involvement in the selection and determination procedures should be considered.
 - Orientation: After determination for resettlement and prior to departure, orientation and language courses for refugees have proven to be effective to facilitate integration. NGOs have extensive experience in providing such services.
 - Information: To create conditions of welcoming refugees, NGOs and
 - governments should jointly embark on information campaigns informing the public on the need and value of refugee protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- NGOs could be part of a Private Sponsorship Scheme, as an additional and complementary instrument to the governmental resettlement programmes;
 - CCME supports ECRE's proposal of the development/establishment of a European Resettlement Office to ensure closer cooperation between current and future European resettlement countries. This European Resettlement Office should include also NGO representatives of European agencies working with refugees as well as organisations of refugees.
 - Governments and NGOs should develop mechanisms of thorough evaluation and assessment of the resettlement process which might be a powerful lobby and advocacy instrument. It is important that the NGOs push for an annual review of the programme at EU level to improve the programme.
- CCME should be part of the effort to publicise the concept of refugee resettlement and the related UNHCR and EU policies in European countries, and lobby and campaign for comprehensive resettlement programmes.

APPENDIX 3:

“The Way Forward. Towards a European Resettlement Programme”. Recommendations of the European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

Recommendation 1:

The three universally accepted functions of resettlement should act as the guiding principles for any expanded resettlement activities in Europe.

Recommendation 2:

Any reconsideration of European resettlement activities, either on the part of individual states or collectively through the European Union, should include resettlement commitments that are responsive to global resettlement need.

Recommendation 3:

Comparing Europe's current level of resettlement activities with other countries, and with 6 million refugees in 38 protracted refugee situations around the world, Europe should increase its engagement in resettlement.

Recommendation 4:

European states that currently undertake resettlement should increase their efforts to fill the annual quotas made available. They should also make every effort to consistently expand resettlement programmes.

Recommendation 5:

Emerging resettlement countries and those countries that have not yet considered resettlement in Europe should, as a matter of urgency, undertake to establish a national resettlement programme on whatever scale feasible, in order to begin to take their share of the global resettlement responsibility.

Recommendation 6:

European states should also act in a coordinated fashion to enhance and expand their resettlement activities.

Recommendation 7:

The establishment of an EU-wide resettlement scheme as proposed by the European Commission should lead to an increase in the opportunities for resettlement to Europe, and it should also engage the participation of all EU Member States.

Recommendation 8:

In the longer term an EU-wide resettlement scheme should be expanded into a truly joint European resettlement programme based on common criteria and the commitment of European states to make a significant number of resettlement places available every year.

Recommendation 9:

European resettlement commitments should be significant enough to make an appropriate contribution to meeting the large global resettlement needs.

Recommendation 10:

In developing a European resettlement programme, European countries should commit themselves to collectively resettling a certain number of people (be this through setting up a quota, target or ceiling) and they should determine a fair and equitable system for the allocation of places. The number agreed on should be based on:

- 1) a true assessment of need for resettlement and not one based on UNHCR's capacity to process the cases, or overall country pledges;
- 2) a spirit of responsibility sharing equally with other countries or unions of similar size and economy;
- 3) the political willingness and financial capacity to support a well-run programme.

Recommendation 11:

Formal multi-year resettlement commitments, which roll over any unfilled places, should be developed as a useful means of ensuring the dependability of both national resettlement programmes and a European programme. However, they should be regarded as minimum-level commitments and revisited regularly to ensure that they are in line with resettlement need.

Recommendation 12:

As a first step the EU should establish a European Refugee Resettlement Fund, as part of fiscal responsibility sharing, to support the costs of resettlement activities of its Member States, accession states and other European countries. Contributions to the funds should come from not only Member States but also private donors.

Recommendation 13:

Refugees should not be required to bear any of the costs of their resettlement. This sets a dangerous precedent for equating access to protection with financial means, and could discriminate against certain refugees and groups of refugees.

Recommendation 14:

In addition under no circumstances should an approach to responsibility sharing be undertaken in which countries are allowed to circumvent their responsibility to resettle persons physically by increasing their financial contributions and paying other countries to resettle their 'share' of refugees.

Recommendation 15:

Recognising that states have primary responsibility for the financing of refugee resettlement and integration, as mechanisms to promote civil society and public support, other financing models, such as private-public partnerships, should be explored.

Recommendation 16:

An approach linking resettlement and asylum responsibility in the context of a truly joint European resettlement programme could be explored in the long term, but through only a thorough study of all the possible permutations and their consequences, in order to determine whether there are viable methodologies that would contribute to better burden and responsibility sharing without compromising Europe's role in the global refugee protection system.

Recommendation 17:

A EU Resettlement Office in Brussels, working in close cooperation with UNHCR, should be incrementally developed in order to support the effective implementation of European resettlement activities. Such an office should at all times avoid duplicating UNHCR activities, and it should work closely with relevant UNHCR and NGO staff in a tripartite spirit.

Recommendation 18:

UNHCR should undertake and be resourced to conduct a greater coordinating role in the resettlement process. This should include increasing resettlement staffing generally.

Recommendation 19:

Mechanisms that make full use of the experience and expertise of NGOs are needed for input into the development of new national programmes and any collective European programme. Significant NGO involvement in an EU resettlement scheme should therefore be developed.

Recommendation 20:

Mechanisms to make the most of the experience and expertise of NGOs in the resettlement process in regions of origin need to be in place. NGOs working on behalf of refugees and those involved in refugee integration in resettlement countries could designate one NGO to coordinate an NGO-wide response by acting on behalf of them all as the focal point in a site of significant refugee need and as local liaison and implementing partner with host Governments, European diplomatic missions, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other humanitarian agencies, as well as local NGOs and other actors in local civil society. Any structures would, however, have to be reviewed as an EU resettlement scheme developed into a joint programme.

Recommendation 21:

Refugees should be engaged in resettlement planning, coordination and evaluation.

Recommendation 22:

Countries of first asylum should be involved in the planning of large-scale resettlement activities to ensure that they result in the alleviation rather than exacerbation of security concerns.

Recommendation 23:

The driving force behind the allocation of commitments for a European resettlement scheme should not be political considerations; the commitments should be divided up between specific regions hosting refugees and the different functions of resettlement. Numbers allocated to specific regions should be determined in consultation with the global resettlement needs assessment prepared annually by UNHCR. Minimum numbers should also be specified for the resettlement of vulnerable groups and refugees with special protection or other needs, such as victims of torture, and medical cases. All commitments, however, should be able to respond to unforeseen resettlement needs.

Recommendation 24:

The targeting of populations by the EU should be informed by a dialogue with NGOs to ensure that decisions are rooted in refugee realities.

Recommendation 25:

For the protection function of resettlement to be realised effectively, considerations of the individual's need for international protection should be balanced with their vulnerability in the country of asylum and their need for resettlement. The determination of a protection status for resettlement within an EU scheme should be flexible, involving an inclusive interpretation of both the refugee definition in the 1951 Refugee Convention and of persons qualifying for subsidiary protection according to the EU Qualification Directive. Refugee status determination should also strongly follow the guidance in Chapter 3 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and allow for resettlement to be extended to refugees recognised under the UNHCR mandate, including those recognised under the extended mandate.

Recommendation 26:

The application of flexible criteria should not, however, preclude a full consideration of the possible application of the relevant Exclusion Clauses, as contained in Article 1F of the 1951 Refugee Convention, and according to the procedures outlined in Chapter 3 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook.

Recommendation 27:

The resettlement criteria as contained in Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook (2004) should serve as the basis for the determination of resettlement need for European resettlement activities.

Recommendation 28:

Women and children comprise specific criteria in themselves and their specific rights, vulnerabilities and needs should be strongly taken into consideration and mainstreamed throughout the resettlement criteria and procedures, including status determination.

Recommendation 29:

Any identified need for resettlement according to UNHCR criteria should be the overriding principle rather than any considerations of an individual's integration potential.

Recommendation 30:

In the longer term, as an EU scheme develops into a joint European resettlement programme, these criteria should be reflected in the resettlement activities of all Member States.

Recommendation 31:

Resettlement should focus on protecting and guarding the unity of the family. In the case of the nuclear family, namely parents and children under the age of 18, no additional criteria should apply in defining them as a family unit. The notion of the family unit should not be limited to the nuclear family, however, and it should also be rooted in an understanding of dependency where a person directly depends on another for his or her safety and economic and psychological well-being.

Recommendation 32:

Countries of first asylum should facilitate access to refugee populations to help the identification of refugees in need of resettlement.

Recommendation 33:

Any European resettlement programme should include provisions for the consideration of resettlement referrals from UNHCR, overseas missions, organisations or family members already in the resettlement country, and from NGOs (via UNHCR) working in the region of origin.

Recommendation 34:

The involvement of NGOs in the identification of refugees in need of resettlement should be supported. This would not only help identify the most needy cases, but legitimise the selection process and therefore broaden accountability. There are various ways in which NGOs could be involved in the context of a European resettlement programme:

- Developing formal arrangements or partnerships, making NGOs implementing partners in order to identify groups and individuals in need of resettlement;
- By getting NGOs involved in referrals on a case-by-case basis (for example through the delivery of training and ensuring safeguards to maintain the integrity of the original programme);
- By further developing State-funded deployments/secondments to UNHCR to meet new needs.

Recommendation 35:

Procedures should be developed for the identification of groups of refugees in need of resettlement. With greater numbers being resettled to Europe through a future joint programme, consideration of the group methodology would become even more necessary.

Recommendation 36:

The identification of groups in need of resettlement should not be undertaken at the expense of individual case identification; instead it should be coupled with the additional human resources required for the processing of that group.

Recommendation 37:

If European states pursue additional resettlement processing in regions of refugee origin, they would first need to ensure sufficient resources, including support to UNHCR and operational NGOs, were made available.

Recommendation 38:

European NGOs could play a supportive role in the processing stage:

- They could assume the required administrative responsibilities prior to decision making by the resettlement country, such as preparing refugees for interviews and preparing the dossiers required for state decision making. This would leave UNHCR free to concentrate on its key mandate, including the coordination of durable solutions, and again reinforce its capacity at registration and refugee status determination (RSD) level.
- UNHCR's oversight of the RSD process would need to be maintained, but NGOs could also be usefully involved in core processing activities such as refugee status determination. It could be envisaged that through secondments to UNHCR, NGO staff could undertake RSDs up to the referral stage.
- NGO staff could also be sub-contracted by governments to support them during the referral to submission stage of the resettlement process.

Recommendation 39:

The involvement of UNHCR and NGOs at the decision-making stage of the process should be considered (in both dossier cases and selection missions) to help advise on the particular circumstances of individual cases or provide additional background on the protection environment in the country of first asylum.

Recommendation 40:

Decision-making processes should also involve refugee communities to help make state decision-makers more aware and sensitive to the many issues faced by the refugees in need of resettlement.

Recommendation 41:

UNHCR's determination of refugee status, made prior to submission for resettlement, should be accepted in principle, in all circumstance, as status for admission to a resettlement country, with the possibility for audit where deemed necessary by the resettlement country.

Recommendation 42:

In light of the protection function of resettlement, a European resettlement programme must include provisions for the treatment of emergency resettlement cases within five days.

Recommendation 43:

In the long-term, ways to keep simple the decision-making process in a joint European reset-

tlement programme with more common elements should be explored. The decision on resettlement for example could conceivably be taken by representatives not of a Member State, but the EU.

Recommendation 44:

Pre-departure activities should be included in a resettlement scheme as they facilitate integration in the resettlement country, and they should be carried out by well-trained persons.

Recommendation 45:

Although there is a recognised need for security checks they should not lead to undue delays in the resettlement process.

Recommendation 46:

The development of a European resettlement programme should include an active role for NGOs in facilitating pre-departure activities. Cultural orientation may be conducted by NGOs on behalf of resettlement countries. NGOs can also be involved in providing counselling services, information on integration in the resettlement country and language training.

Recommendation 47:

NGOs could also take on monitoring, such as ensuring that refugees undergo effective medical screening and are treated for particular diseases prior to their resettlement. NGOs could even help arrange medical checks. Another useful role for NGOs would be as watchdogs for the provision of travel documentation and the issuing of exit permits by countries of first asylum, as these are common obstacles that can add unnecessary delays to the process. Ultimately however countries of first asylum need to be more effective at facilitating exit visas.

Recommendation 48:

Refugees and domestic constituencies with specific understandings of the regions of origin from where resettled refugees will be arriving could and should also be engaged in pre-departure activities:

- They could be consulted on the form and content of cultural orientation courses and refugee community organisations (RCOs) could play a role in their delivery;
- They could be used as cultural and linguistic interpreters, providing information and helping manage the expectations of refugees about to be resettled.

Recommendation 49:

Governments of resettlement countries should be engaged in active education programmes that target the general community, and they should also closely consult key opinion formers in the communities in which refugees are to be resettled.

Recommendation 50:

NGOs should be involved in informing the local population and enrolling their support.

Recommendation 51:

Government and NGO action to engage the support of receiving communities in resettlement countries should be followed up with immediate access to comprehensive integration programmes for refugees upon arrival. These should involve all stakeholders including refugees already present in the resettlement country.

APPENDIX 4:

List of participants who attended the Capacity building visits

FINLAND 6TH –11TH MARCH 2006

- Federica Brizi – FCEI/SRM, Italy
- Alexandra Gröller – Diakonie, Austria
- Alessia Passarelli – CCME
- Doris Peschke – CCME
- Cristian Popescu – Soze , Czech Republic
- Geesje Werkman – Protestant Church in the Netherlands

USA 22ND –30TH APRIL 2006

- Reyes Castillo – ACCEM, Spain
- Flavio Di Giacomo – CIR/FCEI, Italy
- Alessia Passarelli – CCME

CANADA 22ND – 30TH APRIL 2006

- Christoph Riedl – Diakonie, Austria
- Kati Turtiainen – Municipality of Jyväskylä, Finland
- Torsten Moritz – CCME

KENYA 7TH – 13TH JUNE 2006

- Dorritt Akinbobola – CCRJ, UK
- Michael Bubik – Diakonie Austria
- Patricia Coelho – ECRE, UK
- Franca Di Lecce – FCEI/SRM, Italy
- Alessia Passarelli – CCME
- Kati Turtiainen – Municipality of Jyväskylä, Finland

“UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN PRACTICE”

The project “Understanding Refugee Resettlement in Practice: Capacity Building for Action” has been jointly carried out by the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Refugee Service of Diakonie-Evangelisches Hilfswerk Austria, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the Service for Refugees and Migrants of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy and the Churches’ Commission for Racial Justice in the United Kingdom. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles ECRE participated at all stages in the project. UNHCR has supported and contributed to the various parts of the project. Valuable insights and support were also given by the Immigration and Refugee Program of Church World Service USA and the Canadian Delegation to the EU and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The project started with a conference in November 2005 to update all participants in the project as well as interested persons beyond the project partners on the current state of refugee resettlement. On that basis, capacity building visits were planned. The first delegation visited Finland in March 2006 to learn about the Finnish resettlement programme and to look particularly at the integration of resettled refugees. The second visit was in April 2006 with two groups learning about the resettlement programmes of the USA and Canada respectively. The third visit took a delegation to a country of first asylum, Kenya, to see how resettlement programmes are conducted at the source. A concluding conference in July 2006 received reports from the visits. This booklet shares some of the insights.

CCME is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, refugees and asylum, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. CCME members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches, diaconal agencies and Councils of Churches in presently 16 European countries. CCME cooperates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches



The Project ‘Understanding Resettlement in Practice: Capacity Building for Action’ is coordinated by CCME and funded by the European Refugee Fund of the European Commission, Directorate-General Freedom, Security and Justice. The views expressed and information provided by the project and the partners involved do not necessarily reflect the point of view of the European Commission and do in no way fall under the responsibility of the European Commission.

Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe - CCME
Rue Joseph II 174, B-1000 Bruxelles
Tel. + 32 2 234 68 00; Fax +32 2 231 14 13; e-mail: info@ccme.be