



Resettlement Newsletter

Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe

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For I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.
Matthew 25:35b



Resettlement from Guinea: an ICMC deployee is establishing the family composition (photo: ICMC, see page 4)

Gathering momentum for additional refugee protection...

Welcome back to our Resettlement Newsletter!!!

We are glad to announce you that with this issue, the "Resettlement Newsletter" will continue. We will remain in touch for the following year every two months.

As in previous issues, we will continue to keep you updated about developments in the area of refugee resettlement in Europe: how are policies on resettlement developing, what particular groups are in need of resettlement, what is new in practice on the ground, which EU countries are "emerging" as resettlement countries?

As you will see from this issue of the "resettlement newsletter", there is new momentum in a number of countries: new communities are getting ready to welcome resettled refugees, new ways are developed to organise selection missions and new expertise is built.

At the same time, the desperate situation of millions of women, men and children around the globe who have fled persecution and civil war but cannot find permanent protection in the place where they found initial protection makes it clear how much resettlement needs to be enlarged as a tool of refugee protection.

Take your time, go through our articles and please feel free to get back to us with your feedback!

Enjoy the reading!

Best regards,

Torsten Moritz

UNHCR calls for resettlement of Palestinians who fled from Iraq

UNHCR in an aide-memoire of December 2006 calls for the resettlement of Palestinian refugees who have fled conflict in Iraq. Some Palestinians fled to Iraq in 1948 and others were born in the country. However, as UNHCR reports, they have become a target of arbitrary arrest, detention, false accusations in the media, abduction, kidnapping, torture and even extra-judicial killings. Several thousand Palestinians are believed to have fled Iraq to neighbouring countries since 2003. Currently several hundred of these Palestinians are stranded in refugee camps in Syria and Jordan and in the Iraqi-Syrian border area. While UNHCR is currently providing assistance in these camps, the refugees' continuous dependency on humanitarian aid, the refugees' limited freedom to move, the lack of suitable infrastructure and general lack of future perspective makes it necessary to find a viable alternative. UNHCR for that reasons appeals to the international community to offer resettlement into third countries as a humanitarian option, alongside with temporary protection in neighbouring States and other Arab countries and, if desired, voluntary movement to the occupied Palestinian territories. UNHCR will be constantly updating its calls for resettlement of persons fleeing the conflict in Iraq in view of the emerging protection needs.

UK gateway programme extends to Brighton and Hove

Refugees offered a new home by the sea

Lucy Bryson reports from Brighton & Hove

Brighton and Hove is a city on the south coast of England with a long history of accepting refugees and migrants from all over the world. During September and October last year, the city became home to 79 refugees from East Africa. The new arrivals were brought to the UK as part of the Gateway Protection Programme (the UK's resettlement programme) from Kenya by the British Home Office, working in close collaboration with UNHCR. Many of the refugees had lived in huge camps for up to fifteen years. Originally from Ethiopia, the refugees had been forced to flee their homes due to ethnic conflict in the region.



Dadaab refugee camp/Kenya. June 2006
Photo: CCME/Passarelli

A wide range of groups, agencies and local government departments worked together to plan for the arrival of the refugees in Brighton and Hove and continue to meet to oversee their resettlement in the city. The children are all settling in mainstream schools following a six week period in a special orientation programme. Work is underway to assist the adults into training and work which matches the skills, experience and aspirations they brought with them from Africa. A specialist refugee support agency, Migrant Helpline, is providing day to day support to the refugees with the aim of ensuring that they are confident and settled in the city. The majority of the refugees are Muslim and they have been made welcome at local mosques, arriving as they did shortly before Ramadan last year.

The others are Christian and many have started attending a local Evangelical church, frequented by other members of the African communities in the city.

The refugees themselves have expressed their gratitude and relief at being offered a new home here. Many of them say that, above all, they want to be able to contribute to the local community and to be seen doing

so by the local population.

Lucy Bryson is Policy and Development Co-ordinator for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Partnership Community Safety Team

Why should Europe resettle refugees?

- 1) Resettlement creates the opportunity to provide protection, especially to those most in need such as the most vulnerable.
- 2) Resettlement is a way for Europe to exercise its solidarity and take its share of its responsibility in the provision of this durable solution to the world's refugees.
- 3) Resettlement provides access to Europe for refugees.
- 4) Resettlement provides the opportunity to develop co-ordinated high quality reception and integration programmes
- 5) Resettlement is an important means of facilitating public understanding of all refugees, their plight and the situations they flee.

(from ECRE: 'The Way Forward: Towards a European Resettlement Programme' see: http://www.ecre.org/resources/policy_papers/ 253)

Experiences from the journey to meet refugees

Kati Turtiainen shares impressions of her participation in a Finnish refugee selection mission to Myanmar

In November 2006, I went along together with Finnish delegation of officials to choose some Myanmar refugees from Ban Mai Nai Soi refugee camp in Northern Thailand. Out of the 750 refugee quota for Finland per year, we chose 350 refugees from the camp. Normally, the officials from Home Office and Ministry of Labour take part in the delegation, but this time also I was allowed as a regional representative. I work in reception work as a manager of Jyväskylä Immigrant Services in a medium sized city of Finland. Our office was founded already in 1990 when refugees started arriving to Finland systematically each year and they were also received outside the capital. According to the work customs, the people carrying out the reception work of refugees within regions do not know the background of the refugees before they arrive to the country. Their background information and the grounds for persecution have been removed from the refugee form of UNHCR as not needed by the regions. This has made it harder to understand the situations of the refugees even though the refugees think it should be obvious that the authorities know their background, because it is first asked when applying for a refugee status and then when interviewed on entry for a third country. On the other hand, of course, there is the matter of a chance to start with a clean slate in a new country, but this



Kati Turtiainen

is not conveyed by the refugees themselves. I had visited Dabaab refugee camp in Kenya within CCME's processing modelling project of refugee work, which gave me a good point of comparison for the camp in Thailand. These were two totally different worlds; people in Dabaab were appealing to European organisations and churches that they would come and work in the camp to educate people, organise spare time activities and to provide all round help there. At Ban Mai Nai Soi, I saw the best sides of how the third sector works in practice (NGO - non-governmental organisations). Education, health care, churches and many other activities there were organised by the help from a third party. Also the camp itself was well organised compared to the refugee camp in Dabaab's

sandy desert where getting around was difficult. Now I understand the plea from the camp director in Dabaab where he was especially hoping for help from the organisations. The role of UNHCR in Thailand was also considerably smaller, because the Thai authorities wanted keep their hold on the camp.

Refugees often say that you can not understand and it is very hard for them to tell about the realities of their background. When I have told the Myanmar refugees already in our town about visiting the camp, they say now you understand, please tell others too, so that they would also understand.

I am waiting with interest for a moment when the people from Myanmar that I interviewed will be arriving to Jyväskylä. Time will tell whether the first meeting and the expectations of the services' necessity in the new country has been close to what is needed. During the interviewing process, they will be assessed whether they are survivors or do they need a lot of support. In my opinion, the journey to meet the refugees was an excellent chance for a hands-on worker to understand the backgrounds of the refugees more deeply and based on that, to develop the reception work.

Kati Turtiainen is Director of Immigrant Services in Jyväskylä /Finland

European Refugee Fund supports European cooperation projects on resettlement : The MOST project and ICMC European Resettlement network

The MOST project

The MOST - *Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees* is a EU funded project, which started at the beginning of December 2006. The project partners are the Ministry of Labour, Finland, the Reception and Integration Agency, Ireland, the Ministry of Labour, Spain and the Swedish Integration Board, Sweden in cooperation with the UNHCR, IOM and ECRE.

The overall objective of the project is to develop comprehensive models for quicker and better integration of refugees, who come directly from crises situations or refugee camps to the European Union. MOST aims to this by testing new practices and approaches related to the selection of refugees, the orientation to their arrival and the introduction to the structures and habits of the host society. The results of the project will not have any impact on the selection criteria, out of which the main criteria remains to be the individual need for international protection.

Refugees, who arrive within resettlement programmes, have quite often too high expectations on the new host country. Many of them have, in the first country of asylum, supported themselves and their family without any help from the society. However, after resettlement they are not expected to work until they have learned the language, adopted local habits and studied the culture. At the same time language training and other integration supportive studies are often provided by specialised organisations, and contacts with local inhabitants are limited. In this situation, motivation for learning new language can be low and it is easy to lose the active, self-

supportive role and become a client of different social services provided by the new host society.

The project seeks solutions for these problems by involving local communities to the reception related activities. The project will develop pre- and post-arrival introduction programmes, which are based on interaction and active participation at local level. These training programmes will be a continuum. Meaning that the post arrival cultural orientation training given at the new host country is built on themes already developed during pre-departure information sessions. Independence will be encouraged by testing new methods for direct inclusion into the labour market. Finally new ways for integration are looked for by mapping experiences among resettled refugees and by re-designing their role in the reception process.

The project will draw on the experience of resettled refugees, NGO's and service providers to develop practices that will aim to improve the new arrivals ability to manage their own lives and to promote a culture of independence both personal and economic. The purpose is that models created during the one-year project will be transferable and can be utilized by other EU Member States and resettlement countries.

More information on the project can be found on the project website: www.mostproject.fi that will be launched on February 2007.



EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND 2005
CENTRALISED ACTIONS

ICMC 's European Resettlement Network takes off!

Introduction

ICMC has recently started a new project 'Practical Cooperation for a European Resettlement Network' with financing from the ERF. ICMC partners with NGOs from six different European countries, from both traditional resettlement countries, such as Finland, Sweden and The Netherlands as well as countries that have expressed an interest in resettlement, such as the Czech Republic, Italy, and Spain. New partners will be invited to join the Resettlement Network by the end of 2007. The present project responds to an identified need from European NGO's to increase their operational resettlement capacity through training and promoting field experience of staff members at UNHCR offices in refugee camps or other settings.

European Resettlement Training

A 'European Resettlement Training Programme', bringing together around 30 candidates from NGOs and both government offices from the partner countries, will take place the coming month of June in Spain. ICMC is organising the training in close collaboration with the UNHCR resettlement service in Geneva. The trained participants will establish a 'European Roster of Resettlement Expertise' and it is envisaged that a part of the participants will be sent out to work for a period as ICMC Deployees in UNHCR offices. The successful candidates will need to meet certain profiles, such as having hands on experience in working with refugees, be linked to an NGO or government agency, be prepared to consider overseas employment as part of their career development and be committed to transfer knowledge back into their organisations. On the basis of the training a European Guide to Resettlement will be elaborated.

The five day training European Resettlement Training Programme will focus on addressing questions with respect to the daily operations involving resettlement. How does the processing and selection of refugees for resettlement work? What are the UNHCR resettlement criteria and how are these applied? How does the interplay work between UNHCR, which proposes candidates, and the national governments, which selects candidates for their particular country? What are the main features of the main resettlement programmes? How are refugees being consulted on the choice of the resettlement country? What information do refugees have on the particular country they will be going to and is this information adequate to have realistic expectations about the life that will lay ahead? In addition to offering a comprehensive training of resettlement in a UNHCR durable solutions context, the programme will also address issues relating to integration and advocacy.

ICMC meets partners in Finland and Spain in January

A first phase of the present project is consulting in the partner countries the organisations involved in resettlement on the challenges they are facing and to identify training needs to address them. On the basis of the outcomes of these National Meetings, a resettlement training curriculum is established adapted to European needs. The first meetings took place during the month of January.

In Finland, our partner, the Finnish Red Cross had invited the Directorate from Immigration and the Ministry of Labour among representatives the Refugee Advice Center and the Finnish Lutheran Church. The fact that Finland had not filled its 2006 quota, for the first time in history, has dominated the debate the last months. From May onwards, the Finnish Red Cross had been very active in both monitoring the situation and bringing the situation to the attention of the parliament and press. This is another example of the role NGOs can and should play from an

advocacy point of view. Participants mention that advocacy will certainly need to be included as a part of the upcoming resettlement training. Selection and Integration are other areas of importance. In Finland so called 'quota refugees' are chosen on protection and humanitarian grounds. The integration potential is looked at to some extent. An illiterate disabled refugee in need of medical treatment can very well be resettled to Finland. However, one will look at several conditions such as his or her motivation and chance to integrate, the available services from the local communities that can respond to the needs of the person and to the availability of 'support or resource persons' of that group which can assist the newcomers. Such approach is necessary to have the full collaboration of the Finnish municipalities which are sometimes hesitant to receive 'too complicated' cases.

The selection and integration debate also was quite prominent at the national meeting in Spain organized by our partners ACCEM and CEAR. The participants came from different governmental departments and non governmental organisations. In the past Spain has had some experience with resettlement cases, such as

Bosnians and Albanian Kosovars. However the reception and integration of these cases were quite complicated in some cases and not always a success. Participants from both government, NGOs and UNHCR agree that future resettlement to Spain, will need to take account of these lessons learned in the past. Better selection procedures, coordination mechanisms and pre-departure information to resettled refugees will be needed. Both Spanish Government officials and NGOs stress the need for more understanding of resettlement selection criteria and their application during selection missions. Better selection mechanisms and information provision will allow to better managing the expectations of the resettled refugees, unfamiliar with Spain, its reception conditions, labour market, housing conditions, social infrastructure etc.

Participants recommend to look for best practices on how to properly provide information to refugees on their new country and at what stage of the resettlement process and with what means this must be done. The UNHCR representative, who has guided Latin American's first resettlement programme also stresses that good information is key to the success of managing expectations. In terms of integration of vulnerable cases, the government representative stresses that for Spain these can be taken in provided that the services in Spain are capable to respond to the particular needs. Since medical services are of very good standards, medical cases probably be taken up without great difficulties. For refugees with particular psychosocial needs, however, Spanish services are not that well equipped. It is discussed that Finland has a similar approach at looking at integration from the supply side of services and that further exchange on this experience should be undertaken within the network.



ICMC project partners meeting in Finland

*Article by Petra Hueck,
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CCME office (red building on the left) in front of European Commission Headquarters (Berlaymont)

FAQ – frequently asked questions....

1) What is CCME?

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.

2) What is "Resettlement .- broadening the basis in Europe"?

The CCME project "Resettlement - broadening the basis in Europe" enhances knowledge and political debate in EU member states to engage in refugee resettlement - as an additional instrument of refugee protection.

It includes activities to

- broaden policy debates on resettlement in EU member states
- broaden information on it and provide it in accessible format
- broaden public-NGO partnerships for resettlement

3) What is Refugee Resettlement?

It's one of the 3 traditional durable solutions for refugees, along with the local integration in the country of asylum and repatriation. Basically, it's a transfer of refugees from their country of first asylum to a third country that has agreed to admit them with a long term or permanent resident status. Resettlement provides protection for refugees whose safety is immediately at risk and it is a tool of international protection in a context of burden sharing among states.

4) What Resettlement is not...

Resettlement is not the same as seeking refugee status through the asylum system, nor is it a more legal process for accessing asylum rights and can never substitute a spontaneous request of asylum.

Resettlement is not synonymous with "Temporary protection" classifications.

Resettlement cannot become a system of profiling refugees in accordance to their nationality or religion in order to create more or less valuable categories of refugees. Resettlement is based exclusively on the protection needs of the refugees.

5) Which are the Resettlement countries?

The countries that traditionally host resettlement programs are : Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. Those countries are called the "traditional ones", Countries such as Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Island, Ireland, and UK have in recent years started programmes. Others, among them several EU member states, are currently considering them...

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

General info on resettlement

<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/3bb2eadd6.html>

On the CCME project "Resettlement—broadening the basis in europe"

<http://www.ccme.be/secretary/NEWS/CCMERR2006The%20projectshortpublic.pdf>

On the ICMC project :

http://www.icmc.net/e/programmes_operations/europ_network.htm

On the MOST Project:

www.mostproject.fi

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