

## SHARE CITY CURRICULUM

### A Toolkit For Welcoming, Supporting & Empowering Resettled Refugees

This toolkit is produced in the framework of the [SHARE Project](#), an 18-month programme led by ICMC Europe to build a network of European regions, cities, municipalities and their civil society partners involved in and/or with a commitment to refugee protection, resettlement and integration. An integral part of the wider [European Resettlement Network](#), [SHARE](#) provides a platform for structured dialogue, exchange of practice and networking between cities and regional actors and between experienced and emerging resettlement countries planning or considering resettlement.

- **Why a toolkit for reception and integration in resettlement?**

In general, all newcomers to a country face similar challenges - learning the language, finding housing and employment, understanding institutions and systems, and building relationships and friendships. Both the process of being resettled and the backgrounds of resettled refugees can create some additional challenges, for example in:

- adjusting to modern urban environments after long periods spent in a camp setting;
- managing what might be unrealistic expectations of life in the resettlement country; and
- settling into a new community often without pre-existing family links or social networks.

This publication is designed to provide tools, templates and ideas that will support those working on resettlement programmes to respond to these challenges, better meet the needs of resettled refugees and support their aspirations for their resettlement. The tools it includes have been compiled based on the successful approaches used by many SHARE Network partners and stakeholders across Europe, shared with us and our partners through SHARE activities, events and research throughout 2012-14.

For more good practice examples in resettlement and integration, take a look at the SHARE publications '[Welcome to Sheffield: Reflections on 8 years experience of receiving resettled refugees at the local level](#)' and '[A Place to Live, a Place to Stay: A Good Practice Guide for Housing in Refugee Resettlement](#)', and ICMC's '[Welcome to Europe: A Comprehensive Guide to Resettlement](#)' publication.

- **How can the toolkit be used?**

The toolkit includes template and guidance in three distinct sections - 'Arrival, Reception & Orientation', 'Integration Support & Planning' and 'Tools for Caseworkers' - which you can use in whichever way you like! You can make use of just one or several tools, adapt any of the templates for use in your work, or use the toolkit material as an inspiration to develop your own approaches and ideas for resettlement and integration in your regional or local context.

We hope the toolkit will prove helpful in the process of welcoming resettled refugees to your community. Please do let us know if and how you made use of the toolkit and send your feedback, comments or request for further information, by contacting Rachel Westerby, City Coordinator at ICMC ([westerby@icmc.net](mailto:westerby@icmc.net)).

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## 1. RESETTLEMENT

### 1.1 What is resettlement?

Resettlement involves the transfer of refugees from the country in which they first sought asylum, generally a developing country, 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 is a tool of international protection and an expression of international solidarity and burden-sharing amongst states.

### 1.2 Who is resettled?

In practice, resettlement is available as a durable solution for a comparatively small number of refugees. Of the 11.7 million refugees of concern to UNHCR in the world (June, 2014), less than 1% are submitted for resettlement.

### 1.3 What role do regions and cities play in resettlement?

Although national governments are responsible for the selection of refugees for resettlement, regional and local authorities play a central role both in offering places for resettled refugees and providing reception and integration support once they have arrived. The success of national refugee resettlement programmes thus depends on the commitment, ability and partnerships of cities, municipalities and regions.

## 2. RECEPTION & INTEGRATION FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES

### 2.1 What is integration?

Integration is generally recognized as being a 'dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing' process, that is 'two-sided' in the sense that it requires some level of mutual adaptation and accommodation by refugees, migrants and other newcomers as well as the local population of the host country in which they resettle. Integration can be understood as a set of related processes – in areas such as housing, health, employment, language learning, civic participation and refugees' feelings of safety and welcome – that also serve as indicators and outcomes of the wider integration process.

It is widely agreed that institutions in the receiving society should provide the conditions for successful integration by guaranteeing refugee and migrant participation in the 'economic, social, cultural, civil and political life' of the receiving society.<sup>1</sup> Rights and opportunities provided by the receiving society are generally articulated together with responsibilities for individual refugees within the integration process, for example by actively pursuing opportunities for language-learning and abiding by the laws and regulations of the receiving society.

### 2.2 Approaches to integration for resettlement in Europe

Pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) refers to interventions that provide refugees with information about the travel process and the resettlement country prior to their departure. CO programmes are generally designed to prepare refugees for their initial period of resettlement, and address both practical information as well as skills and attitudes which support integration prospects. The majority of European resettlement countries organise some form of pre-departure CO programme, which typically involves refugees attending one or more training or briefing sessions.

European countries vary in their approaches regarding integration of newcomers. Concerning resettlement in Europe, two distinct ways of approaching integration of resettled refugees have been identified. In those resettlement countries with predefined programmes for the integration of

<sup>1</sup> ECRE (2005) *The Way Forward: Towards the Integration of Refugees in Europe*

newcomers, services for resettled refugees are often mainstreamed into this wider provision. Other European resettlement countries have developed specialised integration programmes for resettled refugees.

Specialised programmes can be more responsive to the particular needs of resettled refugees. They are better able to adapt the integration measures they offer according to the profiles of particular refugee groups, including by engaging new partners with expertise in relevant areas. Specialised programmes are also more likely to support the development of local expertise and refined approaches for reception, and can provide an ongoing, structured entry into mainstream services for resettled refugees at the end of the programme. Mainstream programmes in contrast, can assist the integration of resettled refugees by providing earlier opportunities for them to mix with other refugees and immigrants. In addition, mainstream programmes often have a strong basis in national policy and funding frameworks and so may be more sustainable on the long run.

### 2.3. Phases of integration

**1<sup>st</sup> week of arrival** After leaving the country of asylum in which they may have stayed for many years, resettled refugees will often undertake long journeys to reach their new home country. Although excited to start their new lives, they will arrive tired and disoriented, into a strange and unfamiliar context in which they are often confronted with new weather, a foreign language, potentially unusual housing and a whole lot of administrative tasks that must be completed shortly after their arrival.

A common and suggested approach during the first week is to provide information gradually, taking account of the fact that many of the structures and agencies that the resettled refugee will come into contact with are entirely new to them. As such, the roles of the different agencies should be outlined on a number of different occasions.

Even at this early stage, casework support should be designed to encourage refugees to take control of their own affairs wherever possible. Successful resettlement integration programmes place great emphasis on communicating the idea that the programme will give refugees as much support as possible, but that they are recognised as independent and adult people. Of key importance is the ability to respond to urgent needs within this initial period and to reassure refugees about the ways in which complicated problems will be addressed over the coming months.

#### Top tips<sup>2</sup>

##### Arrival and reception

- Welcome resettled refugees directly at the airport
- Provide key information gradually, and repeat at different points in the reception phase
- Communicate to refugees what they can expect from the local resettlement programme and what is expected of them
- Make time in the reception schedule for refugees to visit one another in their new homes
- Introduce refugees to key local service providers, local transport systems and their immediate local area and city or town centre during the first week after arrival

##### The first months

The reception phase for resettled refugees describes the period directly following their arrival in the new host country. The length of reception is generally defined by individual resettlement countries

<sup>2</sup> ICMC (2011) *Welcome to Sheffield – Reflections on 8 years experiences of receiving resettled refugees at the local level*

within their national programmes and therefore varies from the first few weeks to periods of up to 3, 6 or even 12 months after arrival.

Each resettled refugee is different, and will arrive to their new home country with different needs, vulnerabilities, skills and aspirations. Whilst all resettled refugees have the capacity to become fully participating and contributing citizens, many will make only partial progress toward this status within the first year of residency. Many local resettlement programmes aim to provide flexible support and interventions that meet the requirements of each individual refugee, with the overall aim of providing them with the tools, skills and knowledge to facilitate their long-term integration beyond the first year of residence in the city.

The common thought behind the reception programme after the first months is that resettled refugees are able to access mainstream services and participate to some degree in their local communities, and that they have developed links – formally or informally – within their new community.

The first year could be structured as followed:

1 – 3 months

- High level of support and assistance to access services

4 – 9 months

- Reduced levels of direct support
- Encouragement and assistance to live independently

10 – 12 months

- Low level of support
- Preparation for end of the Gateway integration support programme

### 3. ARRIVAL, RECEPTION & ORIENTATION:

#### 3.1. Approaches to reception – centralized reception vs. direct placement

Resettlement programmes in Europe take two distinct approaches to reception. Several European resettlement countries use a ‘centralised reception’ system, in which resettled refugees are initially received into accommodation facilities where they stay for a defined period before moving to municipalities. In other cases, resettled refugees move directly into independent accommodation in a municipality after arrival, in an approach referred to as ‘direct reception’.

#### 3.2. Partnerships to coordinate arrival & reception

In many local resettlement programmes across Europe, local actors have formed partnership groups and structures to coordinate pre-arrival planning. By this end, a reception schedule with clearly defined roles for all partners can be produced and the pooling of resources between partners can be facilitated. In successful local programmes in Europe, a single partner leads on coordinating the local programme, maintaining oversight of a central reception plan, updating partners, suggesting changes and acting as a single point of local contact for national governments.

- **timetable first week:** Can be used by the caseworkers to structure events and appointments during the first week/s after arrival. Subsequently, the timetable can be hand out, not only to the resettled

refugees, but also to interpreters or partners, in this way everybody involved has an overview of what to do and knows what to expect from the first week/s.

- **arrival day checklist:** Urgent tasks that should be done during first day of arrival can be listed here by the caseworkers. Using a checklist will ensure that all necessary tasks have been accomplished.

- **new environment checklist:** Tasks that should be done when showing resettled refugees their new neighborhood can be listed here by the caseworkers. Using a checklist will ensure that all necessary tasks have been accomplished.

- **information for resettled refugees - list of items and contacts map:** A list of items that are provided to resettled refugees by the reception team can be filled out by caseworkers and giving out to the newcomers. Setting up a map of important contacts, by adding the locations and names of relevant support organizations and individuals, will provide additional help to newly resettled refugees in finding their way around in the municipality.

## 4. INTEGRATION SUPPORT & PLANNING:

### 4.1. Casework in Integration

In refugee resettlement, in both mainstream and specialised reception and integration programmes, it is generally NGOs or municipality social services that plan casework integration support.

'Casework' refers to the process of supporting individuals or families ('cases') to identify and meet their needs, manage their circumstances and achieve their aspirations. Those delivering this support for refugees may have a variety of titles, including caseworkers, support workers, refugee workers, social workers or project workers.

Casework support for resettled refugees is typically provided for a defined period, from a few months to several years, and can include a range of integration support including:

- Orientation to the new country.
- Acting as a contact person for other services.
- Emotional support.
- Referral to relevant agencies.
- Advice and information on housing, benefits and other social services.
- Mediation between family members and the host community.
- Family reunion and legal assistance.

### 4.2. Teamwork in Integration: The Multi-Agency Approach

Successful casework in refugee integration requires collaborative teamwork of all partners and institutions involved in the reception process. By bringing together all agencies working with resettled refugees, local partnerships are able to provide joint case management, involving monitoring the progress in the integration of individual refugees and developing joint strategies to address particular needs.

### 4.3. Personal Integration Plans

Many organisations providing longer term integration support for resettled refugees use a personalised integration planning approach. Personalised integration plans are a tool to set future goals and targets for individual refugees' integration, and to plan the steps to take in order to achieve them. Plans are generally reviewed at regular intervals and can be adjusted over time, thus providing a highly individualised and flexible way of planning and managing refugee integration.

Personalised integration plans are generally co-developed with resettled refugees themselves, meaning they reflect refugees' aspirations for their resettlement in addition to assessing their needs. Plans are also a useful tool to show refugees what they have achieved and how far they have come.

- **case note sheet:** Can be completed at the end of each day by the caseworker, as a form of reflection on the work that has been done and to inform colleagues about the work progress. The case note sheet should include details of items covered with the resettled refugees and issues to be raised.

- **Personal Integration Plan template:** The Personal Integration Plan should cover a range of aspects regarding refugee integration: starting with housing, learning about their new environment, managing benefits and finance, finding employment, education and social contacts. Newcomers are hereby asked by the caseworker to reflect on their current situation, identify future goals and the necessary steps to be taken. The PIP is reviewed periodically to see how these goals are being achieved.

- **benefits & finance checklist:** Information that should be provided when managing resettled refugees' financial situation can be listed here by the caseworkers. Using a checklist will ensure that all necessary tasks have been accomplished.

- **employment and volunteering checklist:** Information that should be provided when helping resettled refugees with their occupational situation can be listed here by the caseworkers. Using a checklist will ensure that all necessary tasks have been accomplished.

- **legal status checklist:** Information that should be provided when helping resettled refugees with their legal situation can be listed here by the caseworkers. Using a checklist will ensure that all necessary tasks have been accomplished.

## 5. PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION:

### 5.1. Stress and Trauma

Through the process of migration and adaptation to a new environment, newcomers are prone to more psychological stressors than the host society which over time can lead to mental health problems and poor emotional well-being as they adapt to the receiving context. This may apply especially in the case of resettled refugees who have often suffered under stressful environments and traumatic experiences in the country of origin, during their flight or in refugee camps before finally arriving to the new country of origin. Resettled refugees therefore need support and assistance in finding a balance in this new stage of their lives.

### 5.2. Protective and Aggravating Factors

Gaining awareness of factors impacting on refugees' feelings and behaviours is essential to a good assessment of the support they may need. Psychological health experts distinguish between aggregative factors, that increase a persons' vulnerability and thereby the chance of developing mental problems, and protective factors, which strengthen coping abilities.

Aggregative factors could be experiences of stress and trauma that led to physical or psychological health problems - obtained in the country of origin. But also after arrival in their new home, resettled refugees might experience feelings "cultural shock" or loss and grievance about friends and family they have been detached from.

Protective factors may help a person develop the coping skills necessary to process traumatic and stressful life experiences. For resettled refugees, three common protective factors have been identified: safety, security and time. The newly found sense of security, as discovered in their new environment, can lead individuals to obtain feelings of security over time.

By mapping out such aggravating and protective factors, one can get an impression of an individual's capacities and potentials, and thereby provide sufficient support during the first arrival and integration phase. We therefore provide questionnaires developed to identify possible mental health problems in refugees at an early stage. By this end, and with the help of their caseworker, individuals can be referred to a specialist in order to prevent clinical health outcomes.

- **Factors guidelines:** Explanation as to the way in which each factor can be considered to be either a protective or an aggravating in terms of the individual's health and well-being; to be read before assessment.

- **Framework of protective and aggravating factors:** To have an overview of any potentially protective or aggravating factors, aims to enable case workers to better prepare for any difficult situations which might arise.

## 6. TOOLS FOR CASEWORKERS:

We suggest using the following additional tools and guidelines to assist case workers and volunteers working in refugee reception and integration during times of first arrivals.

- **contact list:** Can be used to collect contact details of clients and interpreters.

- **interpreter guidelines:** Guidelines and information regarding working with an interpreter, including suggestions for (de-)briefing.

- **looking after yourself during arrivals:** Suggestions and guidelines to ensure the case workers' general well-being during reception times.