

Vitality & Engagement

Developing Communities

Newsletter December 2021



1 - Amnesty International Ireland and The Refugee Council (CPR) Portugal are working in partnership to raise engagement and awareness of the Community Sponsorship (CS) initiative- locally, nationally and transnationally. The newsletter is here to share the voice of refugees, CS industry allies, highlight milestones and look to next steps for the VE programme.

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- *Civil Society Good Practice Conveying*
- *Portuguese Series of Events*

Project Infographic



October- December 2021

Case Studies

CASE STUDY: Organisational Perspective, Portugal

LAR PROJECT

"THE PROJECT AIMS TO DECONSTRUCT PREJUDICES TOWARDS PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURES, TO COMBAT DESINFORMATION AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION"

LAR
LOVE AND RESPECT

Lar (means Home in Portuguese) Project is a community-based project that integrates migrants and refugees with the help of the whole community. The project is developed by AIIR – Association for the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in a small village called Ima, in Guarda, having emerged to answer some current challenges like the migrant situation worldwide; the ageing and populational decrease, associated with the abandonment of rural lands.

The project aims to integrate migrant families and to help revitalize rural communities in the interior of Portugal. Since October 2020 it has welcomed two immigrant families.

After arrival, the families are welcomed and supported in all aspects of inclusion from labour market inclusion of the adults, to learning the Portuguese language. Housing was a big challenge, so the Association partnered with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to help revitalize local houses. The project follows the community sponsorship approach by being led by the community and for the community.

All family members are trained and supported to enter the labour market. After the arrival of the families, a migrant centre was opened in the village as a first step to a multicultural community that welcomes and helps foreigners.

“WE VALUE THE TERRITORY WHICH MAKES IT A LOT EASIER TO ACCEPT OTHERS. WE ARE HERE TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES.”

The social-cultural integration of the families allows them to be closer to the community and the countryside. The project implements several activities for the families and the community to work together, focusing on interculturality and intergenerationally.

As part of their environmental regeneration, the families cultivate products in a sustainable way and sell them to local markets. Environmental education activities are also promoted.

The project is working to integrate more families and to expand to neighbouring villages, as a model to be replicated for the inclusion of migrants and refugees.

CASE STUDY: Organisational Perspective, Ireland



I became aware of Community Sponsorship at a seminar early on, where three people spoke about it so passionately and eloquently that I immediately wanted to get involved. David Stanton TD, John Roycroft from the Dept of Justice and Colm O’Gorman from Amnesty Ireland talked about the impact it had on people, whose lives have been ripped apart and how the process of a group or community wrapping themselves around the person and families, like a great blanket of comfort, creating a new life for them, gave them hope. How could you not want to help?

When The Open Doors Initiative was approached, we helped create Cairde –the Allies Network, which plays to our strengths of bringing companies together - business, law, sport and other organisations, to create a wider umbrella of support. This amplifies the work of the Community groups and offers additional aids where needed. We ask that the companies support in a myriad of ways that best plays to their strengths. For example, it can be funding, employee time, practical needs such as computers or phones and even creating a sponsorship group themselves. All help is gratefully received and makes a real difference. And it has only started.

We need to see an all-Ireland approach to helping these families –our new neighbours –to become part of the fabric of our country and help them to do so.

It is a wildly successful integration model, and everyone can be part of it. It's a beautiful process and gives to everyone involved.

“WE NEED TO SEE AN ALL-IRELAND APPROACH TO HELPING THESE FAMILIES – OUR NEW NEIGHBOURS –TO BECOME PART OF THE FABRIC OF OUR COUNTRY.”

Irish society is changing, and for the better. Welcoming people from other countries brings diversity of thought and is led by diversity itself. It brings lateral thinking, creativity and cuts across artificial barriers such as country boundaries and sameness of approach and mirroring, to lead to a blended and diverse society which is enriched by difference. It helps everyone in this way and has a positive and inspiring impact on our lives.

Get involved, help out and make new friends.

You will be so grateful you did.

VE Civil Society Good Practice Conveying 16th November

The event marked the second of six conveyings to be held over the duration of the VE Project. The event sought to reflect and discuss one of CS's key functional areas - Sponsorship Oversight, Quality Control and Training.

To this end, the VE team hosted a panel discussion with three experts in this field to share their experience and learning. This was followed by interactive breakout rooms for the panellist and participants.

The conveying was attended by organisations, services and volunteers from across EU Member States and the UK, who represent key community sponsorship (CS) actors at the forefront of the design and implementation of CS schemes across Europe.

The next conveying will be held early in the new year.

Conference Portugal

20th October

Reception and Integration of International Protection Applicants and Refugees in Low Density Regions

Aiming to involve academia and universities, in the scope of CPR's 30th anniversary and in partnership with the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco (IPCB) and the Geography Institute and Spatial Planning of the University of Lisbon (IGOT-UL), the goal of this conference was to reflect on how refugee reception has been taking place in Portugal, with particular emphasis on lower density regions, and how community sponsorship presents a solution for future efforts in this domain.

Consortium Portugal

16th November

Civil Society Consultation on Community Sponsorship

In an effort to make community sponsorship a participatory process, we gathered several key civil society organizations for a discussion on how the flow of refugee sponsorship should work in Portugal. This working session produced a number of useful recommendations that CPR is currently compiling onto a report to be published and delivered to the Portuguese governmental entities in the first trimester of 2022. The event was highly participated and evaluated by participants in a very positive light.

This was the first of more consultations to come as sponsorship progresses in Portugal, and the first effort to establishing an effective network of civil society organizations geared towards this issue.



16/11/2021 - VE - AMF 2019-AD-CAL