

Vitality & Engagement

Developing Communities

Project Newsletter September 2022

PARTNERS



The VE Project is being implemented by Amnesty International Ireland and The Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR).

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.

Content

- Project Infographic
- Case Study - Portugal
- Case Study - Ireland
- Project Conference - Portugal

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Developing Communities

19



Civil Society Events Hosted

314



Civil Society Event Attendees

13



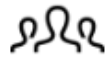
Project Case Studies

779



Online Training Users

72



Outreach Events Hosted

1145



Outreach Event Attendees

26



Allies Network Partners

16



Resources Available

Infographic Summary

September 2022

624



Community Sponsorship Enquiries

974



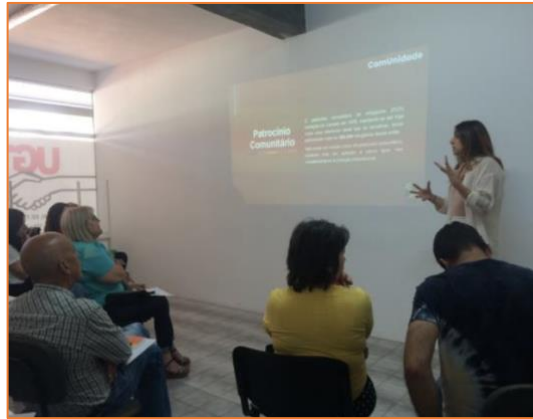
Social Media Followers

8



Online Training Modules Developed

Case Study – Portugal: Organisational Perspective



"THIS [COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP] MAKES A LOT OF SENSE TO ME AND I REALLY WANT TO BE INVOLVED"

Preparing communities for welcoming newcomers through sponsorship is key to ensure the success and efficacy of the model CPR is developing in Portugal. Training represents, therefore, one of CPR's key responsibilities under the VE project.

Originally, the aforementioned training consisted of a 7-hour in-person session, aiming to provide detailed guidance on the roles and responsibilities of sponsor groups, as well as giving practical advice on preparing a settlement plan. Given the inexistence of a CS scheme implemented in Portugal and the information gathered during the R&D phase of activities, led to team to strengthen the curriculum to better prepare those interested in sponsoring refugees. The 7-hour session quickly evolved into a 25-hour, 6 module blended-learning training course, formally certified as vocational training by the national training certification institution in Portugal–DGERT. The main goal for this expansion is to better prepare prospective sponsors, offering the tools for ethic and quick responses to multiple capital issues while simultaneously fostering peer-sharing through non-formal education methods and activities.

Each module focuses on a specific area of concern: **Module 1** represents an initial approach to CS, sponsors' roles and responsibilities, requirements to sponsor and a general context on the global asylum and international protection figures. **Module 2** expands on language learning as well as intercultural and communication skills, essential on the work with refugees. **Module 3** focuses on a crucial area when supporting refugees: psychological support and trauma. **Module 4** centres on safeguarding and how to support towards those who are most vulnerable. **Module 5** steps away from the newcomers and focuses on the sponsor group, covering harmony, responsibility sharing, and conflict management within the group. Finally, **Module 6** offers guidance towards the first steps on group composition, the settlement plan and initial responsibilities.

"WE ARE THRILLED TO START THIS EXCITING JOURNEY TOGETHER AND BE ABLE TO HELP".

Chaves, a rural northern town in Portugal, was the first city to receive the CS training. This was possible thanks to the request of a participant in the first outreach session in Porto who was very interested and mobilized a group of 11 people. The group was formed by volunteers of a local NGO who mobilized friends and a local authority.

After the first 7-hour session in-person, the group proceeded to undertake the remaining modules online via CPR's e-learning platform, with 9 participants successfully concluding. Since then, the group has mobilized more people who are interested in being part of the first sponsor group in Portugal, whom the V&E team continues to support.

The training has recently been opened to the general public via CPR's e-learning platform with 65 participants actively enrolled.

Case Study – Ireland: Organisational Perspective



THE OPEN COMMUNITY CAIRDE ALLIES NETWORK COMPRISES A DIVERSE NATIONAL NETWORK OF ORGANISATIONS THAT SHARE A COMMITMENT TO MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IN IRELAND.

The aim of the Cairde Network is to develop a whole of society approach to the development of community sponsorship that brings in the support and expertise of organisations and companies from various sectors and industries. The Network seeks to engage key areas of Irish society from business, education and sports to religious, community and other groups. Allies partners commit via a Pledge to promote sponsorship across their networks and provide industry or sector expertise to both meet the challenges and realise the unique opportunities presented by Community Sponsorship.

A number of overarching asks in terms of potential engagement have been identified:

- Promote Community Sponsorship across the organisation's staff and/or community networks to encourage the formation of new CSGs.
- Provide pro bono industry or sector expertise.
- Include Community Sponsorship as part of CSR commitments/strategies.
- Provide training and/or employment opportunities.
- Provide financial contributions to support the development of the programme.

"IRISH SOCIETY IS CHANGING, AND FOR THE BETTER. WELCOMING PEOPLE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES CAN BRING DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT, LATERAL THINKING, AND CREATIVITY. I WOULD SAY TO COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS – GET INVOLVED, HELP OUT AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS. YOU WILL BE SO GRATEFUL YOU DID"

In an effort to support the development and growth of the community sponsorship programme, Cairde Allies pledge to:

- Promote Community Sponsorship across the organisation's staff and networks to encourage the formation of community sponsorship groups where possible;
- Share the ethos of Community Sponsorship to help communities and refugees build interactions that foster positive attitudes and create a community of advocates for the rights of refugees;
- Work in cooperation with The Open Community and its partners to meet the challenges and realise the unique opportunities presented by Community Sponsorship.

There are a number of outputs that have been facilitated through the Cairde Network and its partners to date:

- **Insurance:** Free bespoke insurance policy that provides protection to CSGs.
- **Legal:** Legal Panel of firms available to offer pro bono advice on a referral basis.
- **Banking:** Expedited banking set-up support tailored to CS and free basic initial bank account with upgrade options.
- **Media:** Pro Bono branding and national community sponsorship promotional campaign design.
- **Tech:** Bespoke multilingual mobile App that provides clear and concise information on a range of areas of Irish life.

Project Conference - Portugal

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP: A durable and inclusive solution

22nd September 2022

The VE Project's annual conference was hosted in Lisbon in September 2022. The event was hosted by CPR and comprised two panel discussion sessions where a range of speakers explored the value of community sponsorship programmes and shared first hand experiences of community sponsorship.

PANEL I - The reception and inclusion of refugees in Portugal

- **Maria de Fátima Santos**: President of the Board of Directors of Cáritas Interparoquial de Castelo Branco
- **Lúcio Sousa**: Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences and Management at Universidade Aberta
- **Elzbieta Gorska**: Resettlement officer at the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) office in Portugal
- **José Manuel Pureza (moderator)**: Professor with tenure of International Relations and researcher at the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, coordinating the Center for Peace Studies



PANEL II - Community sponsorship as a durable solution

- **Colm O'Gorman**: Global Director of Community Engagement for the Refugee Hub and the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative
- **Zuhair Fakir & Angham Younes**: Syrian refugees living in Ireland since December 2018. They were the first family to arrive in Ireland under the Community Sponsorship Programme.
- **Janet Twomey**: Community Sponsorship Group member who welcomed a refugee family to Cork in the south of Ireland.
- **Lisa Matos (moderator)**: Researcher at the William James Center for Research and a professor at ISPA, Instituto Universitário, in Lisbon.

