




Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program

Sponsorship Agreement Holders
of Canada

Best Practices Series Volume I

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program is funded by:
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) provides resources and services to meet the ongoing information and training needs of private sponsors of refugees in Canada.

RSTP can be contacted at:

Catholic Crosscultural Services
55 Town Centre Ct., Suite 401
Toronto, ON M1P 4X4

Tel: 416-290-1700
Toll-Free: 1-877-290-1701
Fax: 416-290-1710

Email: info@rstp.ca
Website: www.rstp.ca

Copyright ©2009 Refugee Sponsorship Training Program.

All rights reserved. This publication was put together for use by members of the SAH community only. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Foreword

Beginning in 2008, RSTP began gathering and collating a wealth of materials that the SAH community has produced as they navigate the sponsoring process and learn from various challenges. Over the past two years SAHs have shared some of these Best Practices through workshops and regional conferences; they were highly regarded by their fellow sponsors. RSTP believes that many of these lessons, experiences and solutions will be invaluable learning tools for other sponsors, especially to those new to private sponsorship. With the permission of the originating SAHs, RSTP has assembled the various practices to develop a 'Best Practices' series.

In the first volume of the series you will find a few of the remarkable ideas that individuals in the sponsorship community have created. It is hoped that the launching of this volume will encourage others to share with us their successes. RSTP plans to continue to build on this product as SAHs confront and address arising issues and develop new 'Best Practices'.

The series is intended to provide you, as sponsors, useful information, as well as give the originating SAH an opportunity to share their successes. We hope that all SAHs have the opportunity to learn from each other's best practices as well as allow the Best Practices Series to document these practices for perpetuity. You may also find this series on the RSTP website in the Restricted SAH area.

The RSTP Team

Contents

1. Handling Case Inquiries

1.1. Refugee Sponsorship Intake Process

SAH: Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

1.2. Tool – Request for Refugee Sponsorship Assistance Form

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee – Saskatoon

1.3. Tool – Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Information Session (ORAT)

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

2. Case Assessment

2.1. Increasing success: Partnership with groups on the ground – MCC in Colombia

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee – Ontario

2.2. Case assessment process

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee – Saskatoon

2.3. Tool – Case assessment checklist

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

2.4. Tool – General Supplementary Guide to Completing Schedule 2

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC)

3. Following the Case

3.1. Tool – Preparing for the eligibility interview

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC)

3.2. Pre-departure orientation handbook

SAH: World University Services Canada (WUSC)

4. Working with Constituent Groups and Cosponsors

4.1. Tool – Suggested steps for Manitoba groups

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC)

4.2. Money Matters – Dealing with Financial Issues: the Winnipeg Assurance Fund

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC)

4.3. Keeping in Touch

SAH: World University Services Canada (WUSC)

5. Settlement

5.1. Tool – Detailed Settlement Plan

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

5.2. Settlement in rural communities

SAH: East Kootenay Friends of Burma

6. Building capacity, raising awareness

6.1. Get Involved

SAH: Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron

6.2. Bi-weekly volunteer seminar

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

6.3. From a Newsletter to a Book

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC)

Chapter 1

Handling Case Inquiries



Introduction

Every year sponsors respond to inquiries about refugee sponsorship and assist community members, including sponsored refugees in Canada, with information on how to sponsor their relatives, friends or other refugees that they met in refugee camps abroad through the private sponsorship of refugee program. SAH's are often inundated due to the requests and inquiries that they receive; in some of the cases it may become unmanageable for a SAH to handle all of these inquiries. Although each SAH is different many SAHs have developed techniques – forms, procedures, and policies – on how to handle these case inquiries. The following pages contain some examples of these tools.

Refugee Sponsorship Intake Process

SAH: Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

Intake Process

Intake of sponsorship cases is limited to two days per year; At CCIS, this is the first two working days of January. Over a two day period, clients bring cases for sponsorship to the CCIS office.

This narrow window of intake is designed for refugee groups where the SAH expects a large number of applications annually. As is typical with a number of Canadian SAHs, CCIS receives a large number from countries in the Horn of Africa including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan.

Applications from countries where a smaller number is expected annually are received on a daily basis rather than during this narrow two-day period. The narrow window protects the SAH from being overwhelmed with applications throughout the year.

The Refugee Application

An application consists of the written story of the refugee and the UNHCR mandate letter, if the refugee has one. No other documents are requested, as more overloads the intake process with too much paper.

The client submitting the case also fills out a simple cover page asking for their name and contact information as well as information about the refugee; name and address, country of birth, marital status, number of children, and relationship to the person in Calgary who is submitting the application.

The person submitting the application must be a resident of Calgary. Applicants living in other areas of Canada are directed to find a SAH in their hometown.

Case Review

Cases are reviewed in the following weeks or months after intake.

Priority is given to UNHCR mandated refugees; however, a mandate letter does not mean all such cases will be accepted.

Cases are assessed on the relevance of the claim to the political situation in the applicant's country and the severity of the persecution suffered. The case is assigned a number on a scale of one to five with the most serious claim being five.

Cases are reviewed by two to five people who have been trained to assess refugee profiles. Workers typically review cases on a volunteer basis in the beginning, doing only a small number. As they gain experience and interest, an increased number of cases are assigned.

The SAH could consider giving long term volunteers an honorarium or payment on some basis, as the workload increases.

Orientation Sessions with Clients

When final assessment and selection of cases has been made, the client is called and asked to attend an orientation at CCIS.

Clients, whose cases are not accepted, are given the opportunity at an appointment to have the reasons for the refusal explained.

The Sponsorship Orientation is typically a two hour session with a maximum of 20 clients attending. The following topics are covered:

- IMM 6000 kit is given to the client.
- Review and explanation of essential questions in the refugee kit that the applicant must understand and answer clearly. The client is expected to forward this information to the applicant along with the IMM 6000 kit.
- Explanation of the process for returning IMM 6000 kit to CCIS, the steps CCIS will take to obtain a sponsorship by a church, and how to communicate with the Sponsorship Coordinator throughout the sponsorship process.

Finalizing the Intake Process

A time limit may be set for return of the completed IMM 6000, however, setting a time limit may create more complications than it solves.

CCIS submits the completed application with the church undertaking to CIC under Option 3 and maintains contact with the client throughout the sponsorship process.

Tool – Request for Refugee Sponsorship Assistance Form

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) – Saskatoon

The Request for Refugee Sponsorship Assistance Form was developed by MCC Saskatoon. These forms are provided to individuals who are requesting assistance from MCC in finding a sponsor for their relative(s) or friend(s). The forms allow MCC – Saskatoon to gather information about the local family who are seeking a sponsor including what kind of assistance the family is able to provide during the sponsorship. Additionally, preliminary information is gathered about the refugees to be sponsored.

**REQUEST FOR
REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP ASSISTANCE**

If you are requesting assistance from MCC in finding a sponsor for your relative(s) or friend(s), please complete this form. MCC is compliant with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada). This information will be kept confidential but may be shared with prospective sponsoring groups to assist with your case. Sponsoring groups have agreed to comply with MCC's Privacy Code. Please feel free to use separate sheets of paper to answer any questions.

MCCS OFFICE USE ONLY: Date Received: _____ File # Assigned _____

Information about Local Family Requesting Refugee Sponsorship Help:

Your full name: _____

Your address: _____

Telephone Number (home): _____ (work): _____

E-mail address: _____ Fax: _____

How many dependents are currently living with you? _____

How many dependents are you currently financially supporting here in Canada including those living with you? _____ Have you currently applied to sponsor, or are you currently sponsoring any other people? If so, how many people are you sponsoring? For how long are you committed to these sponsorships? _____

What is your country of origin? _____

What kind of assistance would be needed for the people you want sponsored? Note what you can help with, and what you need from a sponsoring group.

	I can help with	Sponsor to help with
Housing	_____	_____
Utilities	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____
Household Furnishings	_____	_____
Bedding, Towels, etc.	_____	_____
General Reception (at airport)	_____	_____
Orientation to Life in Canada	_____	_____
Medical/Dental Assistance	_____	_____
Help in Finding Work	_____	_____
Clothing	_____	_____
Emotional Support	_____	_____
Financial Support	_____	_____
Other (Please describe):	_____	_____

Information about the Refugees to be Sponsored:

NOTE: This information must be provided by the refugee family for whom sponsorship is being requested. All information must be provided to us in English. There will not be enough room to answer many of the questions on this form; please feel free to use a separate page. It is very important that you provide detailed answers to the questions. Without the appropriate amount of detail we will not be able to proceed with processing this request.

Information for Head of Household or Principal Applicant.

1. Full Name: _____
LAST NAME FIRST AND SECOND NAMES

Birth date: _____

Education: _____

Occupation/Work Experience: _____

Languages: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Country of Citizenship: _____

Place of Birth: _____

Current Address including Telephone, E-mail, Fax Numbers: _____

How many people do you wish to have sponsored? _____ Are they all members of the same family? _____

Please list the information about each of your family members requesting sponsorship, whether or not they are living with you. Please use the back pages (p. 7 & 8.)

2. When did you and your family leave your country of citizenship or origin?

3. In which country are you now living, and how long have you lived there?

4. What is your status in that country? Temporary asylum _____ Permanent Resident _____

Other (explain:

What do you need to do to remain in that country? **Please explain in detail.**

Have you registered with the country officials as required? _____ What date did you register? _____ What is the name of the registration document?

If you have not registered, why not?

5. Your present situation: Where do you live? Are you in immediate danger? If you are in immediate danger, please be sure to answer Question #12 (all parts) in detail.

6. Have you applied to any Canadian embassy in the past five years to come to Canada as a refugee? _____ Were you interviewed by the Canadian embassy? _____ What is your Canadian Embassy File Number? _____ What was the response?

7. Have you registered with the UNHCR? _____ When? _____ Where? _____ What is your UNHCR Refugee Mandate Number? _____ If you have other UNHCR documents, please list those below, and provide copies.

If you are not able to get UNHCR documents, please simply tell us why not?

If you were refused by UNHCR, please explain why.

8. Does anyone in your family have special medical or emotional requirements? (Please note Canada will not restrict entry into Canada for medical reasons including HIV or AIDS. Please also note that providing any medical information is completely voluntary. Knowing about medical conditions simply helps the sponsor understand how to prepare and provide settlement services better.)

9. Are there any other special considerations (eg. mixed marriage or heritage, single parent, pregnancy, elderly, etc.) that you believe contribute to your risk factors? Please note what considerations, and for whom?

10. Have you (or your family in Canada) contacted any organization to help you document your story, eg. UNHCR, Red Cross, lawyers, church groups, Human Rights groups? *Please note who you have had help from, and when.*

12. Please **attach a recent photograph** of all of the people in your family that you wish to be sponsored.

*Please complete the following information in detail. **Please also note that the answers to these questions MUST be the story of the refugee(s).***

13. Do you fear persecution for one of the following reasons?

Race

Political Opinion

Religion

Nationality

Involvement with a group that is targeted by your government? (Please name the group(s) and your position(s) and involvement in that/those group(s))

e. Can you remain in the country where you are currently living or in another nearby country? If the answer is no, then why not? What must you do to remain in the country, or move to a nearby country?

f. Have you ever been in prison, a victim of torture? When and where and why?

"We consent to let MCC share this information with prospective sponsoring groups or others as appropriate to assist with our case. If you have any questions or concerns about our privacy practices, please contact the MCC Canada Privacy Coordinator at (204)261-6381 (call collect) or via privacy@mennonitecc.ca. Otherwise we will assume that we have your consent to collect, use and disclose your personal information for the purposes identified above and in a manner consistent with The MCC Canada Privacy Code."

(Please print your name) _____

(Signature) _____ Date: _____

Mennonite Central Committee is not able to accept all sponsorship requests that we receive. It is our practice to do an initial assessment of the refugee claim, which is based on the information provided in this form. We also have limited resources to undertake sponsorships, and rely on voluntary donations from churches and individuals who form our constituent groups. We may not be able to assist with this sponsorship, but your request will be reviewed by an assessment team and carefully considered. If we cannot assist you, you will be notified either in person, by phone, or by letter. We understand your concern for your family members, and thank you for bringing this situation to our attention. After we receive this completed form, we may require further details to further assess your case. Please let us know immediately if your contact information changes, or if any additions or deletions to this application for sponsorship.

Please return this form to: Refugee Program Assistance Coordinator
600 – 45th Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9
Telephone: (306) 665-2555 Fax: (306) 665-5564 E-mail: eharder@mccs.org

Tool – Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Information Session

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

ORAT conducts information sessions on Private Sponsorship of Refugees. These sessions are provided to individuals who contact the office to inquire about the PSR program. At these sessions, individuals are provided with basic information about Canada's immigration and resettlement programs including an overview of the PSR program. Following these sessions, ORAT staff and volunteers meet with individuals to discuss the case they are inquiring about and offer advice as to possible next steps. You will find included in this section the power point presentation that ORAT has developed for these sessions. The speaking notes for this presentation are available upon request, please contact the RSTP office.

Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Information Session
WELCOME! BIENVENUE!

Hosted by: _____
ORAT - Office for Refugees,
Archdiocese of Toronto



© 2009
Cette Présentation est aussi offerte en Français

1 of 18

ORAT's Services

- Assisting in Refugee Sponsorship (PSR)
- Advocating for Refugees
- Referrals
- Networking



2 of 18

ORAT's Policy

- Service to everyone / Non-discrimination
- Free services
- Confidentiality
- Transparency
- Accountability



3 of 18

Different Ways to Come to Canada

Family Sponsorship

- Sponsorship of Spouse, Partner and Child
- Sponsorship of Parents, Grandparents, Adopted Children and Grandchildren



4 of 18

Skilled Workers Program

Point System

- Education
- Age
- Language
- Work Experience
- Job Offer
- Adaptability and others



Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs)

- Each province has its own program
- Local contact i.e. friend/relative in that province

5 of 18

Business Class Immigration

Immigrant Investor Program: \$



Entrepreneur Program: Job Creation

Self-Employed Person Program:

Artists, Athletes and Farmers



Provincial Business Class

6 of 18

Live-In Caregiver Program

- Professional Caregiver to Children, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities



- Eligibility:

Grade 12; Language; Training or Experience

- Job offer in Canada
- After two years employment, can apply for permanent residence.

7 of 18

Temporary Solutions

Temporary Foreign Workers

Seasonal Workers



Visitors

International Students

For more information on the previous slides go to <http://www.cic.gc.ca/>

8 of 18

Refugee Protection

Inland Refugee Claims



Overseas Sponsorship



- Government Sponsorship of Refugees
- Joint Assistance Sponsorship
- Private Sponsorship of Refugees



9 of 18

Who can you sponsor?

A person whose life would be at risk upon return to his/ her own country *and* who has no other solution.

- Eligibility
- Admissibility
- Adaptability



IDPs: Exceptions in 6 "Source Countries"

10 of 18

What are the ways you can become a sponsor?

- Groups of 5 individuals (G5s) 
- Community Sponsors (CSs) 
- Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs)
(Individual churches/ parishes are Constituent Groups) 

11 of 18

PSR Steps


STEP 1: Please provide the following information

1. Why did you leave your country of origin?
2. What will happen if you go back to your country NOW?
3. Why can't you stay where you are now?
4. What do you plan to do in Canada?
5. How will you be sponsored – by a SAH, Group of 5 or Community Sponsor? What about settlement work and funding?
6. Relevant documents



12 of 18

PSR Steps

- STEP 2: Respond to additional questions
- STEP 3: If your case is deemed eligible, find a Catholic institution to provide you with moral and/or financial support; set-up semi-trust fund
- STEP 4: ORAT staff will help you finalize the forms
- STEP 5: Application submitted 
- STEP 6: Sponsorship begins

13 of 18

What do you have to provide in a sponsorship?

- Housing
- Clothing
- Food
- Additional living expenses
- Emotional, moral and other logistical help



Sponsorship responsibilities are usually for 1 year after arrival

14 of 18

How much do you have to provide in a sponsorship?

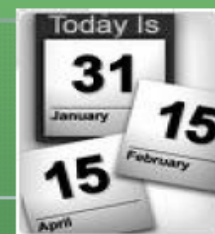
(Liability established by Citizenship and Immigration Canada)

Refugee's Family Size	Estimated Financial Requirement
1	\$ 9,500
2	\$ 15,200
3	\$ 19,300
4	\$ 22,400
5	\$ 25,100
6	\$ 26,400
Additional member	+ \$ 1,200

15 of 18

Government Process and Time Frame

- Application
- Interview
- Medicals
- Criminality
- Security
- Arrival



Average Processing time: 18-43 months

16 of 18

Conclusion

- 1) Choose which program will work best for you and the refugee...



- 2) If you think SAH sponsorship might be best, you are welcome to stay to speak with a counsellor about your case

17 of 18

THANK YOU

You are welcome to come to another session.



If you wish to speak with someone about your case, please remain seated.

For more info:

www.archtoronto.org

www.cic.gc.ca

www.rstp.ca

18

Chapter 2

Case Assessment



Introduction

One of a SAH's most important responsibilities is ensuring that cases are screened and assessed according to Canadian immigration and refugee protection laws and policy before being submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This process can be time consuming and difficult. Luckily, some SAH's have developed useful procedures and tools to assist with this process. In the following chapter you will find tools to help guide you through the case assessment process, this may help with ensuring that forms are filled out correctly, as well a success stories on how case assessment procedures can be better improved by partnering with NGOs on the ground.

Increasing success: Partnership with groups on the ground – MCC in Colombia

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee – Ontario

MCC's work with refugees in Canada is connected to MCC's work with the displaced persons in Colombia. The Mennonite church in Colombia has been working with the displaced persons for many years. In working with the displaced, the church assists those who have been displaced to settle and begin a new life in Bogota or the surrounding areas if they can. Through this process, many have been able to find durable solutions within Colombia. However, many also haven't. It is those persons who can't find safety anywhere in Colombia that are recommended to MCC Canada for sponsorship. After we have received such a request, then we begin to look for a sponsoring church. Once a church has been identified, we complete the undertaking, sponsor assessment and settlement plan and submit the undertaking to the local CIC. After the Canadian end of the process has been completed, the local CIC communicates with Bogota and the process proceeds just as all the other processes.

This is an excellent approach! With a strong presence on the ground, MCC is able to gather all the information it needs and can verify the credibility of the claim based on face to face interactions. Acceptance of cases out of Colombia is about 90%.

Case assessment process

SAH: Mennonite Central Committee – Saskatchewan

In order to handle case processing, MCC Saskatchewan has developed a process that they undergo in order to ensure all cases are assessed in as much detail as possible. This process involves initial intake and gathering of information regarding the case. This information is then reviewed and researched to corroborate the information provided. A summary is provided and the case undergoes a committee review. After reviewing the case, the committee renders a decision and recommendations. If positive and affirmed by MCC Canada the case is then submitted.

By using a committee, this case assessment process provides a multi-perspective view, instead of that of a single individual's viewpoint. Further, it provides an opportunity to learn more information about sponsorship more generally as well as specific regional issues. The case can then be assessed beyond its suitability for refugee sponsorship and can also be examined to determine whether the case fits into MCC priorities, and also allows the committee to determine whether there are possibilities beyond sponsorship for the case.

The make-up of the committee members is also another important consideration. MCC includes two (2) individuals who were previously refugees both from different continents as well as two (2) former MCCers with strong international experiences as well as in-Canada refugee sponsorship experience. The coordinator of the MCC Saskatchewan program provides a support role to the committee.

Once individuals interested have filled out the appropriate documentation the committee reviews the information and assesses based on the following template of questions:

- What refugee category do they fit within (one of the 5 grounds, country of asylum)?
- Who are they afraid of: who persecuted them?
- How have they been personally and directly targeted?
- Did they flee right away or did they delay in leaving (if so why, how long)?
- Did they try to get protection before fleeing (i.e. was state protection available)?
- Could they find safety elsewhere in their country (i.e. Internal Flight Alternative)?
- Could they remain where they are now (i.e. durable solution – local integration)?
- Can they return home now, or is there still a current or future fear of persecution (i.e. durable solution – repatriation?)

- Have they returned home recently for any reason (i.e. re-availment) other than for a brief, temporary purpose?
- Miscellaneous matters: What other issues might apply, i.e. ability to establish in Canada? Questions about inadmissibility (criminal convictions, war crimes, health dangers, etc...)

Although there are definitely challenges to this approach – including: transitioning in new committees, training new committee members, availability of committee to get together, sharing information with the families, as well as how time-consuming the process can be – overall, the process works well and decisions seem to be better accepted by individuals in the long run.

Tool – Case assessment checklist

SAH: Office for Refugee – Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)

The case assessment checklist was developed by ORAT. These forms are used by the refugee sponsorship counsellor when reviewing the case in order to provide an overview of the case to the Director. It provides a guide to the counsellor when reviewing the case and ensures that all of the main aspects of the case assessment have been conducted prior to a decision being made.

ORAT - Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto CASE ASSESSMENT (For Internal office use only)

1. Date:
2. Name of Principal Applicant:
3. Country of Citizenship:
4. Country of Residence:
5. Family size:1
6. Contact Person in Canada; citizen landed none
7. Name:
8. Phone, mail:
9. Relationship (if any):
10. Language (mother tongue and other spoken language):
11. Potential sponsor (Constituent Group):
12. Potential financer:
13. *Why, when and how did you leave your country? Date:*
 - 13.1 Grounds of personal fear:
 - 13.2 Existence of well-founded fear and general conditions:
 - 13.3 Agent of persecution (individual; institution):
14. *What would happen to you upon return now?*
 - 14.1 Danger upon return:

14.2 Similar cases known? yes no

14.3 Is it well documented? yes no

14.4 Any change of country conditions/ government:

better worse none

15. *Can you stay in the country where you are right now?* yes no

15.1 Status in country of residence: no status

15.2 Protection of UNHCR: yes no, why?

16. Credibility; overall consistency:

17. *How would you plan to maintain yourself if you come into Canada?*

17.1. Skills:

17.2 Education:

17.3 Job offer in Canada:

18. *Admissibility concerns, if any:*

18.1 Criminal Charges or Convictions: yes no

18.2 Security Risk; military participation; government position: yes no

18.3 Medical concerns: yes no

19. Comments and Recommendations:

20. Recommendation of the Refugee Sponsorship Counsellor:

Qualifies for PSR Does not qualify for PSR Not enough info

Signed this _____

21. Decision of the Director:

Qualifies for PSR Does not qualify for PSR Not enough info

Signed this _____

Tool – General Supplementary Guide to Completing Schedule 2

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) – Winnipeg

In order to assist the refugees they sponsor, MIIC has developed a guide to assist the refugees in completing schedule 2. It provides an outline to the refugee as to the type of information they should be clear about in answering their questions as well as reinforcing important points such as declaring family members.

General Supplementary Guide to completing
Schedule 2: Refugees Outside Canada
Application for Permanent Residence in Canada
Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad

Under: "GIVEN NAMES", clearly print your **first** name and your **middle** name in BLOCK letters.

Part A

1. A) Have you ever applied to go to Canada as a sponsored refugee?
B) If you applied before, why were you not accepted to go to Canada as a refugee at that time?
C) Why are you more afraid of being persecuted if you return home now? Provide as much evidence as you can.

2. If you are in your home country, do NOT complete questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Go directly to 8.

3. A) Have you ever been refused refugee status by the country where you are currently living or by any other country? (Canada may require a translated copy of your file from that country.)
B) Do you currently have a refugee status application in process?

If you answered "YES" to either question, please provide as much detail as possible, including dates, places and description of circumstances. (Canada may not process your application until you have exhausted every avenue of appeal in your current country of temporary asylum.)

C) This refers to applying for "Convention Refugee" status.

If "YES", what was the result? (If you were mandated as a refugee by UNHCR, ask the UNHCR protection office to refer you to the Canadian visa post. The Government of Canada may decide to assist you to go to Canada.) (Canada does not require you to be mandated as a refugee by the UNHCR in order to be sponsored by a group in Canada, but it will not hurt your chances and it may greatly help your case.)

4. Tell your personal story of how you fled your country and how you looked for protection in another country. List, in order, the main incidents that happened to you as you were looking for protection. Mention the harm that was done to you, to members of your family and to people in situations similar to yours.

Did you ask the authorities in your country to protect you? How did you do this? If you did not ask for protection, why not?

5. It is important to the Canadian visa officer that your story of persecution and your refugee claim are credible, or believable. Make it clear to the Canadian visa officer that your account of fleeing is what really happened. If your story is inconsistent, or if the visa officer has reason to think you are not telling the truth, you can be rejected. Be specific with what you remember about your journey.

6. A) Do you fear returning to your country based on the current conditions in your home country? (If you do, provide evidence that makes you think you may face persecution, or the affects of civil war or armed conflict, or massive human rights violations. Your refugee claim must be forward looking, rather than basing it only on the conditions you faced in the past, when you fled your country.) (Canada does not give refugees protection to compensate them for past persecution. Canada accepts refugees, who have no other durable solution, in order to prevent future persecution.)

B) Describe how you are restricted, where you are now, from working, attending school and traveling.

(Is there a fair chance that you will soon be granted permanent status where you are now?)

7. A) Are you and your family in danger in the country where you are now living? (Provide detailed evidence.)

B) Are you facing problems with the military or civil authorities of the country, or from other groups or individuals in the country where you are now living? If you are, explain in detail. If not, then go directly to question 9.

8. A) Are you currently in another part of your home country? List, in order, the important incidents related to the reasons why you can no longer stay in your country. Include harmful actions taken against you, your family, or to other individuals in similar situations, that make you believe you need to leave. Provide details.

B) Can you return to the community from which you fled? If not, explain why not.

C) If you are unable to safely and successfully settle anywhere else in your country, describe how you and your family are restricted in terms of work, school and travel.

9. Refer to the 'Guide to the Canadian overseas refugee determination process', which is posted on the web site www.miiic.ca.

Part B

10. Provide accurate and complete information about the current status of you and the members of your family in your current country of residence.

11. (The information you provide may be used to determine whether an interpreter is required for the interview.)

12. To help the Canadian visa officer see that you can become self supporting in Canada, it can help to:

- say how eager you are to become established after arriving in Canada,
- describe your education, the languages you speak and your work skills,
- describe your previous and current efforts to improve your English and/or French,
- say what you have learned and what work you have done since becoming a refugee,

- show how, as a refugee, you have been resourceful, motivated and adaptable,
- mention how your relatives in Canada have found employment or financial success, and
- describe the support you expect to get from relatives, friends and community in Canada.

13. If you want to resettle in Winnipeg, make sure 'Winnipeg' is part of the address you provide.

14. Indicate how much money (in local currency) you will bring to Canada.

Part C

15. Declare all the *de facto* members of your family. *De facto* dependants can be your siblings, parents, nieces, nephews or other relatives.

16. Declare all your children who are 18 and above who will not accompany you to Canada now.

17. Declare all your brothers and sisters regardless of their whereabouts.

Part D

18. Please mark the two boxes if you want your sponsor to follow up on your case when needed. Sign your application.

19. If someone assisted you with completing this application, complete this question.

Chapter 3

Following the Case



Introduction

After completing all of the work that goes into preparing a case for submission sponsors must now follow the case throughout the lengthy immigration process, which currently can take as long as 50 months! Given the caseloads of some SAHs it has been necessary to develop practices and tools to assist in 'following' the cases until the refugee(s) arrive safely in Canada. This can range from helping the refugee with their interview preparations to preparing them for their arrival in Canada.

Tool – Preparing for the eligibility interview

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) – Winnipeg

A number of months after refugees have been sponsored, Canadian visa posts contact them for interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to determine whether or not the sponsored refugees are eligible to come to Canada as refugees. How do sponsored refugees prepare for their interview? Where do they find reliable information and assistance regarding the interview process? Who will assist them? MIIC has put together the following information to assist refugees and sponsors in working together to prepare for the interview.

Preparing for the eligibility interview

A brief guide to the Canadian overseas refugee determination process is provided at http://www.miic.ca/sp_overseas_determination_guide.aspx. An additional four page guide to help sponsored refugees prepare for the refugee eligibility interview is available upon request.

Refugees are urged to contact their sponsoring group for accurate, helpful and reliable information. Sponsored refugees who have relatives in Canada can work together as the refugees to prepare for their eligibility interview.

It is imperative that sponsored refugees declare all immediate family members. CIC should be informed of any change in the family composition of the refugee(s) including a marriage, birth or death in the family. New family members added to refugee families after the submission of the sponsorship application must be declared immediately to prevent rejection or delay. Canada does not allow sponsored refugees to bring undeclared family members to Canada.

At the interview the Canadian visa officer will make sure that the person being interviewed is the person who was sponsored and that the person can be believed. Refugees are encouraged to provide answers that are clear, direct and consistent with the information they provided on the forms they submitted when they were first sponsored.

The main purpose of the interview is to determine whether refugees are eligible to come to Canada for protection from persecution. Refugees are urged to make sure they tell their complete personal account of persecution and say only what is relevant to their need for protection. Canada grants protection to refugees in order to prevent them from suffering further persecution when returned to their country of origin.

Refugees are people who fled serious, deliberate and repeated harm in search of a safe place. People who claim to be refugees must make it clear why they fear persecution and why the persecution they fear was inflicted on them.

Privately sponsored refugees can also be found to be eligible to come to Canada as refugees if they can show that they were seriously or personally affected by the strife that surrounded them or if they suffered massive violations of human rights.

Refugees are encouraged to provide evidence regarding their fear of being persecuted upon returning home. This evidence can take various forms including personal reports, articles and web site sources.

Sponsored refugees can decide whether or not they want an interpreter to be present at this eligibility interview. Refugees can ask the interpreter to interpret everything said by both the Canadian visa officer and by the refugees being interviewed, or to interpret only what is not clearly understood by either the visa officer or the interviewees. If the sponsored refugee notices that the interpreter made an error, the sponsored refugee must correct the error immediately. If, overall, the interpretation is clearly inaccurate and unsatisfactory, the person being interviewed must make this very clear to the visa officer. Another interpreter may be brought in or the interview may be rescheduled.

Sponsored refugees are urged to carefully prepare for their eligibility interview. Their relatives in Canada and members of their sponsoring groups are encouraged to assist the refugees they sponsored to prepare for the interview. Sponsored refugees are encouraged to prepare thoroughly for their eligibility interview. This will help Canadian visa officers make clear and fair determinations.

Pre-departure orientation handbook

SAH: World University Services Canada (WUSC) – Ottawa

For WUSC, the process of receiving the refugee begins even before they arrive in Canada. Overseas prior to departure, WUSC sponsored refugees are provided with an orientation handbook called “Almost Everything You Wanted to Know about Living and Learning in Canada but were Afraid to Ask”! Although WUSC undertakes sponsorship in a slightly different way than other SAHs and this handbook is geared to their sponsored refugee – University youth – this practice should not be overlooked. The handbook delves into the WUSC program, travel concerns, academic concerns, Canadian climate and even preparing for the post-sponsorship period. Find below the table of contents of the handbook which gives a overview of the subjects that are covered. For the complete version of the handbook please visit: http://www.wusc.ca/tinymce/jscripts/tiny_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/campus/Pre-Departure%20Guide%202007%20EN.pdf

Table of Contents

Foreword

Chapter 1 — Student Refugee Program:

WUSC Sponsorship

Members of a Sponsoring Group
Uniqueness of each WUSC Sponsorship
Goals of the Student Refugee Program
Roles and responsibilities under the SRP
Processing Timelines for the WUSC Sponsorship Program

Chapter 2 — Travelling to Canada

What to Bring With You
What not bring to Canada
'Landing' in Canada
What to do at the airport if your Sponsoring Group is not there
Permanent Resident Card
Settling in — the first few weeks in Canada
First Few Weeks — What You Can Expect
Accommodation
Food
Health Care and SIN Registration
Orientation to the College or University

Chapter 3 — Academic Issues

Some Facts about Canada's Education System
The Canadian Education System
Transfer of credits from previous college or university
Number of Courses That Can Be Taken
Services on Campus
Class Size
Program Transfers
Transferring Universities or Colleges After the Sponsorship Period
School Semesters/Terms

Chapter 4 — Canadian Characteristics and Customs

Understanding Canadians
Climate
General Weather Information and Seasons
Basic Facts about Canada
A brief history
Canada's National Anthem
Africans in Canada

Chapter 5 — Adaptation and Culture Shock

Canadian Culture
Culture Shock
Stages of 'Culture Shock'
Coping After Traumatic Experiences
People to Talk To for Counselling and to Find out about Services
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Chapter 6 — Money Matters

Budgeting
Tuition
Accommodation and meals
Clothing
Household Supplies
Textbooks and School Supplies
Personal Allowance
Transportation in Canada
Travel Loan
Sending Money Home
Credit Cards
Bank Account

Chapter 7 — Daily Matters

Communication Systems
Telephone Costs and Use
Phone Cards
E-mail
Postal Services
Buying Food
Entertainment
Common Names for Social Places
Shopping for Clothes

Chapter 8 — Health Care

Signing Up For Provincial Health Care Coverage
Interim Federal Health Coverage (IFH)
Dental Care
Hospitals, Private Doctor Clinics and Walk-in Health Clinics

Chapter 9 — After the One-year

Sponsorship

Financing Your Education After the Initial Year
Government Student Loans
Summer/Part-time Employment
Summer Employment
Scholarships and Bursaries
Permanent Employment Prospects
Volunteering
Becoming a Canadian Citizen
Immigration of Other Family Members
Participation in WUSC Activities After the Sponsorship Period
National and International Organizations Working with Refugees

Appendices

1–Pre-Arrival Checklists for the Sponsoring Group
2–Preparing a Resumé for Employment in Canada
3–WUSC Publications
4–WUSC SRP Resource Library

Chapter 4

Working with Constituent Groups and Cosponsors



Introduction

Refugee Sponsorship is definitely not a one person task – but working in groups can sometimes be a challenge. For SAHs, constituent groups and cosponsors provide an opportunity for capacity building and can work with SAHs to ensure successful implementation of the settlement plan once the refugee arrives. Here you will find some tips and tools to assist you in working with sponsoring groups.

Tool – Suggested steps for Manitoba groups

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) – Winnipeg

Organizing a committee involves finding individuals as well as ensuring that the committee has information about the refugee sponsorship process and can receive support from your SAH throughout the process. It entails commitments on behalf of both the sponsoring group as well as the SAH. Below is a sample of suggested steps which MIIC has outlined for their constituent groups; hopefully you will find these useful as well.

Sponsoring Refugees Suggested Steps for Manitoba Groups

Your group may want to:

Gather information about various types of sponsorship, and about refugees in need of a sponsoring group.

We can provide information about sponsoring refugees, and profiles of refugee families.

Discuss your refugee sponsorship options, and reach a decision within your local sponsoring group.

You can invite us to a meeting to outline what's involved, and to answer any questions.

If you need a financial subsidy, ask us about the Refugee Sponsorship Incentive Program.

Get the refugee to complete, sign, and return to you the Application for permanent residence in Canada.

This kit is available from us or from the CIC web site.

Apply to your denominational Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) for approval.

We have contact names, and details about the process.

If your group does not belong to an SAH, we can suggest alternatives, including our own SAH.

Apply to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). We can put you in touch with the CIC contact.

Refugee sponsorship applications are available from us, CIC's web site or call centre service.

After discussing how, and by whom responsibilities will be covered, prepare a general settlement plan.

We can provide sample settlement plans and planning checklists.

Familiarize yourself with the financial, technical, logistical and relational aspects of resettling refugees.

We can provide you with an information packet, and assist you with planning.

Shortly before the refugees arrive, prepare a comprehensive support plan.

We can provide a monthly budget based on the size of the family and the ages of the children.

While waiting for the refugees to arrive, you may want to sponsor a special needs or family linked case.
We can provide you with profiles of particularly vulnerable refugee families.

Have someone from your group meet and welcome the refugee newcomer family at the airport.
If needed, we can provide a settlement counsellor, a driver and a van.
Depending on availability, we can offer temporary accommodation for a basic fee.

Have the newcomers complete the required forms, and offer them the necessary orientations.
You can access our settlement services by contacting the intake worker.

Go over your sponsorship support plan with the newcomers, and discuss housing options with them.
Upon request, we can provide assistance with the search for suitable housing.

Ensure there is frequent contact and ongoing, dependable support for the refugee newcomers.
We can assist with information about resolving difficulties.

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (Welcome Place)
Sponsorship Services
397 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2K9
204 977 1000 Fax: 956-7548 johnp@miic.ca www.miic.ca

Money Matters – Dealing with Financial Issues: the Winnipeg Assurance Fund

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) – Winnipeg

One of the many challenges in sponsorship is money. Who will provide the finances – the SAH, CG or cosponsor? How can the SAH ensure finances for each and every case? MIIC along with other sponsors in Winnipeg have worked together with the province of Manitoba to create an Assurance Program. Below you will find information on how you can work to replicate this in your area as well as an example of the registration brochure used by MIIC to explain the program.

Winnipeg Assurance Program

Prior to 2001 we submitted family linked refugee sponsorships after assessing requests received from refugee newcomers living in Winnipeg. Since 2001 we have invited “ethno-cultural” community and faith groups to become constituent groups of our Agreement to sponsor refugees. To date we have more than 60 constituent groups.

Our collective refugee sponsorship experience in Manitoba seems to indicate that in less than 1% of cases the family links are unable to support the sponsored refugee newcomers to the extent they previously offered. This is often due to unforeseen circumstances. However, sponsoring groups and family links alike are concerned that something unexpected might happen which will prevent them from fully supporting the sponsored refugees.

Our request to the Mayor for a guarantee to back up family linked refugee sponsorships was met with instant approval. The Mayor insisted that an assurance fund of \$250,000.00 be established on the framework of a tripartite agreement.

There is no fee for registering a family linked refugee sponsorship with the assurance fund. When the family link is not able to fully support the sponsored refugee newcomer as offered, and if all other sources of support prove less than adequate, registered sponsors can submit a claim to the fund. The fund serves as an avenue of last resort.

The program came into effect on January 1, 2003. Since then we have registered family linked refugee sponsorships submitted by Winnipeg groups, provided they meet three criteria: the person being sponsored is a refugee; she/he wants to settle in Winnipeg; and the family link is able to support the refugee newcomer as offered.

To date the fund has only been accessed in three cases: a family of 5 from Ethiopia, a family of 3 from Central America, and a man from Eritrea. The growth of the fund, based on interest accrual, continues to out-pace the very limited draw on the fund.

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) promotes and supports the protection and resettlement of refugees and offers a range of services that welcomes and assists refugee newcomers in their settlement and integration into Canadian society.

Sponsorship Services, a program of MIIC, supports Manitoba groups doing private and special needs refugee sponsorships, and facilitates family and community linked refugee sponsorships through community and faith groups.

The **Winnipeg Private Refugee Sponsorship Assurance Program (WPRSAP)**, through initial funding from the City of Winnipeg, is a fund administered by MIIC. It provides financial guarantees to groups sponsoring refugees with family links in Winnipeg. The program enables family linked refugees to find a place to resettle, to be reunited with their relatives, and to increase the population of Winnipeg.

WPRSAP Operational Principles

Groups in Winnipeg, submitting family linked refugee sponsorships to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, are eligible to register with the Winnipeg assurance program.

The WPRSAP fund will remain as long as the money lasts, with principal and interest earnings made available to sponsoring groups in accordance with the established criteria. It is hoped the fund will not be depleted and will be augmented as required.

The fund serves as a last resort, should other available local supports prove insufficient.

Program Goals

1. Assure groups, applying to the program, that they will not unexpectedly be burdened with an inordinate liability.
2. Encourage community and faith groups to respond to the need to reunite families through refugee sponsorship.
3. Bring family linked refugees to Winnipeg to stay.
4. Keep in Winnipeg the relatives and friends of sponsored refugees.
5. Help make it possible for community and faith groups to put their values into acts of compassion and humanitarian care.

Question and Answer:

What is family linked refugee sponsorship?

Faith groups and (ethno-cultural) community groups undertake family linked refugee sponsorships when they sponsor refugees who have relatives or friends in Winnipeg. The local relatives of sponsored refugees offer to support their sponsored relatives upon arriving in Winnipeg.

How does WPRSAP assist groups?

It will assure them that, when other sources of support are insufficient, they can draw on the resources of the assurance fund to provide the basic needs of the refugee newcomers.

Why do groups want to undertake family linked refugee sponsorships?

1. Rescue refugee families from persecution, suffering, and homelessness.
2. Reunite families.

How can groups identify those who need their relatives sponsored?

1. Invite their members to present sponsorship requests to them.
2. Receive refugee newcomers to Winnipeg requesting family linked refugee sponsorships.

Who can assist groups with the refugee sponsorship application process?

Denominational or organizational representatives can assist. MIIC (Welcome Place) can refer you to these representatives, and can, upon request, assist groups directly.

What's in it for groups that sponsor refugees?

Groups who sponsor refugees talk about the privilege of getting to know refugee newcomers, and claim to get as much out of sponsoring as do the refugees.

Conditions

1. Groups registering for WPRSAP coverage are based in Winnipeg.
2. Registration with WPRSAP is done before undertaking a family linked refugee sponsorship.
3. A copy of the completed 'undertaking/application to sponsor' is provided.
4. Sponsoring groups have determined, to the extent they can, that sponsored refugees are eligible for private refugee sponsorship.
5. Sponsored refugees plan to settle in Winnipeg.
6. The sponsorship will be for one year.
7. Sponsoring groups determine that the relatives or friends living in Winnipeg have offered to and can support the refugees upon their arrival.

Application Process

Submit a WPRSAP registration form and a copy of the 'undertaking/application to sponsor' to MIIC before submitting the sponsorship to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Access to the Fund

Other local resources for support are to be accessed before the fund is accessed.

They include:

- the relatives or friends in Winnipeg
- the local sponsoring group
- the Sponsorship Agreement Holder if based in Winnipeg

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.
 (Welcome Place)
 397 Carlton Street R3B 2K9
 977-1000 Fax: 956-7548
 email: johnp@miic.ca
 web site: www.miic.ca

Initial funding provided by the
City of Winnipeg

Family Linked
Refugee Sponsorship

**Winnipeg
Private Refugee Sponsorship
Assurance Program**

available to Winnipeg groups
sponsoring family linked refugees
sponsoring refugees and
reuniting them
with relatives and friends
in Winnipeg

PURPOSE
 PRINCIPLES
 GOALS
 Q&A
 CONDITIONS
 PROCESS
 ACCESS

Initial funding provided by the
City of Winnipeg

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.
(Welcome Place)

Keeping in touch

SAH: World University Services Canada (WUSC) – Ottawa

Given its national mandate as it operates in Universities across Canada, WUSC has had to develop mechanisms to ensure communication and information-sharing to its groups. Additionally, given their sponsors – University youth – it was also necessary to utilize communication mechanisms that would be well-accepted by their groups. One thing is for certain, developing techniques and venues for communication between sponsoring groups and the SAH must definitely match the profile of the individuals in your sponsoring group. And although the internet may not work for all – WUSC has definitely developed a great website for use by their local committees.

Online you will find many useful resources available to all the local committees. One in particular – the local committee handbook – includes eight modules on various topics including starting and running a local committee, managing money and engaging the community.

Below you will find the module topics – the local committee handbook in its entirety can be found by visiting: http://wusc.ca/en/campus/students/resources#Local_Committee_Handbook

For more of WUSC's useful online tools visit: <http://wusc.ca/en/campus/students/SRP>

Local Committee Handbook

[Module #1: Overview of WUSC and Local Committees](#)

[Module #2:\(Re\) Building a Local Committee](#)

- [WUSC Local Committee Registration Form](#)

[Module #3: Running a Local Committee](#)

- [Engaging a Faculty/Staff Advisor](#)

[Module #4: Media and Communications](#)

[Module #5: Managing Money](#)

- [Local Committee Financial Report](#)

Module #6: Fundraising

- Charitable donations: Local Committees' Frequently Asked Questions
- [Donation form](#)
- [Catalyst Fund Info Sheet](#)

Module #7: Event Planning

- [Planning your calendar of events](#)

Module #8: Engaging the community

- Building Bridges: Best Practices in Creating Effective Partnerships between Student Volunteers and their Communities to Support Newcomers in Small Communities - [Best Practices \(PDF\)](#) | [PowerPoint Summary](#)

Chapter 5

Settlement



Introduction

Planning, preparing and assisting the refugee once they arrive in Canada can be quite a feat. There are many different issues which need to be taken into consideration. Some SAHs have developed tools to assist them in the settlement planning process – specifically a very detailed settlement plan. For those who work in rural community settings the challenges may differ; however, you may be interested to learn out how one SAH accomplishes it.

Tool – Detailed Settlement Plan

SAH: Office for Refugee-Archdiocese of Toronto

This settlement plan allows for sponsoring groups to go into details regarding the preparations they are making for the newcomers. Additionally, it also provides the SAH with detailed information about settlement issues before approving a group's sponsorship.

SETTLEMENT PLAN FOR: _____

CLIENT ID/CIC NUMBER: _____

Steps:	Details, things to consider:	Who will do it and when? Comments, information, responses:	Done
A): AIRPORT WELCOME - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:			
<i>GOAL #1: Make arrangements for the arrival of the newcomers.</i>			
1 ! !	Picking up the newcomers at the airport What kind of transportation is available to bring the newcomers home from the airport?	Name, phone and e-mail of airport welcomees:	√
2 !	Welcome package What will be included?		
B): FINDING HOUSING & STOCKING THE HOUSE - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:			
<i>GOAL #2: Find out about affordable housing options in the community and venues for searching for rental units.</i>			
3	Rental budget What is available to be spent on rent on a monthly basis?	Budget for the rent:	√
4	Get out into the community and look at housing. This will allow you to have a very good idea of what's available and what's affordable. When the newcomers arrive, it may be with very little notice, so you need to have scouted out all the possibilities in advance. Make sure you are aware of the specifics of the rental laws and local bylaws that apply in your community.	Is rent within the budgetlines? YES - NO? At a level that's affordable after sponsorship ends? (take into account the cost of utilities as well.) Is the location convenient for transit, stores, schools, etc.? Is the landlord sensitive to cultural issues? YES - NO?	
5	Have a list of units available to view with the newcomers once they arrive	Addresses of available units:	
6 !	Temporary Housing Having an interim housing option gives the newcomers the chance to participate in the permanent housing decision. Where will the newcomers stay until permanent housing is available? Have emergency accomodation prepared for unexpected situations.	Planned temporary address:	
<i>GOAL #3: Determine what is needed to stock the house: furniture, household effects, food staples, etc...</i>			
7 !	Budget for start-up costs What is available to be spent on the following - items necessary for their home.	Budget for start-up costs:	
8 !	Furniture: Where will the furniture come from? Can donations be gathered? Who will be responsible for collecting?	Purchase or in-kind?	

9 !	Houshold effects (pots and pans, etc...):	Can donations be gathered? Who will be responsible for collecting?	Purchase or in-kind?	
10 !	Linens, beddings, etc...:	Can donations be gathered? Who will be responsible for collecting?	Purchase or in-kind?	
11 !	Food staples:	Can donations be gathered? Who will be responsible for collecting? Make sure to include food items particular to the newcomers national diet - 'food from home' - , it will go along way to ease the stress around all the new things the newcomers will face.	Purchase or in-kind?	
12 !	Hook-up costs (rent deposit, telephone, utilities, etc.):		Total expected hook-up costs:	
GOAL #4: Teach newcomers some of the basics of running a house				√
13 !	Telephone	Costs associated, long distance rates, using phone cards	Monthly cost: of phone company:	Name
14 !	E-mail addresses, Internet	Internet connection needed at home? Closest locations with internet access?	Will internet be installed at home? Yes or No? If Yes, monthly cost: Name of company:	
15 !	Postal code; Handling mail, Office basics		Nearest post office:	
16 !	Who will pay the rent/costs and how?	Who will be in charge of providing the newcomers with money each month? How much will be given?	Name:	
17 !	How will this be covered:	Are the funds already available? Are fundraising efforts required?	Where are the funds? Fundraising plan:	
18 !	Monthly budget (living allowance)	How much is available for incidentals?	Total expected monthly budget:	
C): SHOPPING, SERVICES AND TRANSPORTATION - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:				
GOAL #5: Enable the newcomers to learn to shop in Canada				√
19 !	Find out what economical shopping venues are available in your community: from bulk food to discount stores, to second hand shops:	Since newcomers will have very limited funds to work with, learning how to shop economically will be a priority. Shopping may be quite different in their country of origin — for example, they may be used to bargaining on prices; or alternatively, they may be used to fixed prices for staple foods, and may not realize they need to comparison shop.	List of grocery stores in the area:	

20	Introduce them to Canadian food and cooking (marks, brands, expressions, etc...)	Introduce the newcomers to the idea of flyers outlining the sales for the week, 'on special', guaranties, warranties, boxing day sale, PST, GST, etc...		
21	Find locations where the newcomers can find speciality food items, or food items particular to their national diet.	Where are these stores located? Are they accessible by public transportation? Are there any restaurants in the area?	Locations:	
22	Venue and timing plan of shopping.	It may be helpful for someone to be responsible for shopping with the newcomers for the first couple months. Is there a day of the week that could be regularly scheduled to run errands with the newcomers?	Name of individual:	
<i>GOAL #6: Determine the most economical and efficient transportation options available to the newcomers given the resources available to them.</i>				√
23	Find out about bus or TTC metro passes, maps, flyers.	Inform the newcomers about how the transportation system works and the costs associated with it and the use of transfers. Check out www.ttc.ca		
24	Show the newcomers how to use the transport system; show them around your town	As well, be sure to consider the convenience of bus routes, keeping in mind that the newcomers will be juggling many things: housing & employment search, child care, and ESL classes.		
D): FINANCES - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:				
<i>GOAL #7: Assist newcomers in learning about the banking system in Canada, how to handle money, rights and obligations, budgeting...</i>				√
25	Assist newcomers to open a bank account.	Talk to bank managers to find out whether any banks in your community have special cross-cultural sensitivity or expertise. Make sure to explain to the newcomers of telebanking, internet banking, and other banking services work.	Name of bank:	
26	Assist newcomers to the nearest Service Canada location where they can apply for a SIN card.	Also ensure that the newcomers understands what the SIN card is used for.	Nearest Service Canada location:	
27	Explain to newcomers how Income taxes are collected and also how to apply for benefits they may be eligible for.	For more information about the Child Tax Benefit, the Universal Child Care Benefit and the GST/HST credit, please visit http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/	Eligible for child tax benefit - Yes or No? Other tax credits:	

28	Find out about support provided by community groups. Some multicultural groups will provide financial counselling to newcomers in their own language.	Although you will certainly provide financial orientation, it can be tremendously helpful to newcomers to have someone from their own culture — who understands the differing cultural perceptions around handling money — to provide the “bridge” into the Canadian way of approaching money matters.	List of multicultural groups in the area:	
29	Provide guidance in budgeting and financial planning.	Although your group will have prepared a budget for the newcomers before arriving it is very important that this be reviewed with the newcomers when they arrive. Additionally, it is important to explain the costs that will be incurred on monthly basis and how they can fluctuate (i.e. long-distance, utilities, credit cards, etc.... and other variable costs that may come up in a month).		
30	Extra costs:	In case of rejection, are you ready to use part of the settlement funds - or extra money for judicial review (usual cost: \$2,500) and for case review (at CIC)? Yes - No?	In case of rejection, are you ready to use part of the settlement funds - or extra money for judicial review (usual cost: \$2,500) and for case review (at CIC)? Yes - No?	
E): INTERPRETATIONS AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:				
GOAL #8: <i>Prepare the committee for the arrival of the newcomers (learn about the culture), arrange for interpreters, be prepared to deal with sensitive issues and ensure that the appropriate people are responsible for them. Plan how you can support the newcomers cultural adjustment.</i>				√
31	Newcomers’s language	Given that you will very likely be discussing some quite personal matters, is the interpreter’s gender, religion, ethnicity, political opinion and age appropriate? Yes - No If the interpreter is from the same country as the newcomers — is s/he from a group that has historical antipathy with the newcomers’s group? This situation can be both explosive and painful for everyone involved.	What is the newcomer’s language:	
32	Identify interpreters in your area.	Most newcomers don’t speak “Canadian - English” perfectly, so they will require the use of interpreters at some point. At the beginning, this may be extensive and indispensable. Identify interpreters before arrival. Settlement agencies or multicultural communities may be able to make recommendations. Does the interpreter have an understanding of refugee situations and issues? If not, she/he may benefit from some information and awareness raising. Is the interpreter easily available?	Name, phone and e-mail of interpreters in the area: Interpreters availability:	

33	How will you make sure that the interpreter will keep information strictly the confidentiality?	Interpreters may deal with very personal matters, so they must be highly trusted. (Confidentiality form - this can be provided by our office). Is the interpreter known and recommended within the multicultural community? Unless you can understand the language that will be spoken, you will depend upon the interpreter to accurately convey information, and must place a great deal of confidence in him/her.	How are you dealing with confidentiality with the interpreter?	
34	How will you help the newcomers connect with organizations/ events specific to their culture?	Find out specifically about ethno-cultural groups, if your neighbourhood has a multicultural society or council, this is a good place to start. Additionally, some of these groups also provide employment counselling, crisis counselling, and so on and will be useful for settlement issues as well. If appropriate, you may want to find out about community groups, centers etc., that the newcomers may be interested in affiliating with on their arrival. Keep in mind however the pluralism of a community and the refugee experience and that the newcomers may not necessarily feel affinity with a certain group.	Groups, cultural organizations, etc... in the area:	
35	Become culturally aware.	Learn about how your cultural assumptions (e.g. regarding gender roles, family structure, children's rights, etc...) may affect and even cause distress to the newcomers. Learn the newcomers's culture. Maybe 5 words in their language? Raise your own group's awareness about culture.		
F): SETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:				
<i>GOAL #9: Connect the newcomer with organizations and community groups that can assist in their settlement and provide professional support and advice and work with your committee.</i>				√
36	Visit, and provide us with the contact information of at least 3 settlement agencies, refugee /ethno-cultural groups and community social support groups exist in your community detailing the services they offer:	Help the newcomers connect with those groups in order for them to be provided with the appropriate assistance and ongoing support that is necessary for successful settlement	Names and location of 3 settlement agencies:	

37	Names and full contact information of people who will help you implement this settlement plan	Provide us with five names and the full contact info of individuals who will help you in the implementation of this settlement plan (committee members, volunteers or co-sponsors). Name, phone and e-mail of at least 5 people or attach list of committee members:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	
38	Determine if there is any assistance that can be provided by the church.	Financial, logistical, moral, emotional, etc...	Name of parish: Support being provided:	
39	Provide a list of city and neighbourhood programs that may be helpful to the newcomers.	Find your local YMCA newcomer center.	City and neighbourhood programs available:	
G): LANGUAGE TRAINING; EDUCATION; JOB SEARCH - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:				
<i>GOAL #10: Assist the newcomers in locating agencies to assist them in their language training, skill development and job search.</i>				
40	Research and identify ESL (English as a Second Language) and other language training courses that are available in your community that the newcomers are eligible for?	Visit the CIC web site at http://www.cic.gc.ca . Other courses may also be available, through the local adult education program, college, or high school. Is private volunteer tutoring an option? Settlement agencies in your area can explain testing/referral process. Your sponsorship budget should allow newcomers to take language classes when they first arrive rather than requiring them to begin working immediately. Newcomers that learn an official language settle better in the long term. Keep in mind that some ESL courses focus on language in the workplace, related to a specific job whereas others are more general. Help the newcomers choose the one that will be the most beneficial to them.	Assist newcomers to find and register for the most appropriate course; name and location of course:	√

41	Assist the newcomers in identifying courses, workshops, trainings, seminars, etc... that can help them build their skills and language competency.	In addition to ESL/ LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) courses, there are now a wide variety of workplace training, adult education, and targeted skills development courses, available both in-class and through distance learning. Organizations such as the Centre for Education and Training (CET) have services that are developed specifically to help newcomers assess and build their skills and language competency, for the Canadian job market (for more information on CET, check http://www.tcet.com/). Many local colleges also offer courses.		
42	Assist the newcomer in identifying organizations where they can volunteer.		Where will the newcomers volunteer? Please provide two potential options:	
43	Looking for employment is one of the most important tasks. Advance research can be very helpful.	If you know anything about the newcomer(s)'s skill set and background, you can start researching employers who seek those skills in your area. Visit your local Canada Employment Centre to find out what resources are offered, and whether job counselling is available. Begin to check out the many web sites for job hunting, such as +Jobs Canada, (http://www.canada.plusjobs.com/), HRDC Job Bank, (http://jb-ge.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/), Canada Jobs (http://www.canadajobs.com/), the Job Bus Canada (http://www.JobBus.com/) and Southam's Careerclick, which covers job listings from major newspapers across Canada (http://www.careerclick.com/).	Assist the newcomers to learn the "how to" of searching for jobs in Canada — searching ads, using the Canada Employment Centre, getting together a resume, "knocking on doors," etc. Find Job Search Workshop's (JSW) in the area:	
44	Find out about employment counselling services in your community.	Find out about the services of the Employment Resource Centres - such as access to the internet, fax, computers and printers for job search, workshops on job search, counselling services etc. Ethno-cultural groups or settlement agencies may provide counselling or even some training (e.g. using a computer) that is tailored to the needs	Name and location:	
45	Research credential assessment and re-qualification procedures for newcomers who may have professional skills and education.	Visit: http://icascanada.ca/home.php		

GOAL #11: Assist the newcomers in enrolling their children in school and learning about the Canadian school system.			
46	Find out about schools in the area & assist the newcomers to enroll their children into school	List of local schools. Visit Toronto Catholic District School Board http://www.tcdsb.org/ and Toronto District School Board http://www.tdsb.on.ca/	Do any of these schools have SEPT - Settlement and Education Partnership Toronto - workers?
47	Provide information about the Canadian school system & Canadian views towards education.	Support newcomers as they learn about school trips, homework expectations, etc.	
H): SPIRITUALITY, FAMILY LIFE, CHILD CARE - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:			
GOAL #12: Assist the newcomers in locating child care facilities and family assisting organizations.			
48	Find out about childcare options in your community.	When researching childcare resources in your community, keep in mind the likely income level of the newcomers after support ends. In addition to the normal care and safety concerns, consider cost, access to transport, proximity to ESL classes and sensitivity to cultural issues. For single parents to attend ESL classes, childcare may be one of their first needs.	Is providing a ride (sometimes) an option? Can you arrange baby-sitting?
49	Find a family assisting organization in your area.		Name and location of organization:
50	How will you help the newcomers connect to spiritual or faith groups?		

I): HEALTH, CLOTHING, RECREATION, SPORTS - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:			
GOAL #13: Inform the newcomer about health care in Ontario and assist them in locating the appropriate services.			√
51 !	Apply for provincial (OHIP) and federal (IFH) health coverage on their first day in Canada. Our newcomers are eligible for Interim Federal Health (IFH) coverage.	IFH is intended to be emergency care, and covers specific, basic healthcare needs within very strict guidelines. Collect information about IFH and find out in your community which pharmacy/ physician and dentist accept it:	OHIP office in your area: CIC office in your area to apply for IFH: Name(s) of people who will bring them:
52 !	Plan for medical emergencies:	Explain the concept of 911 and when it should be used and related costs - ambulance	
53 !	Locate family doctors in the area.		Provide name and contact information.
54 !	Locate dentist in the area.		Provide name and contact information.
55	Research the sources of special equipment, care and support if special needs arise.		Identify special needs:
GOAL #14: Locate recreation facilities in your area.			√
56	Check out facilities in your area, particularly those that can be used at a low cost or for free.	Help the newcomers learn how to use them, if necessary. Be sensitive to cultural issues (e.g. dress and mixed-gender activities)	Recreation facilities:
GOAL #15: Assist newcomer in finding clothing that is appropriate for Canadian climate.			√
57	Assist newcomers to buy required clothing, and show them how to make use of second-hand and bargain stores.	Adequate winter clothing and vitamin input are essentials. Be careful concerning use of second-hand clothing. Advise them on dress appropriate for our Canadian climate. Explain to them the drastic changes in temperature that can occur from day to day.	

J): CRISIS, TRAUMA AND EMERGENCIES - PERSON RESPONSIBLE:			
<i>GOAL #16: Identify places where the newcomer can seek counselling if and when necessary.</i>			√
58	Resources available in your community. Additionally, learn how to avoid vicarious traumatization.	Refugees have been through traumatic situations. Once they've taken care of their immediate settlement needs, crisis and trauma counselling may become a real necessity for some. Find out in advance the appropriate resources that are available in your community. Visit the web site of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) to find out about torture and its treatment. Contact your local settlement agency for information on appropriate trauma treatment or counselling in your area.	Trauma treatment or counselling services in your area:
<i>GOAL #17: Ensure that someone will be responsible for the sponsorship in case of unexpected emergency.</i>			√
59	Name and full contact info of a person who would be ready to take over the whole sponsorship in case of unexpected emergency (contingency plan):		Name, phone and e-mail (different from person who signs below):

I the undersigned sponsor declare that I am responsible fully to implement the above Settlement plan

<p>Signature of Pastor:</p> <p>Name (print):</p> <p>Phone number:</p> <p>Alternate number:</p> <p>Fax:</p> <p>E-mail:</p> <p>Date:</p>	<p>Signature Cosponsor/Comm. Chair:</p> <p>Name of Cosponsor/Comm. Chair:</p> <p>Phone number:</p> <p>Alternate number:</p> <p>Fax:</p> <p>E-mail:</p> <p>Date:</p>
--	---

Settlement in Rural Communities

SAH: East Kootenay Friends of Burma

East Kootenay Friends of Burma (EKFOB) started up with support from the Cambodia Support Group who initially sponsored Cambodian refugees in the 1980's. Their first arrival was in 1983. Friends of Burma have in the past primarily sponsored refugees from Burma but they also accept refugees from other areas, including Columbia and Africa. Given their location in rural BC, they do not always have all of the settlement resources that are available in larger centre, but they work together as a community and have proven successful in establishing numerous refugee families. In 2008, EKFOB undertook a Rural Resettlement Pilot Project with CIC Vancouver and sponsored 2 JAS cases, a family of 8 Columbians and a family of 8 Karens. This pilot proved a success and now EKFOB continues to advocate to the government to increase rural resettlement spots for refugees coming to Canada – especially for those coming from rural backgrounds such as the Colombians and Karens.

Upon choosing a family to sponsor, the first thing EKFOB does is advertise that they have a family arriving sometime soon. They posted signs at coffee shops, libraries, notices in the newspaper, etc. and welcomed everyone and anyone to get involved in helping with newly arriving families. As well, the members of our organization ask people they know who may be interested in helping out the new family. They ask people to respond and come to a meeting. They indicate that they are so successful because of their wonderful community – 25 different folks came to the planning meeting. They all talked to their friends and it grew from there. They learn what people's strengths are, for example: teaching English, cooking, filling out paperwork, etc. and have them do what they are good at. An example of this: This past winter a gentleman who is good at creating things built a sled for one of the Karen children who was born with no arms and legs so the child could participate with others at the toboggan hill.



Once it is known when the family will arrive, the group finds a home and furnishes it so it is ready for the new family. A schedule is set up and initially there are visits every day of the week as the family gets settled. There has been a code set up so that if the family does not want visitors, they can close their curtains and if they want company, the curtains are left open so that those who may stop by unannounced know if they are welcome. Birthdays are celebrated with cake and gifts. When the family has appointments someone steps forward to take them to the appointment. The family is included in events like potlucks or going to local special events. Email has become a good way to communicate to get people involved in helping the family out. People use their contacts to get jobs for the family and any other help that may be needed.

It would seem that the key to EKFOB's success over the years is their ability to involve the community and encourage everyone who may have a skill to share it with the newcomers. They have involved the local quilting group who provides quilts to each member of the family. Newcomers have also been given free ski lessons at the local ski hill and skating lessons at the local arena. There are 2 amputees in one family and one child born with no arms and legs in the other family. Both families are living in a community with a ski hill that has embraced disabled skiing and the children have been introduced to skiing that meets their needs. There is a local prosthetics office that is helping get the needed items for the individuals so that they may have a better quality of life.



The whole process is a boon to the communities that the refugees come to. There is excitement and community spirit built around supporting the new families. Former refugees are always willing to help new refugees with emotional and financial support. Former refugees are on the Board of the organization to help with decision making for future resettlement projects. Valuable long term friendships have been developed. Communities grow when they embrace new immigrants and what they add to the quality of life in the region.

Chapter 6

Building Capacity, Raising Awareness



Introduction

The sponsorship community is full of hardworking, warm-hearted individuals who devote their lives, work and often their free-time to assisting refugees. The sponsorship program has remained strong for the past 30 years; however, SAHs are often looking for ways to build the capacity of the program and also to raise awareness about the program with the general public. The following are example of how some SAHs do this.

Tool: Get Involved!

SAH: Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Huron

We can make a huge difference in people's lives. We can save a refugee's life. Would you like to be part of this? The diocesan refugee committee is there to help you. Here are some suggestions:

- ⇒ Form a refugee committee at your church (it can be part of outreach or it can be a separate committee) and see if there is enough interest in your church to become involved in a refugee sponsorship.
- ⇒ If your church feels that it is too small to handle such a project, then try joining with other churches in your area. Alternatively consider making it a deanery project or an ecumenical project with other denominations in your community. Refugee work is a good way to bring people together and to meet some really great people.
- ⇒ Find out if there is a church near you which has a refugee family who they are looking after right now and ask if they need any help.
- ⇒ Welcome refugees into your community. By definition refugees do not want to leave their country of birth but are forced to do so. They experience alienation in a new culture and a long painful separation from other family members.
- ⇒ Think about the way we live. Ask yourself if we are contributing directly or indirectly to the injustices which create refugees, or are we contributing to peace and justice for all.
- ⇒ Pray for refugees; pray that peace will prevail in their homelands; pray that they will be able to endure the terrible suffering.

Are you.....

A housewife? Take a refugee mother along shopping. If possible, help her by pointing out how to get good buys, or give her a ride home with her groceries.

A student? Find ways to include refugees in your social activities.

A car or truck owner? Offer rides to those who come to the church or school you attend; offer to help refugees move into new homes.

An owner or manager of apartments or houses? Take a risk and accept a refugee family even when they cannot come up with all of the security you normally require. Most of the time you won't be disappointed.

An employer? Consider employing refugees despite language handicaps.

A teacher? Home-bound mothers and other refugees would love help in learning English.

A psychologist, psychiatrist, counsellor or social worker? Any person with good listening skills can help worried and upset refugees, just by being present and listening.

Bi-Weekly Volunteer Seminar

SAH: Office for Refugees – Archdiocese of Toronto

The biweekly refugee sponsorship seminar of ORAT “Office for Refugees of the Archdiocese of Toronto” was created in response to the following:

ORAT, as a (SAH) “Sponsorship Agreement Order” has very limited funds. The best use of these funds is:

- (A) Directly assisting refugees in settlement and integration (housing, clothing, food).
- (B) Mobilizing community members to provide assistance.

If a “SAH” wants to increase capacity and limited funds, the best investment is to increase the number of volunteers and encourage them to become useful members of the team and/or office volunteers. One way to maintain the interest of the volunteers is to get them together regularly and talk about refugee related social justice topics. The presentation encourages people to learn more, and be more active in providing practical assistance for victims of human rights violations.

About 7 years ago ORAT announced a meeting that takes place every other week Thursday or Friday evenings depending on the availability of the majority of the volunteers. We name a topic, and chose a presenter. This presenter gives a clear picture of the given refugee related topic. After this presentation there are discussions. Beyond the presentation we have time to go through on regular news from both the government side and the non-government side – including RSTP updates.

In the biweekly seminar there are volunteers in charge to organize this event, provide logistics, send out the invitations, arrange speakers, and implement the whole program. Following the 2 hour session, everyone is welcome to stay for an informal gathering which is also an important part of community building. The biweekly seminar gives volunteers responsibility and different roles to perform. Beyond being a tool of knowledge for volunteers to learn more about refugee related issues it also helps us come together and create something to benefit the community.

From a Newsletter to a Book!

SAH: Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council (MIIC) – Winnipeg

Newsletters are always great tools to keep people informed and remind them of topics and events regularly. At MIIC, the Options Newsletter allows them to stay connected with the numerous sponsors across the province, ensuring that people stay connected and interested in refugee issues. Past newsletters can be found at: <http://www.miic.ca/options.aspx>.

Further to this newsletter, in 2008, Ariana Yaftali put together a compilation of stories into a book entitled "We Did It!" The stories are inspirational and serve as a reminder to individuals of the great work that is possible. Find below the introduction to this book:

Many of us still wonder why some people became uprooted. Why are they refugees? What did happen to their lives? Why are they on the run? Why are they homeless?

When we hear the word "refugee", many questions and concerns come to our minds.

Conflict and war continue to play a major role in uprooting people and making them refugees. War and conflict cause tragedy and disaster in the lives of millions of people as they become uprooted. As they escape, they struggle to cope with the loss of family, friends, possessions and everything familiar to them. In conflict situations, in no time, the lives of thousands of people change abruptly. For example, a bomb is dropped in one community and it causes destruction and violence. Depending on the degree of severity of the bombing, it costs the lives of many people. Injuries and tragedies abound. Finally those who are left are forced to leave their communities as war and conflict become unbearable for them.

After a long journey to a safer place, refugees find themselves in the tent cities of refugee camps, waiting in unbearable uncertainty to see what the future will hold for them. In this uncertain situation, refugees are trapped in a struggle. No one wants them and no one cares about them. They are stuck living in the most appalling conditions, living in refugee camps, isolated areas or a desert place where no one else lives except refugees. While they are refugees, they still hope to find ways to get out of their uncertain situation and continue a normal life. The feeling of not having a country, being stateless and not having a place to call home is not easy.

This book is about the stories of refugees; their experiences of war and conflict, and its impact on their lives. It's about their strong sense of determination to move on; to find ways to survive, and to get away from their current situation. It's about finding sponsors and countries which can accept them. Finally, this book highlights some of the experiences of new Canadians who came here through the refugee sponsorship program and features their contributions to Canadian society. Canadian generosity and the sustained support of the Canadian government allow many refugees to come to

Canada and to call this country their new home. We, in Canada, offer a home free from violence and persecution.

Throughout these valuable stories of the survival and successful settlement in Canada, I challenge the popular cliché about refugees being a burden to society.

Refugees are an example of survival, struggle, resistance, sacrifice, purpose and determination. This book is not a comprehensive study of every aspect of the lives of refugees, but it is a snapshot of their experiences and struggles. These stories examine the survival, struggle, resistance and determination of refugees. Through these stories, readers will expand their understanding of the plight of refugees. The gifts which they bring are hope and a spirit of determination.

This book has been divided into three sections; refugees overseas, finding a sponsor and settlement experience in their new homes.

In writing this collection of stories, I am grateful to the newcomers and to their friends and family members who lived with war and conflict for longer time than they deserve. I thank them for sharing their lives with me. I feel proud and honoured that they put trust in me by sharing the most important and personal part of their lives. I truly feel honoured.

I am extremely grateful to my Manitoba Refugee Sponsorship (MRS) colleague and my dear friend, Judy Hall for her incredible courage and inspiration, giving me the idea and courage of writing a book of this collection of stories.

I owe particular thanks to Marty Dolin, our Executive Director, who always supports my writing and sought funding for this project.

I am grateful for the assistance of John Peters, my colleague who supported the project and I also thank him for the time he spent editing these collections.

I am grateful to Masoud Moradi, my colleague who took the responsibility for the layout and design for this book.

My final thanks are personal. I always owe a debt which I will never be able to repay to my mother. I express my gratitude to her for being part of our refugee journey, for protecting me and my sisters from danger and becoming a life shield for me and my family. She has taught me how to survive, be hopeful and never give up. I thank her especially for giving me the education opportunity that today I am able to read and write.

I thank my life partner, David for his support and encouragement for what I am doing.

This book is finally dedicated to the millions of refugees wherever they are and still struggle for their survival. We are thinking of you.

Ariana Yaftali