



Private Sponsorship for Integration: building a European model

HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS EU-PROJECT – HOW NGOS FACILITATE SAFE & LEGAL PATHWAYS FOR MIGRANTS

In 2019 several European NGOs and Public Bodies started to provide safe and legal pathways for refugees with the support European Union's "Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund" (AMIF): Humanitarian Corridors (HC). For many years, a growing number of asylum seekers from Syria attempted to reach the EU by embarking in dangerous journeys to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The AMIF project "Private Sponsorship for Integration: Building a European Model" providing HC is aimed at accompanying particularly vulnerable migrants from Syria via safe and legal pathways towards full and effective social, cultural and economic integration in EU societies through the implementation of a wide range of pre-departure and post-arrival activities. This sets the stage for durable integration practices in private sponsorship and resettlement schemes. Humanitarian Corridors have already been implemented prior to 2019, but the European Union acknowledged this innovative approach of civil society organisations and supported it with a grant for 2 years to support 450 migrants and to share good practices with partners across Europe.



PRE-DEPARTURE MEASURES IN REFUGEE CAMPS

In refugee camps around Syria, the *Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy* (FCEI) and the *Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante* (FEP) are responsible for the identification of beneficiaries in cooperation with local faith-based organisations, NGOs as well as development agencies. Meetings with individuals

or families are organised, where needs and expectations vis-à-vis resettlement in the EU are collected and their desire and potential of inclusion within the hosting society are assessed. Throughout the entire process, beneficiaries are accompanied by cultural mediators, medical officers, ethno-psychologists, and local authorities.

PRE-ARRIVAL MEASURES IN HOST COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE



At the same time the project implements cultural orientation programs in host communities in France and Italy. Most notably officials and service providers (teaching personnel, medical/hospital personnel, etc.), including information on the refugees' country of origin, their history of persecution, education, religion, cultural practices, as well as very basic language skills. Trained personnel will support migrants during their plane journey to the EU and upon arrival where they will be received by their host communities. The project ensures that beneficiaries receive comprehensive support before their departure, during their travel and after their arrival in order to guarantee the best

possible integration into their local communities, which are thoroughly prepared as well.

TWO FAMILIES FROM WAR-TORN SYRIA – NOW IN FLORENCE, ITALY

Oxfam Italia Intercultura, one of the implementing project partners, reports about positive outcomes of the project after the first 6 months: Two families from Syria were hosted in Florence: one of 6 and the other one of 5 family members. Oxfam provided accommodation and meals, cultural mediation, language courses, legal advice, and health treatment through a public medical service.



Maria Grazia Krawczyk (Oxfam Project Manager) reports: "After people fled from war-torn Syria and were forced to wait in an overcrowded refugee camp in Lebanon people seemed to be tired and stunned. Cultural mediation and the support of the Oxfam staff provided these families with an environment based on security and trust. People were made able to talk to their families left in Lebanon and Syria a few days after their arrival in Italy to keep ties and let them know they are safe. Through this project based on cultural respect and economic independence - families receive a monthly allowance to cover basic needs - we observe great progress regarding orientation and integration in the host communities."

For further information about this project, please get in touch with the project manager at Diaconia Valdese or the dissemination partner Eurodiaconia:

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