



## Share Refugee Advisor Programme for Community Sponsorship Information Sheet

### Background

Community sponsorship offers local residents an opportunity to be actively engaged in the integration of refugees by hosting or supporting refugees in their communities. It can be broadly defined as a public-private (non-state) partnership: between governments that facilitate legal admission for refugees, and private or community-based actors who provide financial, social and/or emotional support to receive and settle refugees in communities. This type of citizen engagement can have a transformative impact on communities by promoting social cohesion and creating more welcoming societies. Although not a legal pathway as such, community sponsorship supports resettlement and complementary pathways by adding more places for refugees and offering them additional benefits in terms of welcome and integration in local communities.

Working collaboratively with different partners in seven European countries currently implementing community sponsorship schemes, the Share sponsorship programme uses a multistakeholder, grassroots and bottom-up strategy to build strong and sustainable sponsorship programmes that foster refugee participation, and ensures the voices, experiences and learning of grassroots sponsorship stakeholders are present at the national and EU level.

While in Europe, participatory and co-creation approaches have been developed in sectors such as healthcare and the social sector, these approaches have not really been used in the context of legal pathways and integration and refugees are seldom included as stakeholders in the development of policies that impact their lives. While community sponsorship schemes have only been around for a few years in Europe, we see that the voices of refugees and local communities are rarely represented in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the programmes.

To further develop community and multi-stakeholder engagement in sponsorship, the Share Network has developed a [Refugee Sponsorship Mobilisation Platform](#) which gathers a wide variety of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, cities and regions, faith communities, volunteer groups, diaspora organisations, universities, philanthropy, and refugee themselves. The platform builds strategies and joint advocacy initiatives to expand and develop different types of sponsorship programmes adapted to national contexts.

As part of the Refugee sponsorship mobilisation platform activities, the Share Network has set up a Refugee Advisor Programme for Community Sponsorship to ensure refugee voices are represented in advocacy at the local, national and EU level.

## Share Network Refugee Advisor Programme for Community Sponsorship: objectives and structure

### OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME:

The programme aims to:

1. Enable the participation of refugees and raise awareness about sponsorship, bringing their lived experience and concerns to the local, national and EU level.
2. Enhance refugee participation in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of sponsorship programmes and policies.
3. Offer a platform for refugees to network and exchange with a variety of actors in the sector.
4. Develop recommendations and influence through advocacy.

### SELECTION CRITERIA:

- **A core group of persons with lived experience invested in the programme:** participants should have experience in awareness raising, community-engagement or advocacy or with ambition to develop advocacy skills.
- **Language:** English – working proficiency/ability to communicate independently
- **Diversity of profiles** (gender/ages/level of studies/countries of residence)
- **Consenting to be public** (their pictures/videos will be shared online, etc.).
- **Commitment to the programme until April 2023**

### WHAT COULD THE ADVISORS ENGAGE IN?

- Advocacy
- Awareness Raising
- Training
- Networking
- Research
- Mentorship
- Speaking/moderating events
- Developing communications materials related to selected topics

### SPECIFIC SHARE ACTIVITIES THAT ADVISORS COULD BE INVOLVED IN:

- **SHARE Events** (as expert speakers, moderators, co-creator of agenda)
- **External EU level events** (to provide input to the EU on sponsorship schemes, e.g. EASO WG on community sponsorship)
- **SHARE Publications** (evaluation of our policy deliverables on sponsorship)
- **Research-led common group project** (the core group act as bridges with a broader network of refugees, seek input/engagement on topics that they are focusing on for advocacy)
- **Outputs related to sponsorship** (e.g. podcast, video series, articles, guidebook, etc.)

### COMPENSATION – FOCUS ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Trainings tailored to their interests and needs provided in collaboration with partner organizations (e.g. on public speaking, communication, EU policy, advocacy, etc.)

- Monetary compensation for expertise provided for events and communication outputs
- Feedback on contributions
- Networking opportunities
- Certificate of participation and end of programme ceremony celebrating the advisors' achievement

## WHAT IS THE SHARE NETWORK

The Share Network is an inclusive network of local communities and actors engaged in the welcoming and inclusion of newcomers in Europe. Share promotes and fosters safe pathways to Europe for migrants and refugees as well as their integration. We support and connect local initiatives, share best practice, and raise the voice to communities to inspire action and policy change.

## WHAT IS THE SHARE MOBILISATION PLATFORM

To expand legal pathways and build community engagement, the Share network facilitates the convening of the [Refugee Sponsorship Mobilisation Platform](#). The platform exchanges practices, builds strategies and joint advocacy initiatives to expand and further community sponsorships under resettlement and complementary pathways in Europe.

The Share Refugee Sponsorship Mobilisation Platform offers an inclusive space to gather a wide variety of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, faith communities, volunteers and volunteer groups, cities and regions, diaspora and refugee led organisations, universities, private business, foundations, and refugees.

## PARTICIPATION AND THE SHARE NETWORK

In 2020, the Share Network began a new programme of work to mainstream participation in refugee and migrant inclusion across all the activities. Its priority is to map and assess participatory and co-creation practices for refugees and migrant integration across the EU, while creating its own refugee participation programme. Two Share tools for participation to guide its work and that of its partners and network have been created. The [Share Network Ladder of Participation](#) provides a framework in which to situate participatory work and assess the type and level of engagement. It also acts as a reference tool to guide the development of new participatory and co-creation activities. [The Share 10 Key Principles for Refugee and Migrant Participation](#) guides Share's training, capacity-building, pilot project and advocacy activities. In December 2021, Share convened an Expert Group meeting on [Migrant and refugee participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of social orientation and integration actions, as well as governance, in rural areas](#) to map and assess participatory practices with a particular focus on smaller and rural communities.

The [Share Refugee Advisor Programme for Community Sponsorship](#) supports 23 refugees and migrants from the Middle East and East Africa, some of whom have been welcomed via community sponsorship, to advocate on specific sponsorship topics. Refugee Advisors select sponsorship advocacy priorities, while Share coordinates the programme, provides strategic advice and input and ensures access to training and capacity-building. Refugee Advisors provide expert input and facilitation for Share events and discussions at national and EU level, and form part of the core membership of the Share Refugee Sponsorship Mobilisation Platform.