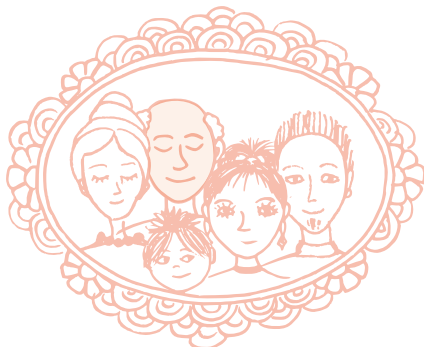
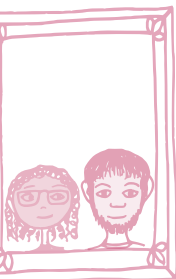
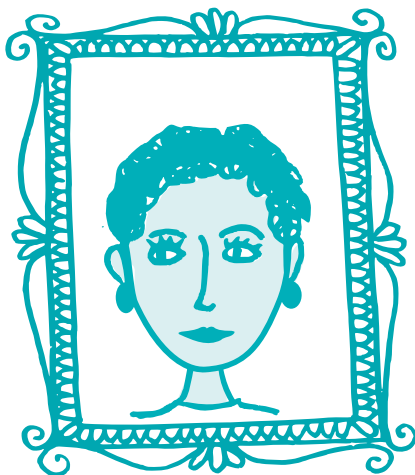
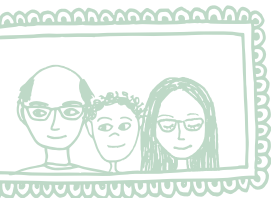
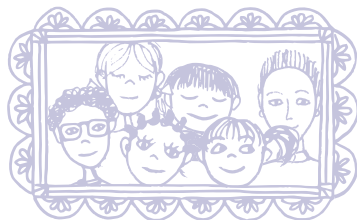


COMMUNITY

Sponsorship

Part of Fedasil



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INTRO

Do you, as a citizen, want to play a role in the accompaniment of recognised refugees? Discover how the Community Sponsorship programme can support resettled people and guide them in the Belgian society!

CREDITS

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WHAT IS COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

Community Sponsorship connects hosting groups composed of voluntary citizens with resettled refugees. These groups support resettled people in society and accompany them for a year. Similar sponsorship programmes exist around the world, such as in Canada, the UK and Spain.

In Belgium, Fedasil launched Community Sponsorship in 2020, in collaboration with partner organisation Caritas International: a group of preferably five committed citizens is involved in the reception and accompaniment of a resettled person (and their family), with the help of a partner organisation and the government.

In the context of the Belgian Community Sponsorship programme, Fedasil is the competent government institution. Fedasil is responsible for the first medical and social screening of all refugees selected for resettlement. This happens in the non-European country, the country where these refugees have already applied for protection. In addition, Fedasil also gives them trainings regarding life in Belgium – BELCO training courses – and informs them about

the various reception models, including Community Sponsorship. Before they can join the programme, the refugees must give their explicit permission to be supported by a hosting group.

As soon as the refugee(s) agree(s) to join the Community Sponsorship programme, Fedasil and the partner organisation join forces to find a good match with a hosting group in Belgium. The partner organisation thoroughly prepares the hosting group for the arrival of the resettled people, while the Fedasil team remains in close contact with the resettled people in question.

Upon arrival in Belgium, the hosting group first ensures a warm welcome, after which the Community Sponsorship trajectory can truly begin. The hosting group supports them in various areas of daily life. This support is additional to the services provided by the Public Centres for Social Welfare (PCSW) and from the integration initiatives the government provides.

RESETTLEMENT



Resettlement is a programme run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State where they sought protection to a another State, that agrees to receive them as refugees.

The Belgian government sets an annual quota, which establishes the number of people to be resettled, and determines the priorities (nationalities, first asylum countries, specific groups...) for the coming year based on a proposal of UNHCR, Fedasil and the CGRS (Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons), taking into account European priorities.

More info: www.resettlement.be.

BELCO



BELCO, which stands for "Belgian cultural orientation", is a training given before the departure to Belgium, whereas the BELCO+ training is given by Fedasil only after arrival in Belgium. The two trainings are aligned and provide the target group with the necessary knowledge and skills to smoothly integrate into Belgian society.



"I'M SURE WE'VE MADE FRIENDSHIPS WITH THIS FAMILY THAT WILL LAST. THE MORE AUTONOMOUS THEY BECOME, THE LESS THEY NEED US. THAT IS ALSO THE ULTIMATE GOAL."

Tine, hosting group

WHAT DOES THE ACCOMPANIMENT LOOK LIKE?

The support of a resettled person via Community Sponsorship in Belgium is a sustainable trajectory in various phases. A hosting group of voluntary citizens supports the resettled people, while the hosting group is in turn supported by the partner organisation, Caritas International.

The support begins with the first meeting with the resettled people at the airport. Together with Fedasil and the partner organisation, the hosting group welcomes and accompanies them to their new accommodation. Upon arrival, the resettled people must go to the Immigration Office to apply for international protection. It usually does not take long before they are effectively recognised as refugees in Belgium since they have already been selected by the CGRS before departure. Once the

resettled people are recognised as a refugee, they will have access to the various services in our country.

This first phase is followed by an exciting but also intense period for the resettled people. The hosting group is ready to support them in the steps they must take in their daily life: enrol the children in a local school, sign up for language courses, find leisure activities tailored to each family member, find a job, etc. Everyone has the same goal in mind: ensure that the resettled people can become autonomous in the Belgian society .









"AT THE AIRPORT, OUR HOSTING GROUP WAS WAITING FOR US WITH FLOWERS AND A BANNER THAT READ 'WELCOME'. I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT AT ALL. IT MADE ME VERY HAPPY BECAUSE WE DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE IN BELGIUM YET."

A., from Syria, resettled from Lebanon

WHAT IS THE ADDED VALUE OF COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

- 1** The **integration process** is much more likely to succeed thanks to the highly personalised support provided by the hosting group.

- 2** As the saying goes: unknown makes unloved. Therefore, involving refugees in activities in your own community – and in this way bringing them together with citizens – often has a **positive impact on the perception of refugees**.

- 3** Community Sponsorship provides refugees eligible for international protection with a **legal and safe** form of migration.

- 4** The partner organisation's **expertise** enhances the quality of the support the hosting group and resettled people benefit from.




HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP?

There are several ways to participate in the Community Sponsorship programme.

1 As a hosting group

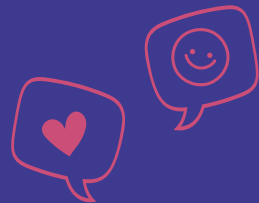
The first step is to form of group of preferably five committed voluntary citizens. As a group, you can then look for an accommodation that is available for one year. Before, during or after these steps, you will contact the partner organisation, Caritas International, who will assist you throughout the entire process. Experience with the target group is a plus, but certainly not a requirement; a good dose of motivation is more than enough.

The partner organisation will ask you to complete a preparatory questionnaire. In this questionnaire, you describe who you are and what your motivation is and you also answer some specific questions about the future support of resettled people. In this way, as a hosting group, you can already start thinking about essential aspects of the support.

Finally, Fedasil will work with the partner organisation to find a match between your hosting group and a person or family to be resettled. The partner organisation will then thoroughly prepare you for their arrival.

Want to know more about the partner organisation?

Visit our website or contact us at communitysponsorship@fedasil.be for more information.



2 As a partner organisation

If your organisation would rather participate as a partner organisation and support hosting groups in supporting resettled people, please send an email to communitysponsorship@fedasil.be. A colleague from Fedasil will then provide you with more information.

3 As a landlord

Do you have a property available that you would like rent out to resettled people for at least one year, but would you rather not be part of a hosting group yourself? No problem! Hosting groups are often looking for an accommodation. Send an email to communitysponsorship@fedasil.be with information about the accommodation – a few photos, the rent, the contract, etc. – and the Fedasil team will schedule an appointment with you.



"HERE I GO TO SCHOOL, LIVE IN A NICE HOUSE
AND AM FREE TO GO WHERE I WANT. I AM NO
LONGER AFRAID TO GO OUTSIDE."

R., from Syria, resettled from Lebanon.



"I BELIEVE WE PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS. FIRST, THERE IS THE MATERIAL SUPPORT OF THESE PEOPLE: WHAT DO THEY NEED? THEN THERE IS ALL THE PAPERWORK, WHICH IS FAR FROM EASY. WE CAN HELP THEM IN DIFFERENT WAYS THROUGHOUT THEIR JOURNEY AS NEW CITIZENS IN OUR COUNTRY."

Bart, hosting group



FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE HOSTING GROUP

The resettlement of recognised refugees inevitably involves several costs at the start of the process, such as the rent of the accommodation, utilities or other basic costs like food or clothing. Resettled people cannot sign a rental contract as long as they are abroad, and they often cannot afford to pay the rental deposit.

For this reason, it is the hosting group that signs the lease contract, pays the deposit as well as the utilities at the beginning. However, the hosting group does not have to bear these costs itself, as a budget is provided for this purpose by the programme.

Still, it is recommended that the hosting group sets aside a modest reserve budget for any additional costs due to unforeseen circumstances, such as an unexpectedly delayed arrival. After four to six weeks, the resettled people are entitled to a social contribution from the PCSW and from then on, they are responsible for the above-mentioned costs.

"WE WANTED TO WELCOME PEOPLE IN EXILE AND DO SOMETHING WITHIN OUR CAPABILITIES. OF COURSE, IT'S JUST ONE FAMILY, AND THAT MAY BE JUST A DROP IN THE OCEAN. BUT STILL... IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING!"

Irène, hosting group

MORE INFORMATION

Would you like more information about the Community Sponsorship programme?

Visit our website: www.fedasil.be/en/resettlement/community-sponsorship or send an email to communitysponsorship@fedasil.be.



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