



# COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES:

*New Zealand's pilot  
programme and its potential*



**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**







“  
*No one leaves home unless  
Home is the mouth of a shark  
You only run for the border  
When you see the whole city running as well  
Your neighbors running faster than you  
Breath bloody in their throats  
The boy you went to school with  
Who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory  
Is holding a gun bigger than his body  
You only leave home when home won't let you stay...*

”  
*From Home by Warsan Shire*

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What is clear to me from all the officials, volunteers, refugee advocates and politicians that Amnesty International has talked to over the last year is that we all want to do more for people fleeing war and persecution. We all recognise the global need for countries to share more of the responsibility for resettling people who need to rebuild their lives after leaving their homes.

But what is also clear is that communities have a solution that presents an opportunity for officials to work in partnership with them to bring more people to safety. Community sponsorship has been given a huge tick by thousands of New Zealanders. They see the programme as a vital way, alongside our Government quota, that we can resettle people who need to rebuild their lives here in New Zealand.

This report is not only an account of some of the amazing people who have already volunteered to resettle refugees during the New Zealand pilot of community sponsorship. It's not only a record of some of the first refugees to resettle here under this innovative scheme. This report is also a testament of the spirit of thousands of other New Zealanders who want us to say “welcome”,

via community sponsorship, to more refugees. All of them are urging the Government to make community sponsorship a permanent programme and many of them are putting up their hands to help.

We know from almost four decades of the programme's success in Canada that community sponsorship can be a sustainable and inspiring way for a country and its people to welcome more refugees. We urge the New Zealand Government to clearly back our international obligations and the generous spirit of our people by making the community sponsorship programme a permanent part of our resettlement strategy.



Tony Blackett

*Tony Blackett*

Executive Director  
Amnesty International New Zealand

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# COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP AND THE GLOBAL NEED FOR REFUGEE RESPONSIBILITY SHARING

As the international community grapples with a refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale, safe and sustainable solutions are rare. This section looks at the global need that exists worldwide, and the role that ordinary citizens can play to welcome the growing numbers of vulnerable people fleeing conflict and persecution around the world.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Community sponsorship involves individual people and community organisations taking the lead in directly helping refugees to settle in their communities. Started in Canada in the 1970's, the Canadian community sponsorship programme has successfully resettled approximately 300,000 refugees since it began, in addition to Canada's government-led programme. Ordinary citizens voluntarily come together based on a shared desire to welcome refugees into their community and support them in their successful integration into the community. Sponsoring groups in Canada have included a diverse range of groups, including faith communities, Lions Clubs, unions, diaspora communities and LGBTQI+ groups.

Community sponsorship is designed to complement and be in addition to strong government-led resettlement programmes, such as the New Zealand Government's Refugee Quota Programme. Community sponsors support refugees over a specific period (generally one to two years) to find housing and employment, connect to social services, enrol in schools and navigate life in a new country. Equally important, these sponsors welcome refugees into their local community and neighbourhood, and help them feel a sense of home and belonging. In the process, both sponsors and refugees often have a life-changing experience, reshaping and strengthening their communities and society to be more diverse, accepting and welcoming.

New Zealand's community sponsorship journey formally began in 2018, with a pilot programme involving four community groups in Nelson, Hamilton, Timaru and Christchurch and 23 refugees.<sup>1</sup> This followed growing calls and offers over several years from civil society, refugee organisations and faith communities to establish a programme that would enable community groups and ordinary New Zealanders to offer more direct help in addressing the pressing need that existed around the world, particularly as the refugee crisis gained international attention in 2015.

The initiative has attracted cross-party support, with the announcement of an initial pilot programme by the National-led Government in 2016, a consultation and development phase in 2017, and the 2018 pilot continuing under the new coalition Government in 2017-2018. In 2019, the New Zealand Government decides whether to continue New Zealand's community sponsorship programme beyond the pilot stage as a permanent and additional part of New Zealand's response to the refugee crisis.

***"The refugee crisis can be addressed if we act as global citizens, in collaboration with governments, the private sector and the philanthropic community."***

**Frank Giustra**  
Founder and President of  
the Radcliffe Foundation

## WHAT IS THE GLOBAL NEED FOR REFUGEE RESPONSIBILITY SHARING?

The international community faces an increasing, and urgent need to establish new pathways of safety for vulnerable people fleeing conflict and persecution around the world. As of 2018, of the 25.4 million refugees worldwide, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that there are close to 1.2 million refugees in critical and immediate need of resettlement, with an expected increase to 1.4 million in 2019.<sup>2</sup>

The projected increase in 2019 is 17 per cent higher than that of 2018 levels and reflects needs from more than sixty countries of origin, from "both protracted and more recent refugee situations", including Syria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup>

However, the number of resettlement places available globally dropped to just over 75,000 in 2017, with potential for further drops by the end of 2018, as states such as the United States dramatically cut resettlement numbers.<sup>4</sup> Based on the 2017 figures, the UNHCR now predicts that it will take 18 years for the world's most vulnerable refugees to be resettled.<sup>5</sup>

In this context of growing resettlement demands, lower and middle-income countries are doing much more than their fair share: approximately 85% of the world's refugees live in developing nations.<sup>6</sup> This is placing significant pressure on their infrastructure, their ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to meet the protection and resettlement needs of refugees themselves.

*"We are at a watershed, where success in managing forced displacement globally requires a new and far more comprehensive approach so that countries and communities aren't left dealing with this alone."*

UN High Commissioner for Refugees  
Filippo Grandi.



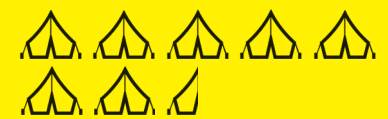
### 25.4 MILLION

*Refugees worldwide*



### 1.2 MILLION

*Refugees in critical need of resettlement*



*In 2017 resettlement places available dropped to*

### 75,000

<sup>(1)</sup> Otherwise known as the "Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship" (CORS) category.

<sup>(2)</sup> UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2019, UNHCR, Geneva, 25-26 June 2018, p. 9, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/5b28a7df4> (accessed 2 October 2018) <sup>(3)</sup> UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2019, UNHCR, Geneva, 25-26 June 2018, p. 9, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/5b28a7df4> (accessed 2 October 2018) <sup>(4)</sup> UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2019, UNHCR, Geneva, 25-26 June 2018, p. 9, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/5b28a7df4> (accessed 2 October 2018) <sup>(5)</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/6/5b30ab0d4/gap-refugee-resettlement-needs-opportunities-widens.html> (accessed 6 October 2018) <sup>(6)</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/> (accessed 6 October 2018)



***“We commit to a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees.”***

United Nations General Assembly,  
New York Declaration for Refugees  
and Migrants, 19 September 2016

## THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

The international community has acknowledged the urgent need to engage in meaningful and equitable responsibility sharing. Developing states cannot be left alone to deal with the significant and unequal responsibility of hosting significant numbers of some of the world’s most vulnerable people, and refugees must have access to secure and viable solutions to rebuild their lives with dignity. In 2016, UN Member States sought to express the “political will of world leaders to save lives, protect rights and share responsibility on a global scale”, in the historic 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.<sup>7</sup> The Declaration was the pathway to the Global Compact on Refugees (“the Compact”), an attempt by UN Member states in 2018, including New Zealand, to strengthen the international response to large movements of refugees in crisis and to create a concrete pathway for action.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst the Compact acknowledges that eliminating root causes is the most effective way to achieve durable solutions, it also notes that addressing the causes of refugee movements can take time, and some refugees are simply unable to return to their home country. As the global context shifts further, innovative and durable solutions that engage with new partners are required. As such, one of the four key objectives of the final draft of the Compact is to expand access to third-country solutions. This includes an explicit emphasis on the expansion of complementary and new pathways for resettlement, such as private or community sponsorship.

Community sponsorship, alongside a stable government quota resettlement programme therefore offers a complementary and tangible mechanism for international solidarity in line with the objectives of the Compact.

***“Contributions will be sought from States, with the support of relevant stakeholders...to establish private or community sponsorship programmes that are additional to regular resettlement, including community-based programmes promoted through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI).”***

The Global Compact on  
Refugees Final Draft

***“We welcome all to consider joining our growing cohort of countries, working in partnership with their communities, to offer a warm and supportive welcome through community-based refugee sponsorship. We stand ready to support you in these endeavours.”***

2018 Joint Statement — Ministers from  
Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland,  
Argentina, Spain and New Zealand <sup>9</sup>

## NEW ZEALAND AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN

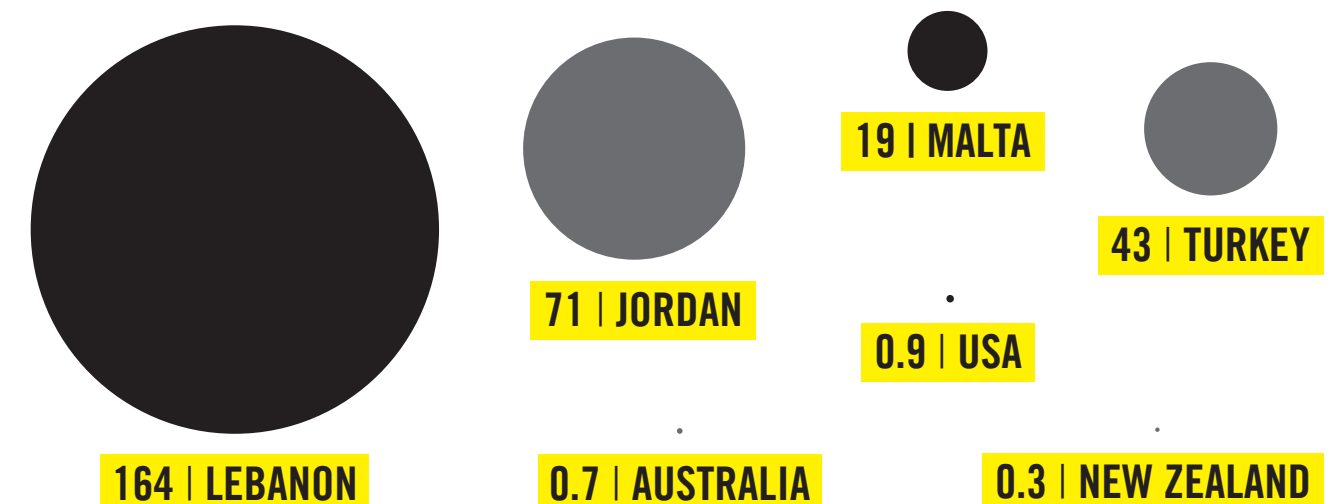
New Zealand has a proud history and international reputation as a country that whilst small in numbers, is not afraid of innovation and boldness, particularly in tackling some of the biggest issues of our time and championing human rights.

However, New Zealand’s contribution to refugee resettlement is still comparatively tiny in the international context of responsibility sharing. Even with the welcome increase to 1500 refugee places per year under the Government Quota, New Zealand still only hosts approximately 0.3 refugees per 1000 inhabitants. This lags behind neighbouring Australia’s 0.7, and is dramatically less than developing states such as Lebanon, which hosts 164 per 1000 inhabitants. Community sponsorship offers a sustainable model to do more.

By engaging in community sponsorship as an additional pathway, New Zealand is also joining with a select, like-minded and forward thinking group of other countries such as Canada, Ireland, Argentina, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These countries have established or are beginning to establish community sponsorship programmes as a complementary refugee pathway. They are seizing the opportunity to increase their countries’ refugee spaces and improve responsibility sharing by mobilising their own citizens’ desire to support refugees’ integration and build welcoming communities. As these countries establish and grow their programmes, other countries around the world are looking to them as examples of innovation and compassion.

Amnesty International has played an advisory, advocacy and supporting role in encouraging the development of complementary protection pathways for refugees that are suitable for local contexts around the world, including working closely with other members of civil society and several potential and current sponsoring groups here in New Zealand.

## REFUGEES PER 1000 INHABITANTS



Source: UNHCR, Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2017, and UNRWA 2016.

(7) A/RES/71/1, available at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1) (accessed 6 October 2018) (8) <http://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5b3295167/official-version-final-draft-global-compact-refugees.html> (accessed 6 November 2018)

(9) <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/joint-statement--ministers-from-canada-the-united-kingdom-ireland-argentina-spain-and-new-zealand-underline-their-support-for-community-based-refugee-sponsorship-in-advance-of-the-2018-united-nations-general-688280161.html> (accessed 6 November 2018)



# NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST SPONSORS AND REFUGEES

Amnesty International has interviewed many of the people involved in New Zealand's Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship pilot programme. In this section we share their stories, in their own words.

This pilot involves four community groups sponsoring 23 refugees (newcomers). The groups include Gleniti Baptist Church in Timaru, Southwest Baptist Church in Christchurch, three friends who teamed up with St Vincent de Paul in Nelson, and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand sponsoring a family of newcomers in Hamilton. Each of these groups has taken on a single refugee family, except for Southwest Baptist Church, which has three neighbourhood communities sponsoring one refugee family each.

Amnesty International's engagement with these community groups and newcomers includes phone and email exchanges in the initial stages of the programme in 2017; contact after the community groups were selected; a March 2018 event in Wellington with people from the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative discussing community sponsorship in Canada; a press conference in Christchurch in May 2018 as Amnesty International launched the **I Welcome Pledge**; talks with some of the sponsors and refugees in Christchurch in August 2018 about their experiences so far; phone interviews with community group members in Nelson and Timaru to learn about the successes and challenges; and a video story gathering trip to Nelson, Timaru and Christchurch so participants could share their own stories about being involved and how they are finding the process.

Through community sponsorship, members of the community groups provide a holistic, wrap-around support service. They are there to help with the fundamentals and logistics of setting up homes, figuring out transport and accessing basic services. But equally important, they become friends with the newcomers. Through this combination of shared logistical responsibilities and regular social gatherings, there is a profound camaraderie that develops amongst community

group members. This stems partly from the friendships that are often present at some level in the group before they sponsor a refugee family. But those bonds grow through this sense of shared purpose, along with the meaningful time spent together throughout the resettlement process.

The community groups have reported to Amnesty International that they feel like extended families for the newcomers. As a result, New Zealand communities are becoming more welcoming and closer-knit.

While it is still early days, the experience of the groups is compelling. Many community group members across the country have said how wonderful the programme has been for them. Similarly, newcomers are showing a deep gratitude, trust and respect for the sponsor groups, which are not only a supportive network, but have become like family.



## MARK PAVELKA

*"I just feel it's a win-win. The refugee families are gaining a lot, we're gaining a lot. It's given people a way of helping that they always wanted, but didn't know how."*

Mark is the Pastor at Gleniti Baptist Church in Timaru. Their community group is sponsoring a young Syrian family – Mohammed, Hayat and baby Zuheir. Mark said:

"I really support this programme, because I think it's a responsible way to bring in refugees. To enfold them in a support network. It helps the Government carry the load, because the community shares that load.

One of the big costs of leaving your home country is being torn away from your support group. This gives them a new support group of people who really care – and offer all sorts of different talents and skills to help them settle in as fast as possible.

The group has helped with WINZ, with setting up bank accounts and making sure their budget is going to work. We have other people who are getting them connected with Ara Polytech and with learning English. We have another guy who is a defensive driving instructor, so he's going to help them with the process of getting their

driver's licenses. Many different people – people who have time on their hands during the day, so they can pick the family up and take them for a drive, or show them around the city, or look after Zuheir while Mohammed and Hayat have to be at classes.

Hayat's just started fulltime at Ara Polytech, so she's energised and excited. I think they're integrating well. They're really good ambassadors, because they're lovely people. And little Zuheir just wins over anybody he comes in contact with!

The refugee problem is so huge that many people feel overwhelmed. They really do want to help, but don't know how. And people from all round our city have put up their hands to help in all sorts of practical ways. So it's given people a way of helping that they always wanted, but didn't know how.

To actually meet the family was really quite overwhelming. It suddenly made it very personal. Their dream is to set up their own restaurant. They plan to really integrate into New Zealand, to become Kiwis and bring up Zuheir as a Kiwi. Helping them put the building blocks in place to reach that dream is rewarding. I just feel it's a win-win. They're gaining a lot, we're gaining a lot."





**TIMARU, REFUGEES FROM SYRIA**

# MOHAMMED, HAYAT, ZUHEIR AL QATTAN

***“We have great support team here. We really have all things we need.”***

Mohammed Al Qattan and Hayat Shawish are from Syria. They’re currently building a new life for themselves and their baby Zuheir with the help of the community sponsor group from Gleniti Baptist Church in Timaru. Hayat said:

“People say New Zealand is very beautiful. And when you go to New Zealand you stay very comfortable and in peace. All people kindness in New Zealand. And safe. This is important things for us now.

Safety is important things in life. Because, if you scared, you can’t make anything. You can’t study. When I was in Syria, I had the exam in my university, and when I do exam, there is bomb and there is war. And it’s no concentrate, or no focus in the material or in your exam.

It’s very difficult. And when you go to university, you’re not safe. You can die at any time. It’s so difficult for us.

The first thing, when we decide to go to New Zealand... it’s for Zuheir. Because here Zuheir can study. And can go to kindergarten. Have friends.

We already have sponsor as our family. We really have great support team here. We’re thinking about health or study. And it’s good for Zuheir now.

Really, they support us, in everything we need. Anything in this life takes time. Every time Mark said to us to just be patient, to have all things you need. But now, we really have all things we need.”



**CHRISTCHURCH, COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP MEMBER**

# MIRIAM MARSHALL

***“I feel like we haven’t just made friends with our refugee family, we’ve also deepened our friendships with other people.”***

Miriam is part of one of the community sponsorship groups in Christchurch. Her role is to coordinate the different volunteers to work with the family. She also has a son Toby, who is the same age as their refugee family’s baby girl. They live in the same neighbourhood and play together. Miriam said:

“We’ve been really lucky in that the family we’re working with has a wee baby the same age as mine. So it’s been really nice, we can come and hang out and go to Plunket together and go to Playgroup. It’s really special being able to have cups of tea and just...yarn. We’ve got someone who is helping them get into the local primary school. And their kids also attend the school, so it’s a nice connection there.

People are helping take them to the doctors. We have somebody doing the bank and finance and insurance and power companies and cell phones...all those sorts of things. We’ve got some guys who are just keen to hang out and be friends and do boy stuff with dad...so that’s

really cool. We try to hit off the logistics of normal life, but also have a bit of friendship. And just involve them in our everyday life.

This seems like such a natural model. In terms of having communities of people who are looking out, who run into each other, who support each other. I think that seems like such a good way of doing it.

I knew the people in our group, some of them only by sight. Having a common project that we’ve been working on has been really cool for getting to know the people around us better. And also making friends...more than we were. So it’s really nice to see them out in the community.

I feel like we haven’t just made friends with our (refugee) family, we’ve also deepened our friendships with other people. It’s a real privilege for us, being able to be involved.

We’re learning lots of good stuff as well. So we’re stoked to be involved. I’d strongly suggest that it’s a good way to help settle a family well. Do it! Get amongst it! It’s been really rich. It’s been enjoyable. It’s been fun.”





NELSON, COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP MEMBER

## MARGARET O'CONNER

*"It felt like giving birth to hope."*

Margaret is a member of the St Vincent De Paul Society in Nelson, which was approached by three local women who were looking for support to form a community sponsorship group. When they heard about the CORS pilot programme, they knew it was a good fit, so they joined forces. Margaret said:

"I organised a civil emergency kit for them. I also undertook to take Muaz and Berevan to English Language Partners, for their English language to be assessed. I also took them to a dental practice, showed them how to get concession tickets for the bus and took them on the bus from Richmond into Nelson.

It felt like giving birth to hope really. I was particularly moved for some reason, the day that I took them into Nelson on the bus. Something really moved within me and I thought, I'm so proud to be part of it.

What we're getting from this young couple, it's just a blessing really. They're just so warm and loving and grateful. That's not why you do it. But it really feels very affirming. I'd like to think that I could make some of that a little contagious for some of the people that I know around the country. I could certainly recommend it as something that people might want to choose to do.

Saralinda and Susan are particularly well organised. What I'm saying is they're focused on the paperwork. Because there is a lot of paperwork. I'm glad that's not my department. They're very keen on making this work. And they have a lot of skills to bring to bear.

It's been fantastic getting to know them. We've had a lot of fun. An immense amount of fun actually! Even with Mick and Peter, who are part of the St Vincent de Paul Society, of which I am part, I feel very warmly towards them. But it's been an additional bond, which has been great. So it's been a very heartwarming experience."



NELSON, REFUGEE FROM SYRIA

## MUAZ AL-DAIRI

*"You can't imagine our happiness. Saralinda, Susan, Anna, Mick, Margaret and Peter – very, very nice people. Very helpful. We get on, quickly. Now we are ...friends."*

Muaz and his wife fled Syria for Lebanon, where they spent four long years eking out a precarious existence. In Syria, Muaz earned a degree and had been working as an engineer. In Lebanon, his best option was to work as a cashier in a shop.

Finally, they were offered the chance to come to New Zealand. Muaz said:

"You can't imagine our happiness. Yes. I found out about this programme through the United Nations. We went through several interviews. After we got the approval, we were really joyful. We were really happy to start a new journey here – to come to New Zealand. What we know about New Zealand is its helpful people, yes. And peaceful here. I know this thing since I was child.

Saralinda, Susan, Anna, Mick, Margaret and Peter – very, very nice people. Very helpful. We get on, quickly. Now we are...friends. They are doing everything to help us. Playing squash, hiking, some sports. And some conversation, yes.

This is a wonderful programme. It's a mutual benefit, both for the people on the other side of the world – the Syrian refugees – and New Zealand. So it's good for both sides if this programme continues.

The strength of this community is in diversity. It's good to have people from different backgrounds. Different skills. Different knowledge.

I would like to be in the field of engineering. My first step, I would like to continue my studies as a mechanical engineer and find a job within that field.

I hope I get a job as fast as I can, so that I can achieve my goals in a short time. I feel stable, comfortable, happy and I have this huge amount of energy."



NELSON, COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP MEMBER

# MICK ALDER

*“Every time I walk into the house, Berevan would just rush and give me a big hug like a grandfather.”*

Mick is a member of the St Vincent De Paul Society in Nelson. He flew up to Auckland to bring a Syrian refugee couple down to Nelson to start their new lives. Mick said:

“We went along at 11 o’clock, walked into this room at the immigration centre, and it was just abuzz – alive – with people talking, children, noisy.

We’d seen a photograph beforehand. And then we walked in and saw them sitting across the table, just like that. And they looked at us, and we looked at them. And I thought yes, yes, yes, yes.

You’re privileged that you can do these things. That’s the philosophy. It’s a privilege to help people. There’s a saying, ‘No situation can’t be met in some way.’”



NELSON, COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP MEMBER

# SARALINDA MACMILLAN

*“The main beneficiary has been the former refugee families. But you benefit quite often as well. And feel much more connected. That’s been just wonderful.”*

Saralinda and two of her friends in Nelson were like so many other people who have taken the I Welcome Pledge – they knew about the millions of people around the world who have been displaced, but didn’t see anything meaningful that they as individuals could do to help. Then they heard about the community sponsorship pilot programme.

When they decided to apply and learned what was involved, they agreed that they needed support. So they teamed up with St Vincent de Paul. Saralinda said:

“It’s been a really fascinating journey so far. I get a little bit emotional about the team. You know, this little group of people who are just so willing. We’re a group of friends. I think that was one key point. Although you can have that in the quota model, it doesn’t always happen.

So you’re with like-minded people. You feel quite a strong bond quite quickly. And that’s been just wonderful.

The main beneficiary has been the former refugee families. But you benefit from that quite often as well. And feel much more connected.

Just seeing happy families merging into our way of live, learning about their culture and broadening our horizons and perspective. Yeah, it would be great to do a lot more of it.”





CHRISTCHURCH, REFUGEE FROM SYRIA

## IBRAHIM\*

*“This programme is a good opportunity for people to find a new life. A good life. Here, you feel...they’re our family.”*

Through the pilot programme, Ibrahim has come to New Zealand with his wife and children. They are being sponsored by a community group in Christchurch. He said:

“If you need anything in your life, they give us the support, what we need.

We have tea together, and sometimes we make some trips. We go to the café. Social life. Sometimes we invite them to our house, and sometimes they invite us to their house. I feel very comfortable about this, because... nice life.

Yes, this is a very good thing. Because it’s a very different way to make comfortable any person coming to here. I’m here for two months, and I feel comfortable. I feel everything is OK. Because you feel there are new family in your life.

When we come to here, maybe after two or three days,

they took us to the school and I met the teachers. They are very, very friendly.

The teaching here is very different. But when I see the way they are teaching – because in my country, I was a teacher – I see the difference. And it is a good difference.

How they speak with the children, how they do the teaching, the playing – everything is very good, for us and for the children.

I hope for this programme to continue. Because another people from another country – if there are problems in that country – I hope for people to find safe place. To find a new life. A good life.

Yes. I would feel very good for this. Because I feel the community is very, very friendly. The sponsors are helping us meet other people. And we feel very comfortable.

And I hope if other people come to this country, I hope that I will be responsible for them. Because I think this is a good way to help those people feel good when they come to here.”

*\*Name has been changed*



NELSON, COMMUNITY SPONSOR GROUP MEMBER

## SUSAN O’CONNELL

*“Now that those practical things are in place, the support’s really more ...friendship.”*

Susan is one of the three women in Nelson who approached the St Vincent De Paul Society to form a community sponsorship group. Susan said:

“Supporting a young family to come into our community, it’s really rewarding. I’d really encourage people to do it.

It is a commitment. And we’re now in a time in our life where we’re in a position to give back a little bit more.

All of those practical things in the first two or three weeks when they got here – finding them somewhere to live, setting up a bank account, helping them getting

their WINZ entitlement sorted, enrolling them in English language school – now that those things are in place, the support’s really more...friendship.

I know they’ll fly...these two. They are going to do really well. I just hope that we can support them and empower them to do whatever it is that they want to do with their lives. And that they’ll be happy.

I’d like to think that what we’re doing is a hand up. It’s not a hand out, it’s a hand up. And they’ll just flourish.

I think the rewards are going to keep coming. I think as we see them progress and achieve jobs and maybe in time have a family and integrate into the community, that’s where we’ll keep getting back what we’ve put in.”



# THE POTENTIAL: NEW ZEALANDERS SAY WELCOME

Amnesty International knows from our work in the refugee sector in New Zealand that there are many people who want to do more to solve the global need for resettlement. In this section we canvass the outpouring of public support for the programme in the pledges we've collected, we tell the stories of other ways New Zealanders are supporting community sponsorship and we meet people already inspired to become future sponsors if the programme is made permanent.

The I Welcome Pledge asked New Zealanders if they supported community sponsorship of refugees and if they would like to see the current pilot become an annual programme. In all, **10,276** people said yes, adding their voices to the Pledge.









Amnesty International also had the opportunity to meet with people who aren't part of a community sponsor group in this pilot programme, but are either involved with the newcomers in another way, or are simply New Zealanders who would like to help. Here is what some of them had to say.



## BRONWYN DUFFY

*“Community sponsorship is a brilliant way to go. I’ve been speaking with friends and they’re very excited. They think it’s a great idea and would love to be involved in something similar. There are many people out there in communities just waiting for the opportunity.”*

Bronwyn lives in Picton, where she runs an architectural design social enterprise. She’s aware of the global challenges of our time and she does what she can to be part of the solution.

She’s heard about the community sponsorship pilot and has gotten in touch with the Christchurch group to see if she can help. Bronwyn said:

“We’ve always been interested in supporting refugees. But we’re really keen to get more involved on a community level. Things like helping support business

ventures getting set up. Providing a bit of microfinance perhaps. Or people that are coming with a qualification already, but it’s not recognised in New Zealand, and providing some funding to help get that qualification recognised here.

Normally we can either whine about the government, or we can try to raise awareness, or we can give to big projects that we never hear feedback about. But it’s a real privilege to know that there’s a family that is possibly struggling, that has been through times I just can’t imagine, and I’m allowed – in a tiny way – to help out. I think it’s a real honour.

I’ve been speaking with friends and they’re very excited. They think it’s a great idea and would love to be involved in something similar. So for me, it’s a real fulfilling opportunity that not many people get.

I think community sponsorship is a brilliant way to go. It’s a great addition to what New Zealand is already doing. And I think there are many people out there in communities, different organisations, churches... people that are just waiting for the opportunity. So they won’t need their arms twisted!

They’ll be pleased to be able to help. And people want to be able to help refugees – we see all the terrible things on the news, but to be given a real grassroots opportunity to support a family...yeah, would be awesome.”



## JULES

*“My question to the Government is why wouldn’t you continue it?”*

Jules isn’t part of a community sponsorship group, but one of the local group members approached her about a common interest she shared with one of the refugee families. So Jules developed a relationship with the newcomer family, which involves both friendship and business. Jules said:

“I did quite a bit of traveling when I was younger. Having met Tibetan refugees that were living in Nepal and talking to them about their plight, it was something that’s always been a little bit close to heart.

When you travel, you see different aspects of the world. You do feel helpless as an individual. Because the government controls it. It’s politics, isn’t it? I can see this is a way that I could help as an individual.

It’s been really lovely. I met a gorgeous family. And my daughter has met them as well. To see my daughter interacting with them, it’s really valuable for our children. For Kiwis to have interaction with people from other countries and other backgrounds.

Just the little bit that I’ve heard about the programme in Canada, it sounds amazing. So if it works there, then we definitely should be embracing it and trying to make it work here.

My question to the Government is why wouldn’t you continue it? It enriches everyone’s lives. Why wouldn’t we help?”



## ROSIE KNOPPEL

*“Knowing the feedback from the local community, I know a lot of people really embrace the idea to have more refugees coming. Because they feel good about doing something good.”*

Rosie is a Migrant Support Manager in the Aoraki region and coordinator for The Newcomers Network in Timaru. She’s not directly involved with the Timaru community sponsor group, but she is aware of the programme and has experience with migrants and refugees. Rosie said:

“Refugees are bringing a different view on life in New Zealand, because they come from different backgrounds. And they lived through different situations. So it enlarges our view on what’s happening in the world.

Refugees are often very skilled. They’ve always had to adjust their lives to their environment. So they are pretty easy, in that they learn quickly, because they are motivated.

Knowing the feedback from the local community, I know a lot of people really embrace the idea to have more refugees coming. Because they feel good about doing something good.

I think that’s wonderful. That’s why I would support it, definitely. Bringing more refugees here will help the whole community.”





## ANDREA PERRY

Andrea is an International Student Advisor. She's pictured here with some of the students from the University of Waikato. She is also part of the leadership team of Gateway Church in Hamilton. Andrea said:

"Previously I lived for seven years in Jordan where I saw close up the desperation of refugees living hand to mouth, with a distant hope of ever having a secure place to live and raise their children. My church community and I would consider it a joy and privilege to sponsor refugee families and support them to make a new life in New Zealand.

We are large community of over one thousand and have diverse skills and experience, which we desire to share given the opportunity to do so. We believe it would not only bless the refugee family but enlarge our hearts and world view."



## SOPHIE JERRAM

Sophie is from Vogeltown. She is part of the Vogelmorn Community Group, which runs events and spaces for the community. Sophie said:

"I'm proud that New Zealand has always had the space and capacity to host newcomers. My children's grandfather arrived through a post-WW2 refugee settlement programme from Eastern Europe. He met his future wife at a community integration party. By hosting, communities can learn together about the plight of refugees; we gain empathy and context for our world.

If the opportunity arose I would strongly consider sponsoring a family. I imagine it would need to involve cultural, sporting, environmental educational and recreational activities, as well as basic physical logistics. So it would have to be a community team effort.

It appears that community resettlement offers communities the chance to gather and to recognise their resources and capabilities. For the newcomers, the pooling of existing community resources in a collective effort would be a rich and authentic experience of the local community."



## TONY BOYCE & BEV CASTLE

Tony Boyce Builders is a small business in Washdyke. For five months, Tony and Bev have employed a man from Jordan named Mustapha, who speaks Arabic.

A month later they employed a refugee named Amar Al-Hindawi from Syria, who came up from Dunedin. With Mustapha there to help with the initial language barrier, Amar is now one of their best workers. Tony and Bev would employ more refugees like Amar if they had the work. They said:

"Amar can put his hand to anything. He takes initiative and just does it. The work ethic is amazing. He's just a wonderful, wonderful worker. It's the best thing we ever did. Amar, we put him on the truck and he went up (to a job site) and back three times in one day. Started early in the morning, and he would just load the truck flat out. He's just completely focused on doing the job.

Amar's wife has been in several times with baking and all different types of food. Little pastries with dates, and these others that are like baklava. Just beautiful food! She makes them herself. She works at the hospital. Nice people. They're dependable. That's something we've lost a lot of in our society.

It's giving people an opportunity. And it's a great experience from our point of view too. It's really good for our own staff – the ones that haven't been exposed to other cultures."



## VANESSA MAPP

Vanessa lives in Aro Valley as part of a tight-knit, diverse community with strong support for each other. She said:

"We already have some refugees as neighbours, who we support in various ways, including a music group for the kids. We often have shared dinners and neighbourhood parties, and there is a network of individuals who are very happy to be part of a more formal support network to sponsor a refugee directly.

To give a little time and friendship to help another person have a fresh chance at life is a small way each of us can directly help. I also think the fastest and easiest way to integrate refugees into their new environment is to have these relationships with locals. It has the added benefit of broadening the worldview of the locals, as they become familiar with other cultures.

I sincerely hope the programme continues next year, and if it does, we are certainly wanting to be involved."



# THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

New Zealand is one of several countries that have established or are beginning to establish community sponsorship programmes as a complementary pathway for refugees. The case studies below look at several countries' examples of programmes from the established to the fledgling, which are responding to the refugee crisis with innovation, partnership and compassion.

## CANADA: WE KNOW IT WORKS

The Canadian experience of community sponsorship provides one of the most compelling examples of a sustainable, transformative and evolving community sponsorship programme. Canada operated a tight immigration policy until the late 1970s when it introduced sponsorship in response to those fleeing Southeast Asia after the US war in Vietnam.<sup>10</sup> Since then, one in every three Canadians have helped resettle more than 300,000 people.<sup>11</sup> Outcomes of the programme have included more successful integration and resettlement results than traditional schemes, and the transformation of Canadian society.<sup>12</sup>

Canada's immigration policy, developed in the late 1970s, was a cornerstone in establishing the key objectives and principles of Canada's system. This includes distinct objectives relating to refugees in need of protection. Goals under the 1976 Act included, "the promotion of Canada's demographic, economic, social and cultural goals; family reunification; non-discrimination; the fulfillment of Canada's international obligations in relation to refugees; and cooperation between all levels of government, as well as with the voluntary sector, in promoting the adaptation of newcomers to Canadian society."<sup>13</sup>

The introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2001 also explicitly identifies that the refugee program is in the first instance about saving lives and offering protection to the displaced and persecuted.<sup>14</sup> As the community sponsorship scheme has evolved in Canada, so have its participants. Sponsoring groups now include a broad range of actors including unions, law firms, former refugee communities, faith communities and everyday citizens.

What are known as "privately sponsored refugees" (PSRs) are resettled in addition to those arriving under the Canadian Government's established resettlement programme. The PSR programme allows Canadians to get involved in refugee resettlement and contribute to the welcoming of refugees over and above what the Government provides. Contributions are made in a variety of ways. For example, religious, ethnic, interest-based or humanitarian organisations can apply to be Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs).<sup>15</sup> SAHs who have existing infrastructure and experience in working with vulnerable people, and meet the requirements to hold an agreement with the Government (such as status as a legal entity), can either directly sponsor refugees, or support smaller groups that may not have all the resources to do so by themselves. The programme also allows for "Groups of Five", where ordinary citizens can come together and combine their skills to sponsor one or more UNHCR mandated refugees to settle in their local community.<sup>16</sup>

For example, the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Project has a "Blended Private Sponsorship Agreement" in partnership with the Immigration and Refugee department.<sup>17</sup> Through this programme, LGBTQI+ communities in more than 14 local authorities across Canada have sponsored LGBTQI+ refugees who have faced persecution based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression (SOGIE) or HIV status.<sup>18</sup>

The success of the Canadian programme and the broader benefits for Canadian society prompted the establishment of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI), a partnership led by the Government of Canada, the UN Refugee Agency, the University of Ottawa, the Radcliffe Foundation, the Giustra Foundation and the Open Society Foundations. GRSI is actively engaged in sharing Canada's history, experience, and leadership in community sponsorship with other countries and in supporting the creation of new programs that countries design to meet their unique needs.<sup>19</sup>



Photos: Stephanie Foden / Amnesty International

(10) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/i-welcome-community-2/stories-of-welcome/community-sponsorship-in-canada/> (accessed 6 November 2018) (11) <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/new-model-refugee-resettlement-puts-people-first-and-gathers-support> (accessed 5 November 2018) (12) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Evaluation Division Evaluation of the Resettlement Programs (GAR, PSR, BVOR and RAP), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, July 2017, available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/reports-statistics/evaluations/resettlement-programs.html#toc-exec> (Accessed 6 November 2018) (13) <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadians/celebrate-canadian/teachers-corner/refugee-history.html> (accessed 5 November 2018)

(14) Immigration and Protection Act 2001, s 3(2)(a). (15) <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/agreement-holders.html> (accessed 5 November 2018) (16) <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/help-outside-canada/private-sponsorship-program/groups-five.html> (accessed 6 November 2018) (17) <https://www.rainbowrefugee.com/> (accessed 7 October 2018) (18) <https://www.rainbowrefugee.com/> (accessed 7 October 2018) (19) <http://refugeesponsorship.org/> (accessed 8 November 2018)



## UNITED KINGDOM: PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

In July 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) Government announced that it would “empower local communities to support the most vulnerable refugees through establishing a community sponsorship programme.”<sup>20</sup> This included an online register where offers of help or donations for refugees from the public could be collated, and a formal community sponsorship scheme. The initiative was in response to the British public’s generous reaction to the refugee crisis that received worldwide attention in 2015, and was built on an outpouring of offers to help, and requests to allow individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugees directly. Community sponsorship started on a small scale, but was formally introduced as a permanent scheme on its commencement. Lambeth Palace community group, under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the first group to be approved as a community sponsor and to welcome a Syrian family.<sup>21</sup> Since then a number of sponsoring groups have resettled refugee families in the UK. Many others have been established and are working towards welcoming families.

The UK model is particularly laudable in how the UK Government has collaborated with and empowered prospective sponsors, civil society and local government to lead in establishing community sponsorship. In order to develop the scheme, the Government worked closely with the National Refugee Welcome Board (convened by Citizens UK), churches, local authorities and a range of other stakeholders, including those who came forward as prospective sponsors around the country. This partnership has included a strong willingness to invest in and consult with stakeholders, particularly in the design and the required architecture to scale up community sponsorship as an established pathway. For example, In July 2017, the Home Secretary officially announced a two-year £1 million fund to provide training and support to community groups involved in the community sponsorship scheme.<sup>22</sup> The Government has also provided detailed guiding documents for prospective sponsors, resettlement plan templates, sample sponsorship agreements and guides for local councils, which have been integral to the development of the programme in local wards.<sup>23</sup>

At the 2018 community sponsorship awards, a special International Award was awarded to the British Government and its civil society partners in recognition of the UK’s pioneer work on refugee sponsorship. On acceptance of the award, a senior civil servant, Paul Morrison, Director of Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration at the Home Office, said, “community sponsorship was the best project he had worked on in 20 years in the civil service.”<sup>24</sup>

## IRELAND: A SMALL NATION ON THE PATH TO COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

The Government of Ireland, working in partnership with civil society stakeholders, is introducing a community sponsorship programme for refugees after consultation over 2017-2018. The development and design of the programme has involved a strong partnership approach between the State and civil society, which is intended to continue through the implementation of the programme.

The Irish community sponsorship programme will involve community groups coming together to sponsor refugees, and committing to provide financial, social, emotional, and resettlement support to help newly-arrived refugees integrate into life in Ireland. The programme will enhance existing rights-based supports provided to resettled refugees by the Irish State. An initial Development Phase is set to run from quarter four of 2018 for 12 months. During this time, the infrastructure will be developed to enable the programme to be fully operational during the Implementation Phase, which will commence in 2019. It is intended and expected that the programme will enhance the State’s capacity to resettle refugees, leading to additionality during the Implementation Phase. It is expected more information will be made public on the Irish programme over the last two months of 2018 as the development phase enables community groups to prepare for the arrivals of refugee families.

# RECOMMENDATIONS:

Amnesty International warmly welcomes that New Zealand has joined a growing cohort of countries internationally that recognise the opportunity of community sponsorship, with the implementation of the Community Organisation Sponsorship Category (CORS) pilot programme in 2018. As has been demonstrated in this report, New Zealanders are responding generously to the international refugee crisis. They seek the opportunity to be responsible, in partnership with the Government, for bringing more refugees to safety in New Zealand.

**Amnesty International urges the New Zealand Government to ensure that the pilot programme is established and extended as an annual pathway, and is underpinned by the following principles:**

## PERMANENCE:

A stated policy objective of the pilot was to “provide an alternative form of admission for refugees to complement our Refugee Quota and, in doing so, demonstrate New Zealand’s response to the scale of refugee movement and commitment to international responsibility sharing.”<sup>25</sup> As has been shown, the local potential and global need for a permanent and sustainable community sponsorship category to be a part of New Zealand’s contribution internationally is both significant, and timely. As experiences such as the UK’s have also demonstrated, the development and fine-tuning of the model to fit the local context and to undergo necessary evaluations was not a barrier to establishing the programme as a permanent one. The general public, current sponsors and potential sponsors have clearly demonstrated both considerable capacity and desire for CORS to be confirmed as a permanent pathway for refugee resettlement. For example, a joint open letter from 47 organisations from around New Zealand in support of developing community sponsorship includes faith-based groups, unions, rural communities, urban community trusts and refugee-led organisations. Transitioning to a permanent programme in 2019 also ensures that the momentum from the New Zealand public and the capacity building of sponsors can be best leveraged.

**Amnesty International recommends that the CORS category be established in 2019 as a permanent fixture in New Zealand’s broader refugee and humanitarian programme, with scope for further evolution and refinement.**

## PARTNERSHIP:

The pilot also sought to “provide an additional opportunity for community organisations to actively engage in refugee resettlement, and to build local communities that welcome refugees.”<sup>26</sup> Community sponsorship succeeds in building welcoming communities when the principle of true partnership between communities and governments is developed and communities, including former refugee and diaspora communities, are empowered. Also crucial to this partnership are community members and organisations outside of the sponsoring groups who volunteer, offer goods or funds, and provide training or connections to support sponsors. The Government needs to ensure they don’t isolate these groups in favour of a more traditional ‘service delivery’ approach as it is the broader community who will provide support to sponsors, become future sponsors and support the success of more welcoming communities.

As international experience tells us, successful public-private collaboration requires “commitment and effort to maintain ongoing dialogue, an improvement and solutions orientation, and openness to change.”<sup>27</sup> It also requires an accountability mechanism that can ensure quality resettlement outcomes for refugees, and a structure in which sponsors and stakeholders can engage with Government meaningfully and develop the programme as it evolves. Both Canada and the UK invest in infrastructure designed to ensure ongoing communication, co-design with key members of the sponsorship community and other stakeholders, and conduct regular evaluations to ensure the integrity and quality of the programme. Amnesty International notes there has been strong evidence provided to the Government from a coalition of key sponsorship stakeholders in New Zealand of both willingness and capability to form and lead a catalyst partnership entity.<sup>28</sup>

**Amnesty International recommends that the New Zealand Government engages further with a broad range of community and civil society stakeholders to develop the CORS programme in New Zealand, and invests in the catalyst partnership entity alongside key sponsorship stakeholders.**

(20) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk> (accessed 2 November 2018) (21) <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-07-19/HWS95> (accessed 24 October 2018) (22) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-1-million-to-help-communities-support-refugees> (accessed 1 November 2018) (23) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship> (accessed 25 October 2018) (24) [http://www.sponsorrefugees.org/the\\_winners\\_of\\_the\\_community\\_sponsorship\\_awards](http://www.sponsorrefugees.org/the_winners_of_the_community_sponsorship_awards) (accessed 25 October 2018)

(25) Office of the Minister of Immigration, Cabinet paper: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, August 2017, p.2, available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oia-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2018) (26) Office of the Minister of Immigration, Cabinet paper: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, August 2017, p.1, available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oia-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2018) (27) Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative “Overarching principles and policies” Building blocks of community sponsorship: Guidebook and planning tools based on Canada’s model, available at <http://refugeesponsorship.org/guidebook> (28) Core Community Partnership (as represented by the Anglican Diocese of Wellington, the Baptist Union of New Zealand, and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand), Proposal to confirm Community Sponsorship as a Permanent Pathway for Resettlement, 12 November 2018.



## HUMANITARIAN:

The original policy development of the pilot category explicitly stated that it was intended to be part of “New Zealand’s broader refugee and humanitarian programme.”<sup>29</sup> New Zealand has historically taken a primarily humanitarian approach to accepting refugees through its ratification of international instruments such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention) and human rights treaties, which recognise that refugees’ safety and well-being (i.e. protection needs) should be prioritised over other common immigration imperatives.<sup>30</sup>

However, currently the admission restrictions under the CORS category somewhat contradict these principles. Whilst sponsored refugees are UNHCR-mandated refugees,<sup>31</sup> they are also in addition required to meet high standards of English language skills, tertiary education, work experience and health to be eligible for the CORS category. For example, the pilot category requires that both principal and secondary applicants must have the same acceptable standard of health that is required of residence visa applicants, i.e. economic migrants. This is a higher standard than is required for admission to the Refugee Quota Programme. Whilst Amnesty International acknowledges that sponsor capabilities must match refugee vulnerabilities, the restrictions create an unnecessarily high barrier for UNHCR-mandated refugees to be eligible for admission and are not grounded in protection principles.

**Amnesty International recommends that the language, skill, age and health eligibility criteria under the CORS category be reviewed in line with CORS primarily existing as a humanitarian category.**

## ADDITIONALITY:

The pilot sought to “provide an alternative and additional form of admission for refugees to New Zealand, to complement the annual quota.”<sup>32</sup> The community sponsorship model is uniquely suited to sit alongside a stable and quality government-led refugee resettlement effort, such as New Zealand’s Quota Programme.

It is clear from our interviews with participants that a driver for their commitment is that they feel they are playing a part in helping a global need, on top of what the Government offers. This motivation would be impacted if the community sponsorship programme lost the additionality component and instead asked citizens to carry out work that should be done by the government quota.

**Amnesty International recommends that CORS is maintained as an additional category that is part of New Zealand’s broader refugee and humanitarian programme.**

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. WHEN INJUSTICE HAPPENS TO ONE PERSON, IT MATTERS TO US ALL

### CONTACT US

 [INFO@AMNESTY.ORG.NZ](mailto:INFO@AMNESTY.ORG.NZ)

 0800 AMNESTY (266 3789)

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<sup>(29)</sup> Office of the Minister of Immigration, Cabinet paper: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, August 2017, p.1, available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oi-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2018) <sup>(30)</sup> Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative “Overarching principles and policies” Building blocks of community sponsorship: Guidebook and planning tools based on Canada’s model, available at <http://refugeesponsorship.org/guidebook> <sup>(31)</sup> Office of the Minister of Immigration, Cabinet paper: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, August 2017, p.2, available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oi-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2018) <sup>(32)</sup> Office of the Minister of Immigration, Cabinet paper: Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship Category, August 2017, p.2, available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/immigration/oi-responses/folder-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category/cabinet-paper-community-organisation-refugee-sponsorship-category.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2018)



*More than 10,000 New Zealanders are saying yes to their chance to play a direct part in welcoming some of the world's most vulnerable people.*

*The Community Organisation Refugee Sponsorship programme offers us an extraordinary opportunity to tap into the hospitality of everyday New Zealanders, by welcoming refugees in addition to what the Government offers through the quota system.*

*Amnesty International has recorded in this report the stories of New Zealand's journey through the 2018 pilot programme and the incredible sponsors, supporters and refugee families whose lives have been brought together through it.*

*The report offers a snapshot of what has worked overseas, New Zealand's potential to make the programme its own, and the pressing need to be an innovative and compassionate leader in the international community's response to the biggest refugee crisis since World War II.*

*We are asking the New Zealand Government to clearly back our international obligations and the generous spirit of our people by making the community sponsorship programme a permanent part of our resettlement strategy.*

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