

# REGIONS AND CITIES AS SPONSORS

## Conference Report

Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain

15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> of June

*Basque Government Building*

*Gran Vía de Don Diego López de Haro, 85*

*48009 Bilbao*



*International participants of the conference*



## Introduction

Coordinated by ICMC Europe, the [Share Network](#) provides a multi-stakeholder platform for mutual exchange and learning amongst regional and local actors to foster welcome, inclusion, and integration of newly arrived migrants and refugees in Europe. In 2021 it launched the [Quality Sponsorship Network \(QSN\)](#) to support pilot and ad-hoc sponsorship initiatives to develop into sustainable, community-driven programmes.

The QSN partnership is composed by the Basque Government (ES), Caritas International (BE), Consorzio Comunitas (IT), the Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP), DiCV Cologne (DE), the Irish Refugee Council (IE), and Citizens UK (UK). One of the main objectives of the Share QSN Network is to widen engagement in community sponsorships by including regions and cities as active partners.

A leading example of **regional engagement** is the Auzolana (Basque for 'Welcome') pilot community sponsorship initiative that was launched in March 2019 to welcome five Syrian families in Basque municipalities: **Bilbao, Arrigorriaga, Portugalete, Andoain and Vitoria-Gasteiz**. The initiative is the **first community sponsorship programme, organised and led by a regional government**. The programme counts on the active participation of the UNHCR, the Spanish State Secretariat for Migration, civil society actors from Caritas Diocesana in Bilbao, Andoain and Gasteiz, and the Ignacio Ellacuría Social Foundation in Arrigorriaga and Portugalete; as well as local sponsorship volunteering groups which accompany the families' welcoming and settlement process, while coordinating integration efforts with the municipalities where refugees are hosted. The Basque pilot programme was evaluated in 2021 with evaluation reports available in [Spanish, Basque and English](#). The Basque Country also developed a [basic guide](#) on setting up a sponsorship programme.

Since 2019, the **regional governments of Valencia and Navarra** have also launched sponsorship pilot programmes – under a similar approach as the Basque Government coordinated programme. To build on the successful first initiative, the Basque government will start a second programme to welcome Syrian refugees from Lebanon, with arrivals planned for May 2022.

**Being both a pioneer initiative in the engagement of regional governments in complementary pathways, as well as an interesting example of multilevel governance, the QSN conference and Look & Learn visit took place on 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of June in Bilbao.**

### The programme

Hosted by the Basque Government at one of its premises in Bilbao, the 2,5 day event (see agenda in Annex 2) was attended by over 60 participants from nine different European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK) to learn and reflect upon the Basque, Valencia and Navarra experiences in building successful multi-stakeholder community sponsorship programmes. Participants included representatives of European cities and regions, national administrations, NGOs, volunteers and solidarity networks, as well as other relevant stakeholders.

**The programme visited on the ground practices, identifying regional and local approaches to community sponsorship, welcome and integration and looked at successful models of multi-level governance, sponsor and volunteer engagement and partnerships with regions and local authorities.**

Since March 2022, thousands of regional, municipal and citizen led volunteer initiatives



are currently responding across Europe to house, welcome and support arriving Ukrainians. The conference discussed these **first welcoming and solidarity initiatives for Ukrainians, exchanging practices and frameworks. It particularly focused on how local and place-based initiatives interact and coordinate with state-led responses under the Temporary Protection Directive and are resulting in new partnerships to host and**

**welcome refugees.**

The 2.5 day Share event created a space for discussion, knowledge sharing, exchange of best practices and capacity building among participants. The final day offered the opportunity to conclude on lessons learned and new strategies to promote, expand and support regional and local community sponsorship initiatives.



## Table of Contents

IntroductInstitutional Opening of the Conference ..... 5

Panel I – Engaging Regions and Cities in Community Sponsorship..... 6

Panel II – Multi-stakeholder Engagement in Community Sponsorship ..... 9

Panel III – Hosting Refugees in Emergency Situations: Responses from Citizens, Cities & Regions..... 12

Interactive Discussion on Mobilising support for decentralised community sponsorship programmes: Key areas for engagement and developing new programmes ..... 15

Breakout discussion on strengthening cities’, regions’ and communities’ engagement ..... 17

Conclusions & Next Steps ..... 19

Annex 1: Look and Learn Visit..... 23

Annex 2: Agenda ..... 24



## Institutional Opening of the Conference



*Lide Amilibia from the Basque Government and Itziar Urtasun from Bilbao City Council*

Participants joined the conference in the Basque Government building after having participated in a look & learn visit the previous day. The visit took place in Castaños, a particularly welcoming neighbourhood of Bilbao, allowing participants to familiarise themselves with the sponsorship programme. For more detailed information, please see Annex 1.

**Lide Amilibia**, Vice Councillor of Social Affairs of the Basque Government welcomed participants highlighting the essence of the Basque community sponsorship programme in three key words: **engagement, solidarity and commitment**. So far, the Basque Government has supported five families (29 individuals) in five municipalities across the region. The autonomous regions of Valencia and Navarra have followed suit and have each launched a similar regional programme. The Vice Councillor Amilibia stated that the Basque government has recently agreed to provide 285 000EUR to support a second programme to welcome Syrian refugees from Lebanon - of which the first group of refugees arrived recently.

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*We give what we would like to receive –  
we see refugees not through the eyes of  
fear but through the eyes of solidarity*  
Lehendakari Iñigo Urkullu, President of  
Basque Country

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**Petra Hueck**, Director of ICMC Europe/Share Network explained that first and foremost, community sponsorship programmes are **multi-stakeholder partnerships** that allow refugees to be welcomed safely and legally into a country. She noted that this multitude and variety of actors involved in the process of welcoming and integrating a refugee family makes the strength of such programmes. Hueck declared that the answer to growing community sponsorship programmes sustainably in the future, may lie in various aspects of the unique Auzolana II, which is, contrary to other programmes, supported by strongly committed regional governments.

Regional Governments are strong advocates to support civil society led programmes, providing regional government funding, coordination and monitoring and evaluation.

**Sophie Muller**, UNHCR representative in Spain reiterated the beginnings of the programme in 2019, where refugees from camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey were welcomed and hosted by the programme, bringing together the government, civil society and towns including its citizens. UNHCR is working on





scaling the programme and turning it into a sustainable durable solution. Muller highlighted three specific aspects which differentiate community sponsorship from other durable hosting models: Its main pillar is formed by the local/community level; It is a multi-stakeholder programme, where the government is and should be present in all stages; No 'one size fits all' approach, since each country developed their own programme.

**Itziar Urtasun**, Councillor of Development and Cooperation at the City Council of Bilbao, stressed Bilbao's longstanding work in promoting diversity and a plural society. She emphasised that **the local level is crucial for any integration programme** but that local authorities on their own have only limited room for action. This, she explained, is why the city council of Bilbao works closely with the Basque Government and takes part in various European initiatives such as the [Intercultural cities](#) programme.

**Lehendakari Iñigo Urkullu**, President of the Basque Country addressed the conference



*President Urkullu addressing the audience*

participants with a [video message](#) welcoming the participants. He stated that the Basque Country's sponsorship programme is an example of sharing the responsibility and efforts to receive refugees in a more efficient, just and equitable manner. He reaffirmed that **integration can and will only happen locally**. Community sponsorship represents solidarity and a joint effort between public institutions, social initiatives and citizens in addressing refugee movements from third countries. He further noted that the situation in Ukraine has given rise to endless local and regional initiatives and, especially, voluntary work. He concluded his intervention by stating **"We give what we would like to receive – we see the refugees not through eyes of fear but through eyes of solidarity"**.

## Panel I – Engaging Regions and Cities in Community Sponsorship: Challenges and Opportunities

Moderated by Gemma Pinyol-Jiménez, Head of Migration Policies and Diversity, [Instrategies](#), the four panellists from four different countries discussed the engagement of regions and cities

in community sponsorship in a multi-level governance context. Following questions were put to the panellists.



*Xabier Legarreta speaking about the Basque experience of community sponsorship*



## Why does a region or city decide to engage in community sponsorships?

**Xabier Legarreta**, Director of Migration and Asylum at the Basque Government opened his intervention by explaining the reasons for their engagement in the community sponsorship programme. Triggered by the arrival of Syrian refugees in their region, the Basque Government realised that the Basque Country's role alongside other Spanish regions and municipalities was very minimal in being able to provide a response to an overburdened central government led reception system. To address this the Basque Government with support of UNHCR and in partnership with the two social entities [Caritas](#) and the Jesuit [Ellacuria Foundation](#) started the pilot programme, to offer safe and legal pathways to more Syrian refugees.

**Patricia Ruiz de Irizar**, Director of Migration Policies from the Navarra Government explained that Navarra was the third autonomous region to implement the community sponsorship programme. For Navarra it was important to strengthen the role of regions in migration and give visibility to the importance of the role of autonomous regions in hosting refugees. Since 2021, 4 families were welcomed in Navarra, of which one moved to France. Navarra built on the lessons learnt from the Basque Country and Valencia Region. The regional government

- Financed a **new position** whose sole role is to support the community sponsorship programme.
- Provides **psychological support** services from the very beginning

- Contracted a **cultural mediator** to accompany both the volunteers and the refugee family from the start.

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*Local and regional authorities should be involved from the beginning of the programme, on the same level as the central government*

*Patricia Ruiz de Irizar, Director of Migration Policies, Navarra Government*

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**Padraig McEvoy**, Local Councillor in Kildare County Council explained that in a time where the national media did not understand hosting refugees in a constructive manner, the 8.000 people town of Kildare in the rural territory of Kildare County

decided to take a stance and counter the negative narrative. They became one of the first groups to host sponsored refugees back in 2019.


## How does a city or region engage in community sponsorship?

**Legarreta** from the Basque Government explained that the region wanted to ensure that it was the sponsorship programme would be a structural programme. To this end, they provided monitoring and funding, the second 2022 programme receiving 285 000EUR. Although regional and local authorities play an important role in sustaining the programme, Legarreta acknowledged that the **programme is essentially run by the volunteers**, without whom this programme would not exist.

**Padraig McEvoy** explained that the local priest of **Kildare** set up the group and identified a multitude of people to work with, with different skills and networks. **Padraig McEvoy** was approached since he offered know-how in local administration and in navigating the welfare system. Other volunteer group members were a university administrator, a lawyer and a teacher. The family was housed in a property of the local school, once they had arrived from a camp in Jordan. Later on, the



volunteer group expanded with a psychologist and some Algerian migrants (Arab speakers), who became a point of reference and a bridge between the Irish volunteers and the family.

 **What are some opportunities and challenges identified by cities and regions engaged in community sponsorship?**

Launched in 2020, the Belgian community sponsorship programme has so far welcomed three families. **Manon Koepp**, from the Belgian Reception Agency [Fedasil](#) explained that is not evident to make the sponsorship programme visible to municipalities and regions. Their upcoming strategy will be to further work with municipalities **that already work on successful refugee inclusion programmes** and see how these can facilitate and support community sponsorship.

**Ruiz de Irizar** explained that in Navarra, the information provision in countries of origin must be improved. She pointed to harmful **false expectations** that the arriving families had, leading to deception and dissatisfaction. She further emphasised the importance of giving refugees the option to make an informed choice. This was highlighted by **Legarreta** who explained that a family had arrived in Portugalete in the Basque Country, thinking they would be welcomed to Portugal and not Spain. McEvoy added that in Ireland, families had understood the pre-departure information romantically or used it to compare to state-resettled refugees, creating deception upon arrival.

*Pre-departure information provided and management of expectations*

**In Belgium**, sponsored refugees receive the same pre-departure information as resettled refugees which is provided by Fedasil. Refugees thus do not know what to expect and do not know the difference. Fedasil is currently

working on a video that explains what to expect when being welcomed under sponsorships by a volunteer group.

**In Spain**, pre-departure information is provided by IOM and the Spanish Ministry. The regional authorities are not involved in the delivery of the information. This has been identified as a challenge to providing adequate information and regional authorities are asking for more tools to support pre-departure information sessions.

Ruiz de Irizar enumerated some further improvements she would like to see with the next cohort arriving in Navarra. Support should take account of **new family constellations** that occur after refugees arrive. Navarra has made the experience of a couple separating creating new families. Such developments should be considered in the provision of support.

Communication between the national and the regional/local levels is often deficient. All panellists agreed that **coordination and communication** between the various regions; between different towns; and between the regions and towns must continue, ensuring that lessons learnt are shared and built upon.

*Multistakeholder engagement in the Basque Region*

The Basque Government has set up a working group made up from the Basque Government, middle-level regional entities (provinces), local authorities and civil society to exchange and work on actions for refugee protection including community sponsorship. This panel meets 4 to 5 times per year, but this is flexible, as Legarreta explained, since with Ukraine, the panel meets every 2 weeks

Koepp affirmed that **housing** was a challenge across Belgium, exacerbated by the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. Participants agreed that working with local authorities can facilitate finding accessible housing for arriving families.





## Panel II – Multi-stakeholder Engagement in Community Sponsorship

Moderated by Gabriela Agatiello, Project Manager at ICMC Europe/Share Network, this panel brought together panellists from Spain, the UK, Ireland, and Germany to discuss regional multi-stakeholder engagement in community sponsorship.

### ***Community sponsorship in the Valencia Region, North Devon, the cities of Cologne and Rottenburg and the greater Dublin area***

**José de Lamo Pastor**, General Director on Equality and Diversity of the Valencia Government, discussed the programme in Valencia, which was set up in 2020 by the Spanish Government, UNHCR, the Region of Valencia, the Jesuits and [Caritas](#). Thus far, five families have been welcomed into 5 different municipalities representing smaller towns, middle-sized towns and cities both in rural and more urban zones of the region. Two families have already left the programme since they found work and have become autonomous earlier than anticipated. He concluded on the experience in Valencia that **community support is stronger in middle and smaller-sized towns that are less touristic**.

**Rory O'Neill**, Integration Projects Manager and Community Sponsorship Lead at the [Irish Refugee Council](#) (IRC) introduced the work of Regional Support Offices (RSO) in Ireland. The Irish Community Sponsorship programme was set up in 2017, complementary to resettlement. The programme was designed by UNHCR, the Irish government and. There are 4 Regional Support Offices (RSOs), one of which is the IRC. The RSOs recruit and support sponsorship groups in a designated regional

area (not an administrative region) by offering training, while pre-departure and post-arrival training is delivered by [IOM](#). They also act as a mediator between civil society groups and the government, since local authorities do not have a significant role in the programme. He further explained that **sponsorship has been used to express solidarity with countries in crisis**: first to as a vehicle to bring Afghans into Ireland and now to facilitate support to Ukrainians in Ireland. This solidarity can be used for different contexts. For example, in Kildare, where they previously hosted Syrian family and are now preparing to support a Ukrainian family.

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*Municipalities should play a role in providing financial and structural support to volunteers*  
**Stephan Neher, Mayor of Rottenburg**

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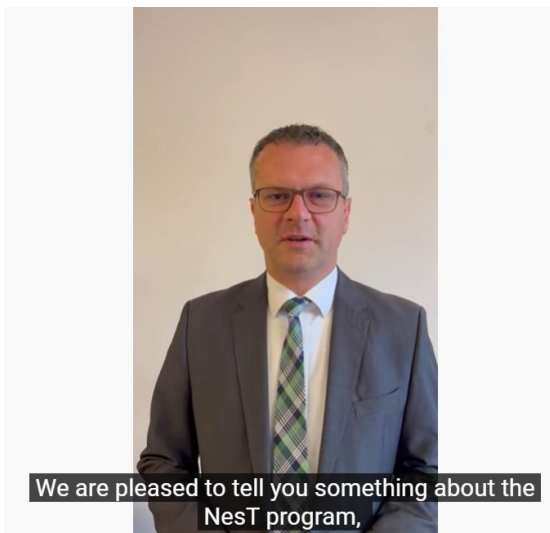
**Susannah Baker**, co-Founder of the [Pickwell Foundation](#) explained how the foundation supports sponsors in the regional area of North Devon, a primarily rural area in the

UK. As a Lead or Principal Sponsor the foundation is responsible for 38 refugees (7 families) mostly from Syria. The UK has since the inception of the British Community Sponsorship Scheme in 2016 welcomed 750 refugees through 150 groups. To set up a sponsor group in the UK, one must be a registered charity or a 'Community Interest Company'. To avoid red-tape groups prefer coming under a 'Lead /Principal Sponsor' who handles the applications, such as the Pickwell Foundation. For an application to be approved, the group also has to add a letter of approval from the local authority where the family will be placed. The Pickwell Foundation supports these groups locally but also works nationally as part of a Principle Sponsors Network, which helps steering and advising on community sponsorship to the Government Home Office



meetings. Baker explained that the foundation works not only on the UK community sponsorship scheme, but also on the [Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme](#) and the [Homes for Ukraine Scheme](#). Being involved in three government refugee schemes, allows the foundation to draw from a vast pool of experiences and facilitating mutual learning.

**Stephan Leo-Joyce**, Project Manager '[New Neighbours Campaign – at the Work Place](#)' at the [Caritas Association for the Archdiocese of Cologne](#) (DiCV) gave an overview of the German community sponsorship programme called [NesT](#). Since its inception in 2019, 139 refugees have been welcomed by 31 so-called 'mentor groups'. He affirmed that the German government would continue to fund NesT from 2023 onwards. The DiCV under its [New Neighbours Campaign](#) currently supports (co-sponsors) four mentor groups by making 79.000 EUR available to cover the rental costs of the two-year period. Moreover, they support mentor groups and refugees in counselling centres and are actively recruiting new mentor groups.



*Mayor Neher explaining the role of local authorities*

**Stephan Neher**, Mayor of Rottenburg am Neckar, a municipality in the German region of Baden-Württemberg, addressed the audience

with a video message. Neher envisions community sponsorship as a great additional way of welcoming vulnerable refugees into a willing community and civil society.

***“I think it is absolutely essential that the municipality and its administration is supporting community sponsorship initiatives financially because we believe it is obstructive to oblige volunteers to make financial contributions as well as their resource intensive administrative and emotional support.”*** explains Neher.

The municipal administration of Rottenburg thus decided to **cover the full rental costs**, so that no additional financial costs burden the volunteers. He concluded by urging cities and towns all over Germany and Europe to engage in additional sponsorship programmes, such as NesT. He calls on local administrative bodies to remain approachable, offer supervision, and most importantly – if challenges arise – to not leave the volunteers alone.

### ***Advantages and challenges of coordinating community sponsorship regionally***

José de Lamo Pastor, explained that in **Valencia** regional coordination had a beneficial impact on **funding for sponsorships**. Since the regional government assumes the costs (housing, providing a volunteer coordinator) of the scheme, they provide a safety net and volunteers are alleviated of stress. Overarching regional coordination also ensures **equal treatment of and same opportunities** for all sponsored families in one region. Further, de Lamo Pastor declared that it facilitates **common learning and sharing of experiences**.

This is also the experience of **North Devon**, where the Pickwell Foundation organises the pairing of different volunteer groups across the region to work out their common needs and issues they are faced with. Baker added that



through lobbying and influencing other towns within the area as well as adjacent regions, organisations operating regionally can scale community sponsorship, as it had happened in North Devon. Moreover, a regional coordination can facilitate support in filling in administrative papers as the process is similar in the whole of the region.

However, de Lamo Pastor pointed out that **housing** and **language learning** support is something to be taken up by local authorities instead of regions, as they have better access to the local housing market and know of the local language learning offers and opportunities. This was supported by O'Neill who explained that in Ireland, the IRC advised sponsor groups to find housing that is not on the market. Baker also emphasised that housing support should be done locally as she had the experience that being able to meet or knowing landlords personally had a positive impact.

She further noted that having a regional organisation acting as the bridge between the citizens engaged and the local authority can result in a good **relationship with the local authority**. Since the regional organisation works over years with the same local authorities, the **relationship** can build and grow over time resulting in strong mutual trust.

So far, since its inception in 2019 the scheme in Valencia has been successful, however, numbers could be higher. De Lamo Pastor also flagged risks of the **sustainability** of such a resource intensive scheme. The General Director on Equality and Diversity noted that considerable human resources from the regional administration are needed to support the programme and questioned whether this can be continued in case of expansion of the programme in the future.

### ***Improvements needed when collaborating with regions and cities***

De Lamo Pastor emphasised that collaborating with municipalities is key to a successful programme. They can assist in finding housing, translators and cultural mediators.

He also explained that there should be a focus on **employment** and access to the labour market from the outset. This has proven successful in Valencia **where 4 out of the 5 families have a family member in employment**.

Baker provided some **practical tips** on engaging with authorities

- Always speak well about authorities in public and highlight the good initiatives and beneficial support they provide
- Be prepared to be part of the solution when authorities are faced with problems

### ***The role of those who were previously welcomed***

O'Neill explained that in Ireland refugee who have previously been welcomed are only asked to contribute if they have the capacity. There are examples of previously welcomed refugees now being part of a volunteer group and hosting another family. The IRC also engages welcomed persons in peer research by interviewing newcomers, allowing the latter to feel heard.

Baker affirmed that a previously welcomed refugee is now employed by the Pickwell Foundation and accompanying every airport pickup of a new family. As a practice, they offer the latest family welcomed the possibility to be part of welcoming the next family.



## Panel III – Hosting Refugees in Emergency Situations: Responses from Citizens, Cities & Regions

Moderated by Petra Hueck, Director, ICMC Europe/ Share Network, the panellists representing a Belgian city and different levels of Spanish authorities discussed their responses to hosting Ukrainians. Hueck opened the panel by praising the various responses from citizens, cities and regions in offering welcome. Regarding the [Temporary Protection Directive](#), Hueck stressed the unique characteristic of refugees being able to have agency over where to settle and apply for a residence permit and hoped that this will with time be also applied to other refugee groups that now spend prolonged periods in reception centres.

### ***The case of Ghent: A city showing solidarity with refugees and migrants***

**Evi Voet**, Coordinator of the City Service for Asylum and Refugees in Ghent, started off by explaining that the city uses a **cooperative multi-actor approach** to coordinate its local migration and integration policies. Ghent cooperates with civil society organisations, agencies and citizen initiatives to implement humane and holistic policies towards newcomers. Ghent has been active in resettlement since 2015 and engages since 2020 in a programme, carried out in partnership with Fedasil and the local NGO [Thope](#), the latter being tasked with finding long term housing and offering tailored integration support. Upon arrival refugee families spend their first 6 weeks in Belgium in an arrival reception centre and Thope rents houses from private owners that they then re-rent to the resettled families that receive social benefits to pay for the accommodation. So-

called Thope 'Buddies' in the neighbourhood, who are volunteers, will then support the families from their first day of arrival in Ghent, easing the adaptation process to life in Belgium.

**Karmele Villarroel Labanda**, Project Officer '[Loturak programme](#)' at [Fundacion Ellacuria](#) in the Basque Country, explained that the Foundation has been working for over 15 years with migrants and refugees in the region. Over the past decades, the Jesuit Foundation has supported language learning, offered guidance, raised awareness, created spaces for anti-racist discourses and offered housing to the most vulnerable.

They are one of the supporting organisations for the Basque community sponsorship pilot programme. When engaging in work in the

Basque Country they adhere to three principles:

- **Universality**, which entails accompanying all migrants in the territory, regardless of their status and condition of arrival
- **Necessity**, which entails having a focus on the most vulnerable people who are at the margins of social protection systems
- **Working in networks and joining forces**, with like-minded organisations to make increase impact and make the work more effective

**Carmen Díaz**, Vice Mayor and Councilor for Social Cohesion at **Getxo City Council** explained that only a **structured policy that includes the local level can respond situations of emergency and provide for durable solutions**. She maintained that hosting and welcoming

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*Recognising and supporting bottom-up approaches without taking them over helps including newcomers in a more tailored way*  
Evi Voet, City of Ghent

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refugees should first of all be an exercise of public responsibility. Getxo, which continues to host a large number of Ukrainian refugees, views it as its responsibility as a city to manage hosting programmes such as those for Ukrainian solidarity housing.

### ***Ukraine Responses***

In the Basque region, it is estimated that two-thirds of Ukrainians are hosted by private citizens. Solidarity is not new; She reminded the Chernobyl disaster which saw an outburst of solidarity when many Ukrainians arrived in the Basque region.

Villarroel Labanda explained that the Loturak programme was created upon a request from the Basque government to **articulate a response to Ukrainian arrivals and the support from volunteers hosting them.**

#### ***Loturak Programme in the Basque Country***

- Five different NGOs operate across the Basque country offering support through training and awareness raising to the refugee families and hosts
- The approach used by the Ellacuria Foundation and Caritas Bizkaia draws from the learnings of community sponsorship and relies on local reception networks
- By mid-June 2022 the Loturak programme is supporting 95 citizen homes hosting 250 refugees, in three provinces of the Basque Country.

Villarroel Labanda explained that the training had to be adapted to the situation of Ukrainians since under the Temporary Protection Directive they have an immediate legal status including the right to work and obtain benefits. Further, she noted that contrary to other refugees, the people hosted are mainly women, teenagers and smaller children. The programme also identifies

leading local champions previously engaged in sponsorship and supports citizens during the hosting period. Finally, the programme promotes and encourages welcome by citizens and neighbourhoods as a good integration practice.

Voet explained that in Belgium, people receiving Temporary Protection and indicating a reception need are not accommodated in federal reception centres but instead, are immediately directed towards municipalities. The city of Ghent has created its own platform

#### ***Citizen Housing Initiative in Ghent, Belgium***

- Online platform where people can register to offer their housing
- Comprehensive screening procedure
- 300 Ukrainian refugees in host families

for Ukrainians and provides hotels and small scaled reception centres.

As in other cities, hundreds of citizens have offered accommodation. To ensure quality and safeguard refugee rights, Ghent has developed a three-tier process to screen offers for citizens housing.

The city

- Ask citizens to register their housing offer in a portal
- Calls the person that offers to host, to **interview** them about their motivation
- Performs an **administrative screening of the house and the host** checking for the quality of the housing and criminal records
- Performs a **house visit to check the accommodation**

Once the person offering their home is vetted their offer is put on a platform that the national reception agency Fedasil accesses to do the matching of refugees to local homes. Upon arrival the family will be supported by a team of social workers in Ghent.





Ana Barrera, Project Officer 'Family Welcome' at the Spanish Secretariat for Migration explained that the project run with Fundación La Caixa Foundation, a Spanish not-for profit banking foundation, has been created to support citizens hosting of Ukrainian refugees.

#### **Spanish Family Needs Family Project**

- Minimum commitment of 6 months for offering citizen housing
- La Caixa Foundation in collaboration with Spain's Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration
- The programme runs in Madrid, Barcelona, Murcia and Malaga

The project runs in four strategically chosen areas: Madrid, Barcelona, Murcia and Malaga. La Caixa supports screening of the local hosts while the Ministry provides the resources to arriving refugees as well as to the citizens hosting. The screening process consists of checking the conditions of the home and conducting an interview with the persons offering their homes. Since the minimum duration of commitment is set at six months, roughly half of those initially interested decide to continue to participate in the programme. Barrera declared that the **economic and social stability of the offered citizen housing** is crucial. Further, she cautioned that citizens offering their houses are volunteers and must **have recourse to professional support**. Once the citizen housing is vetted, the State matches it to Ukrainian refugees and acting as a mediator - while La Caixa accompanies the refugees and citizens during the hosting phase. A coordinated follow-up is conducted by both the Ministry of Inclusion and the Foundation. Barrera disclosed that in their matching process they prioritise families having the least

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*The role of citizens and civil society organisations should be built upon since they are able to provide fast and flexible responses, drawing from experiences.*

Karmele Villarroel Labanda, Fundacion  
Ellacuria

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resources. At the time of the conference, 150 refugees were awaiting to be matched by the La Caixa 'Family Needs Family' programme.

#### **Lessons Learned from Ukraine response**

All panellists agreed that **screening procedures to safeguard** refugees and minimum standards of housing offered are necessary. They further noted that some volunteers were deterred by the more complex than anticipated procedures and the comprehensive commitments.

Díaz emphasised the importance of **pre-existing structures** that should be built upon in any emergency response. **Getxo** had a lot of experience in welcoming young migrants and refugees from Morocco which could be mobilised to support Ukrainians. Díaz claimed that without having worked extensively on diversity beforehand, Getxo would have not been able to offer the support it did. Villarroel

Labanda affirmed that the **role of citizens and civil society organisations** should be recognised and built upon in future responses. Their ability to provide fast and

flexible responses has proven crucial to the efficacy of programmes. Voet affirmed that local authorities benefit from proactively integrating refugees with the involvement of citizens. Not only does it foster solidarity, but it results in an effective whole-of-society approach.

She further noted that **open and transparent communication** on migration results in greater public support. All panellists agreed that the speedy facilitation of administrative procedures and immediate disbursement of benefits and rights should be **extended to other applicants** of international protection.



## Interactive Discussion on Mobilising support for decentralised community sponsorship programmes: Key areas for engagement and developing new programmes

Moderated by Petra Hueck, this interactive Q&A session gathered panellists from academia, regional and cities networks, grassroots organisations, international organisations, local authorities and civil society. Hueck set the scene by explaining that there are different ways in which communities engage in hosting refugees. The local context is key when looking at welcome. No size fits all. The discussion centred around the way cities and regions can be part of varied networks and partnerships to support community sponsorship approaches. Lacking one single model this discussion looked at the different approaches possible.

### ***Enhancing the role of cities and regions to support community sponsorship approaches***

**Tihomir Sabchev**, part of [Cities of Refuge](#) at University of Utrecht and the [Refugee Hub](#) at the University of Ottawa explained that as part of his research on cities in Greece and Italy and their reception of migrants, he spoke to mayors, public administrators and civil society. Lacking clearly defined competences and mandates, cities across Europe engage in integration programmes. In his research, he found that cities often fill the gaps that national systems do address. Political municipal leadership is key. This can foster positive change not only within the city but extended regionally, nationally and even internationally. Sabchev identified local authorities that govern migration through cooperation with civil

society organisations as being the most efficient. Such multi-level /multi actor governance approaches can foster a beneficial bottom-up approach.

### ***Networks of cities and regions***

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*Although having a national centralised asylum system is the norm, cities find ways to engage in integration programmes*  
**Tihomir Sabchev, Refugee Hub, Ottawa University**

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**Léa Enon-Baron**, Co-Director of the [ANVITA City Network](#), gave an overview of the network of French local authorities, regions, departments and elected

representatives that work towards the unconditional reception of people in need of protection while advocating for increased solidarity at European and national level. Alongside gathering good practices and resources, ANVITA develops tools for local authorities to welcome migrants and build partnerships with other stakeholders in migration while framing common advocacy strategies to change the public narrative of migrants and refugees. **Guisela Guari Canada**, Institutional Relations & Advocacy Officer at the [Assembly of European Regions](#) (AER) explained that the AER is an apolitical network of regional authorities with a membership beyond the EU. Both ANVITA and AER agreed that **decentralisation** is key although local authorities still only have limited competencies. Enon-Baron explained that whenever cities provide shelter there is a strong political will to jump in where the state falls behind. She also reminded that the **housing crisis** makes that **limited means** are at cities' disposal, although she noted that rural areas can hold an answer to this. Guari Canada



mentioned that they had set up a working group to exchange on common challenges and solutions around regional coordination of integration.

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*Contrary to the general narrative, there is solidarity on the ground – through citizens and cities*

Alina Lyapina, Seebrücke Movement

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**Alina Lyapina**, Co-Founder of [Seebrücke](#) and Communication officer at [Humboldt Viadrina Governance Platform](#) explained that Seebrücke is a German grassroots movements created in 2018 to respond to relocate migrants that arrive in the context of rescue at sea operations in the Central Mediterranean. The organisation wants to develop safe pathways to Germany and therefore created 'Safe Harbours'. The main objectives are to pressure the central government, activate municipalities that did not share the same vision as the national government and prove that contrary to the general narrative that there is solidarity. So far, 200 German municipalities have declared themselves 'safe harbours' and pressure their local and regional government for greater welcome of migrants and refugees. Together all the citizen groups and local authorities build an alliance of safe harbour cities to bundle forces and bring local actors together. Lyapina mentioned that Humboldt Viadrina Platform is currently working on a new programme which aims to match and relocate Ukrainian refugees to German Safe Harbour Communities via an online matching platform for an individualised and needs-oriented welcome.

### ***Cities and solidarity engagement***

**Maria Alcina Cerdeira**, Councillor of [Fundao](#) in Portugal analysed how this 29 000 inhabitants 'cherry town' managed to become a prime

example of a solidary city. Alcina Cerdeira explained that the city has set up a programme to attract newcomers to be immediately inserted into the labour market. Fundao produces 60% of Portugal's cherries and has therefore a history of agricultural immigrant workers. In 2015, this history alongside solidary citizens led the town to rent a parish building that could accommodate over 600 people. The city then decided to attract technology firms, of which currently 17 have opened a branch there employing 1500 engineers and IT-workers. From thereon initiatives started to sprout to offer those newcomers a welcome package which has now been extended and expanded to welcome rescued migrants, students and workers. Fundao is now a territory of welcome, offering employment enterprises steered by a committed mayor and community.

**Mark Aguila**, Councillor of Planning, Evaluation and European Projects at Sant Boi City Council, a city in the province of Barcelona, explained how Sant Boi shows solidarity and includes refugees and migrants. As of mid-June, Sant Boi is hosting around 120 Ukrainian families. Aguila affirmed that solidarity cannot be based on emotions and short-term solutions but must have a solid basis to be sustainable. He declared that cities must collaborate with various stakeholders as well as with their greater region; municipalities must be brought together. He further explained that cities should constantly re-evaluate and reassess their responses for them to remain effective. Although lamenting the lack of resources available to municipalities, Aguila emphasised that local representatives in favour of humane migration policies are essential since they see issues happening in real time.

### ***International organisations***

**Maria Zabala** from the Hosting, Integration and Durable Solutions Unit at UNHCR Spain



explained that the organisation has been at the heart of developing the regional programs in Basque country, Navarra and Valencia. The role for international organisations could thus be to support regional and local integration programmes. UNHCR wants to push the sustainability of the Spanish community sponsorship programme by developing a Spanish framework including legal instruments. This could also result in scaling of the programme to more regions, more sponsors and civil society actors involved.

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*To improve the design of the scheme and when involving cities and regions, sponsors and welcomed persons should be included. Else, the essence of the programmes would be lost*

Maria Zabala, UNHCR

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Zabala cautioned that to improve the design of the scheme sponsors and welcomed persons should be included else the essence of the programme would be lost. She concluded by saying that the **private sector** should become an important stakeholder as it may provide financing and facilitate labour market integration. This, however, should be coordinated locally and regionally to be most efficient.

### ***Piloting complementary pathway programmes***

Giovanna Corbatto, Programme Manager at [Caritas Italiana](#) explained the origins of the

Italian [University Corridor programme UNICORE](#). The city of Bologna and its university were the first engaged in the programme. The University provided students living in Ethiopia with scholarships to continue their studies in Italy. Caritas Italy supports if the university cannot find housing and activates a multitude of stakeholders in the community to ensure that the students are included in their host society. She explained that universities and cities have close bonds and that higher education programmes may enable cities to engage in welcome and admission of refugee students and their families.

### ***Organising sponsoring groups***

**Hannah Feldman**, Senior Projects Manager Sponsor Refugees at [Citizens UK](#), explained that as a lead sponsor organisation, most volunteers wanting to form a sponsor group approach them. However, occasionally Citizens UK will proactively seek out a city to gather various community actors to form a group. She highlighted that it was beneficial if a volunteer is well connected to their community. The lead sponsor organisation also organises monthly webinars for already formed groups, newly formed ones and those who are thinking of sponsoring a family. These webinars centre around various topics that the groups will invariably come across and is led by a resettled person. Citizens UK further encourages forming networks of sponsors to spread the word, support one another and advocate for more sponsorship.

## Breakout discussion on strengthening cities', regions' and communities' engagement

The third day of the conference saw the participants split in three breakout groups. These were led by [ANVITA](#)'s Léa Enon-Baron,

[Refugee Hub](#)'s Tihomir Sabchev and [Citizens UK](#)'s Hannah Feldman to discuss strategies to expand regional and city engagement in



community sponsorships. Below are listed some key reflections.

### ***Private sector involvement***

Participants found it inspiring to hear from the Councillor of Fundao how the town designed a successful labour integration programme. Alongside the labour market needs, the breakout group discussed that such programmes also fulfilled the social market needs of a rural town facing depopulation. Evi Voet also explained that in Ghent they established partnerships with two big enterprises to train and provide refugees with a driver license. Further, they have a specialised department '[Job Team](#)' for different groups of people which works on connecting people to enterprises. She also explained that in the reception centre they run a programme called '[Job Road](#)' which closely supports asylum seekers up until employment. Challenges identified to engaging the private sector were the administrative hurdle for employers and the status uncertainty that comes with employing people seeking asylum. Such an investment can be made by big companies but small and medium enterprises, which are mainly present in the EU, often do not have the resources.

Irene Zarza Herrera explained that the [Fons Catalan](#), a non-profit organization formed by Catalan city councils and other local organizations, is used to receiving donations from small enterprises to launch campaigns whenever there is a crisis, such as Afghanistan.

### ***Smaller community grassroots organisations***

Participants discussed giving grassroots movements and initiatives more power. They emphasised that small rural and urban organisations have the networks and know the local needs best. Participants found that

smaller cities and neighbourhoods within big cities can be easier mobilised.

### ***University involvement/ Higher education opportunities***

Participants noted that numbers of refugee students admitted to European universities are still low. Scaling these could lead to more city engagement – this would also connect the students to the job market once they have finished their studies. The Italian UNICORE programme was seen as a good example since it provides refugee scholarships to a multitude of Italian Universities and thus includes cities ranging from Naples to Rome and Bologna. The [Manifesto on Expanding Refugee Tertiary Education Pathways in Europe](#), launched together with the [Global Task Force on Third Country Education Pathways](#) at the [Universities as Sponsors Conference](#) outlines an effective multistakeholder approach to expand tertiary higher education pathways and thus can be used as a basis.

### ***Rural areas***

Participants discussed the potential that rural areas may represent for the inclusion of refugees. They noted that many sponsored families across Europe, especially in Italy and the UK are welcomed into rural areas. They found that if the welcome is properly done, inclusion can happen a lot quicker and better. However, some essential facilities such as schools must be accessible. Further, there should be adequate management of expectation when refugees are to be located in rural areas and may represent the only diverse population. Some participants cautioned about the deep work exploitation that also exists in rural areas.





## Conclusions & Next Steps

Further engaging regions and cities, under varied partnerships and programmes, can allow community sponsorship programmes to grow and become more sustainable. This requires a more structured approach to the engagement of regions and cities as 'co-sponsors'. To this extent, structured outreach, exchange and training must be organised between regions, cities and civil society.

### Benefits for regions and cities engaging in sponsorships

The conference highlighted several benefits for regions and cities to directly engage in community sponsorship programmes:

- Community sponsorship represents **solidarity and a joint effort** between public institutions, social initiatives and citizens in addressing refugee movements from third countries.
- It offers regions and cities, a **direct role** in designing and supporting safe and legal refugee admissions, offering community welcome and facilitating local integration.
- Community sponsorships offers cities and regions a tangible way to take a direct stance against the often-negative national narrative surrounding migration, offering a **'whole of society approach.'**
- Sponsorships can be used as a vehicle to express solidarity with refugees and countries in crisis, **that can be mobilised for varied contexts** (e.g. Afghans, Ukrainians, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors etc.).
- Community sponsorships allows regions and cities to engage in **strengthening local partnerships and community bonds**. There is a **'Not one size fits all'** approach regarding this, since engagement can include offering financial support, public

support for refugee protection and volunteer engagement, support in identifying housing solutions, support with monitoring and evaluations, etc.

- Supporting community sponsorships strengthens **social cohesion**: the multitude and variety of actors involved in the process of welcoming and integrating a refugee family is the strength of community sponsorship programmes.
- Community sponsorships can offer a **response to an overburdened central government-led reception system**
- Cities and regions can embrace arriving refugees, offering welcome and social activities, to **foster a sense of belonging**.
- Through supporting community sponsorships, political leaders can play the role of 'champion' **paving the way for other regions and cities to follow suit**.

### Regionally implemented programmes

The Spanish sponsorship programmes show that **regional governments**, working with civil society, can act as **co-sponsors of the programme**, providing regional government funding, coordination and monitoring and evaluation support.

In view of **multi-level governance** in migration, the national government is and should be actively engaged in all programmes.

While the Spanish programme focuses on administrative autonomous regions, more **informal territorial (regional) based partnerships**, are likewise efficient ways to develop and strengthen community sponsorship partnerships. For example, in Ireland, **Regional Support Offices (RSOs)** recruit sponsorship groups in a specific area



(North, South, East, West), and offer support through training and day-to-day assistance for refugee families and volunteer sponsors. They also act as a mediator between civil society groups and the government. In North Devon, a **regional lead** engages with stakeholders on the territory, ensuring coordination and troubleshooting, as well as capacity building and engagement with local authorities. This regional lead also engages with the national level, as part of a **lead sponsor network**, which helps steering and advising the Home Office on community sponsorship.

### Challenges of resettlement-based community sponsorship programmes

Multi-level governance in administering community sponsorship programmes can best be addressed via **multi stakeholder cooperation frameworks**. **Coordination and communication** between the national and the regional/local levels is often deficient, hampering growth of decentralised engagement.

To avoid deception upon arrival, **pre-departure information** provision to arriving refugees and local communities must be improved. Refugees should be made aware of the differences between government-led resettlement programmes and civil society/ regionally organised community sponsorship programmes and allowed to make an informed decision between the two programmes.

Regions or cities and national governments must collaborate in developing pre-departure cultural orientation. There is a need for better **matching (vulnerable)** refugees to municipalities particularly when settling in rural and more remote areas. Matching should also take account of special needs, (higher) education and future employment opportunities.

Additionally, the transition to, and **end of the sponsorship period**, is often not sufficiently prepared for and coordinated for with social services and mainstream service providers. This can disrupt transition to longer term affordable housing.

### Next Steps

- **Need for awareness raising and outreach**

The participants agreed that community sponsorship programmes are often not very visible at the municipal and regional level. Regions and cities have a limited understanding about operational frameworks of community sponsorship and the different ways they can engage and form partnership under such programmes.

Engagement from regions and cities must thus be actively promoted via awareness raising, peer-exchange and training. **Networks of cities and regions** can play a role to raise awareness and transfer knowledge. **Refugees themselves can play an important role as advocates for the programme.**

- **Need for best practice exchange**

There is a need to strengthen regional and local community sponsorship communities of practices and establish frameworks for exchange and communication between programme stakeholders. Networks of sponsors are an efficient way to spread the word, support one another and advocate for more sponsorship.



➤ **Need for recruitment strategies that ensure diverse volunteer groups**

Community sponsorship allows for wide volunteer engagement in terms of age, gender and thematic expertise. To ensure close links with regions and cities, **volunteer groups can include city officials and political representatives** as volunteers or patrons, to strengthen links and cooperation.

Groups should focus on **employment** and access to the labour market from the outset, using networks and links with local employers.

Groups should encourage the **participation of previously welcomed refugees** to take part in new welcoming groups.

➤ **Engagement of municipalities**

Early engagement with municipalities is key for the success of sponsorship programmes. Cities and regions **that already work on successful refugee inclusion programmes** are the most evident partners to facilitate and support community sponsorship.

Local authorities that govern migration through established cooperation with civil society **can respond better to new situations**. While the local level is crucial for any integration programme, local authorities alone have limited room for action. Multi-level and multi-actor governance approaches can foster a beneficial bottom-up approach.

Securing **housing** is a challenge common to all countries, requiring close relations between local authorities and sponsorship groups to seek solutions.

➤ **Employment partnerships** for early labour market integration

Engagement with employment services and local employers should be part of programmes

from the outset, requiring early engagement. Locally embedded organisations have the networks and know the needs and opportunities best.

**Smaller cities and rural territories as well as neighbourhoods within big cities** can be more easily mobilised.

Securing employment can at times be also easier in **middle and smaller-sized towns**. Rural territories that are losing population can use migration as a constructive way or tool for [rural revitalisation](#) to ensure employment and retain services. This requires careful matching and management of expectations of volunteer sponsors and refugees themselves.

➤ **Ukraine responses and sponsorships**

The Ukraine crisis has allowed many cities to develop and pilot new models of welcome, delivering **fast and flexible support**. The lessons learned from, notably, citizen housing initiatives and the management of volunteers should influence community sponsorship programmes, just as the key lessons from the latter (vetting of sponsors, matching, safeguarding, training, providing ongoing support and possibilities for peer learning) should inform the new models of welcome piloted for Ukrainians. This has been reconfirmed by the European Commission who published their [Safe Home Guidance](#) one month after the conference (July 2022). The Share Network presented its work on community-led initiatives during the EC launch of the Safe Home Initiative and has been actively following up on its developments.

Case examples from Belgium, Spain, Ireland and UK, show that Ukraine responses have been more efficient when **building upon pre-established regional, city and civil society partnerships** that can better adapt to new needs, using **existing tools and support networks** while expanding communities of practices to new actors. There is a need for



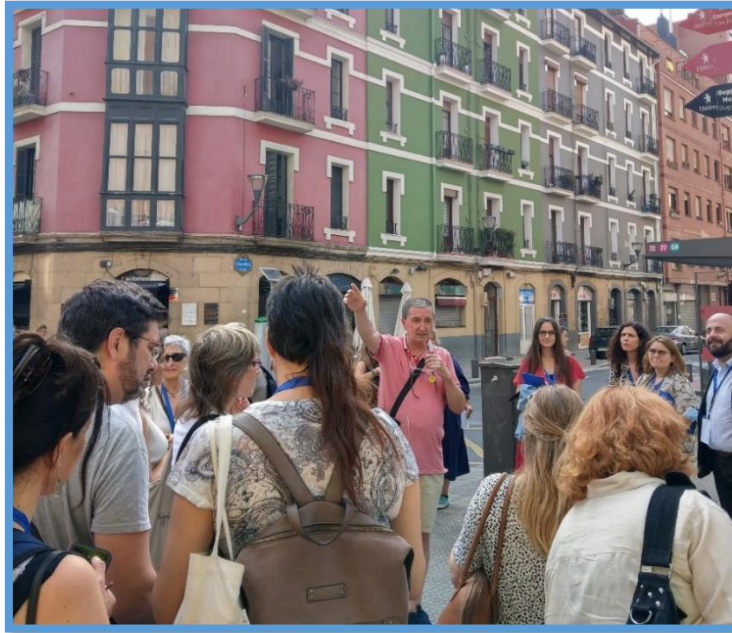
**partnerships and communities of practice** to cooperate in ensuring screening, safeguarding and quality control of volunteers and citizen housing initiatives, while planning for phasing out of emergency support to longer-term housing solutions and integration. These should adapt to the special needs of displaced

Ukrainians, who are mainly women, minors and smaller children

Hosting and early integration initiatives should also be **inclusive**, avoiding discrimination of other refugee groups and seeking to expand welcome and benefits to all.



## Annex 1: Look and Learn Visit



*Vincente Villate guides participants through the Bilbao neighbourhood Castaños, hosting one refugee family from Syria*

After being welcomed by Xabier Legarreta, Director of Migration and Asylum at the Basque Government and Petra Hueck, Director of ICMC Europe/Share Network, participants had the opportunity to see and experience how welcome (Auzolana) has been organised in the neighbourhood Castaños of Bilbao. The neighbourhood was chosen as a look and learn visit due to its long-standing tradition in citizen solidarity. Vincente Villate, an active member of the volunteer group welcoming the first family to Bilbao, showed participants the different places where the group would meet

and organise various integration activities including language learning, coordination with local schools, recreation and early labour market integration. The volunteers and the social worker from Caritas Bizkaia Jon Fernandez De la Bastida then discussed their experience as volunteers and answered questions from participants. The Look and Learn visit ended in the neighbourhood's community centre where newcomers can engage with Basque culture through music, traditional dances and more.



*Participants are being shown around the community centre in Castaños*





## Annex 2: Agenda

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Look and Learn Visit</b> <i>Venue: Bilbao Berrikuntza Faktoria - Mondragon Unibertsitatea (Uribitarte Kalea 6 - 48001 Bilbao)</i>
<b>15.00h</b>	<b>Welcome and objectives of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Xabier Legarreta</b>, Director of Migration and Asylum of the Basque Government</li> <li>○ <b>Petra Hueck</b>, Director, ICMC Europe</li> </ul>
<b>15.30h</b>	<b>Look and Learn Field Visit to Bilbao</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presentation of Auzolana II: Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders</li> <li>○ Lessons Learned from Pilot Programme: Discussion with participants</li> </ul> <p>Walking tour to a sponsoring community in Bilbao introducing key elements and actors of the program</p>
<b>18.00h</b>	End of the visit
<b>20.00h</b>	Dinner with all participants
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Community Sponsorship: Regions and Cities as Sponsors</b> <i>Venue: Basque Government Headquarters (Gran Vía de Don Diego López de Haro, 85 - 48009 Bilbao)</i>
<b>09.00h</b>	<b>Institutional Opening</b> Moderated by Patxi de la Fuente Pereda, Directorate of Migration, Basque Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Lide Amilibia</b>, Vice Councilor of Social Affairs, Basque Government</li> <li>○ <b>Petra Hueck</b>, Director, ICMC Europe/Share Network</li> <li>○ <b>Sophie Muller</b>, UNHCR representative in Spain</li> <li>○ <b>Itziar Urtasun</b>, Councilor of Development and Cooperation, City Council of Bilbao</li> <li>○ <b>Lehendakari Iñigo Urkullu</b>, President of the Basque Country (video message)</li> </ul>
<b>10.00h</b>	<b>Panel I. Engaging Regions and Cities in Community Sponsorship: Opportunities and Challenges</b> Moderated by Gemma Pinyol-Jiménez, Head of Migration Policies and Diversity, Instrategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Xabier Legarreta</b>, Director of Migration and Asylum, Basque Government</li> <li>○ <b>Patricia Ruiz de Irizar</b>, Director of Migration Policies, Navarra Government</li> <li>○ <b>Padraig McEvoy</b>, Local Councillor in Kildare Count Council</li> <li>○ <b>Manon Koepp</b>, Project Officer, Belgian Reception Agency (Fedasil)</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
<b>11.30h</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>11.45h</b>	<b>Panel II. Multi-stakeholder Engagement in Community Sponsorship</b> Moderated by Gabriela Agatiello, Project Manager, ICMC Europe/SHARE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>José de Lamo Pastor</b>, General Director on Equality in Diversity, Valencia Government (Generalitat Valenciana)</li> <li>○ <b>Rory O'Neil</b>, Integration Projects Manager and Community Sponsorship Lead, Irish Refugee Council on Regional Support Offices (RSOs)</li> <li>○ <b>Susannah Baker</b>, Founder, The Pickwell Foundation on Recruitment and Support to Sponsors within Regional Areas</li> <li>○ <b>Stephen Neher</b>, Mayor of Rottenburg, Germany (video message)</li> </ul>



	Q&A
13.00h	<b>Lunch Break at the venue</b>
14.30h	<p><b>Panel III. Hosting Refugees in Emergency Situations: Responses from Citizens, Cities &amp; Regions</b></p> <p>Moderated by Petra Hueck, Director, ICMC Europe/ Share Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Evi Voet</b>, Coordinator City Service for Asylum and Refugees, City of Ghent</li> <li>○ <b>Ana Barrera</b>, Project Officer 'Family Welcome' with Fundación La Caixa, Spanish Secretariat for Migration</li> <li>○ <b>Karmele Villarroel Labanda</b>, Loturak programme, Fundacion Ellacuria, Basque Country</li> <li>○ <b>Carmen Díaz</b>, Vice Mayor and Councilor for Social Cohesion, Getxo City Council</li> </ul> <p>Q&amp;A</p>
15.45h	<p><b>Interactive discussion on mobilising support for decentralised community sponsorship programme: Key areas for engagement and developing new programmes</b></p> <p>Moderated by Petra Hueck, Director, ICMC/SHARE Network</p> <p><i>Round 1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Tihomir Sabchev</b>, Cities of Refuge, University of Utrecht</li> <li>○ <b>Léa Enon-Baron</b>, Co-Director, ANVITA City Network (France)</li> <li>○ <b>Gisela Guari Canada</b>, Institutional Relations &amp; Advocacy Officer, Assembly of European Regions (AER)</li> <li>○ <b>Maria Zabala</b>, Hosting, Integration and Durable Solutions Unit, UNHCR</li> </ul> <p><i>Round 2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Giovanna Corbatta</b>, Programme Manager, Caritas Italiana</li> <li>○ <b>Marc Aguilà</b>, Councilor of Planning, Evaluation and European Projects, Sant Boi City Council</li> <li>○ <b>Alina Lyapina</b>, Co-Founder, Seebrücke/ Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Humboldt-Viadrina Governance Platform</li> <li>○ <b>Hannah Feldman</b>, Senior Projects Manager Sponsor Refugees, Citizens UK</li> </ul>
17.00h	End of the day
20.00	<b>Tapas/Pinchos</b> <i>Plaza Nueva, Bilbao</i>

<b>Day 3</b>	<p><b>Looking forward: Engaging cities and regions</b></p> <p><i>Venue: Eusko Jaurlaritzza-Basque Government Headquarters (Don Diego López Haroko Kale Nagusia, 85 - 48009 Bilbao)</i></p>
9.30h	<p><b>Mobilising support for decentralised community sponsorship programme: Joint policy document on strengthening cities, regions and community engagement</b></p> <p><i>In breakout session defining main action points and areas for strengthening engagement of regions, cities and communities in community sponsorship, supported by practices.</i></p>
11.00h	<b>Reporting on Key Findings</b>
11.30h	<b>Closing of the event</b>