



EU-Passworld

Education Pathways Community Sponsorship

What is Community Sponsorship?

Community Sponsorship is a great way for communities to get involved in welcoming refugees and helping them to adapt to life in Ireland. It allows us to welcome more refugees to Ireland. Community sponsorship programmes empower groups of individuals to commit to providing emotional, financial and integration support for a period of time to help refugees adjust to life in a new country.

The Community Sponsorship approach to welcoming refugees can improve refugee integration outcomes and strengthen local communities by not only connecting local communities with newcomers, but also bringing existing communities together. Sponsors often say it is the **most meaningful thing they have ever done.**

Sponsorship brings together people from different backgrounds to work towards a common goal: welcoming and supporting newcomers to their community. Community involvement with the programme also helps to build greater awareness, understanding and empathy around refugee-related issues locally and nationally.

Education Pathways

The starting point of education pathways is **refugees' ability.** Education pathways are a type of complementary pathway that provide refugees with a safe and legal way to take up scholarships in host countries.

Refugees who are selected to participate in the programme will be seen, recognised, and treated as international students, and not just defined by their refugee status. This identity dimension should not be underes-

timated, as it is often the aspect of complementary pathways that has the greatest impact on refugees' subjective wellbeing.

How will the group support the refugee?

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Refugee student arriving at Italian airport through the UNICORE project

The group will assume responsibility for the reception and integration of the student. This includes providing emotional, financial and integration support throughout the period of the student's studies in Ireland.

By creating a group, you are providing a ready-made network of support for the student from the

moment they arrive. The group will help the student navigate their new community and overcome any challenges they may face. Having a community supporting them as soon as they arrive helps refugees to get settled in quicker and build fulfilling and meaningful lives.

How do we become involved?

1 Recruit members of a group

Consider the kinds of skills and ethos you want in your group; and what kind of selection process you will have. Note that different people will have different strengths and time commitments - it's worth checking in with this from the outset, and continually, as this will vary. For example, try to balance people who have busy schedules with those who can commit more time to the group. Groups can recruit as they go along - you will need to make sure that all new members can access training.

2 Contact Nasc

We'll assist you through the process of formally becoming a group and completing group training.

3 Get organised

The group will need to set up a bank account and decide upon the rules of how it will function. We can provide you with templates and precedents to help you with this. We will help you register as a group and create a settlement plan (a pre-arrival document signposting supports needed for the student and roles of the group members) for the refugee when the time comes.

4 Think about how you'll raise money

The group will need to fundraise a minimum of €10,000 before the student's arrival to help financially support the student for the duration of their studies.



Community Sponsorship Groups **Food for thought...**

- Some groups have leaders; others share equal responsibility. It's worth thinking about - and coming to an agreement on - what kind of structure would suit your group best.
- Group roles tend to shift; and the people in those roles can shift too. Roles include Housing, Healthcare, Finance, Communications, Welcoming...
- How big do you want your group to be? Some groups have 10 members, others have over 20. Smaller numbers make it easier to manage your group; larger numbers help split the roles and build networks.
- When recruiting new members, think about what people can offer to the group. Anyone can be part of a group but think about the different things each member can offer. Do you know people with language skills? Or with spare time on their hands? People with safeguarding experience? Or how about that neighbour who's a pro at bake sale fundraisers?
- Think about how the group will approach communication and decision-making at the outset. This will be useful as the group grows.

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