

Workshop on Community Sponsorship of Refugees
Building the Future through Community Sponsorship of Refugees
Comparing experiences and learning from each other

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Chiara Cardoletti, Representative, UNHCR Italy, San Marino and Holy See.

Let me express our thanks for the invitation received from the Embassy of Canada to the Holy See and the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and for having organized this valuable opportunity to exchange views and best practices between countries (US, UK, Germany, Canada and Italy) and actors who have been successfully engaged in community sponsorship programmes;

First of all, I would like to highlight the excellent cooperation with Canadian authorities, with whom, in the context of the GRSI, events and seminars have been organized in Italy over the past year and a half, enabling an exchange of information and best practices between Italian and Canadian civil society organizations and institutional stakeholders on community sponsorship, leading to a first draft of a concrete proposal for the creation of an Italian community sponsorship programme;

Italy is becoming more and more a strategic country in terms of the implementation of complementary pathways, as evidenced by the various existing models of humanitarian admission (humanitarian corridors and emergency evacuations from Libya and for Afghans) or education pathways (UNICORE, Progetto Mediterraneo and Pagella in tasca) and the discussion around the possibility of creating new labour-based pathways (labour pathways) and community sponsorship, also thanks to the positive synergy between Italian authorities, civil societies and international organizations, which has made it possible to offer concrete solutions of solidarity and protection;

Community sponsorship is one of the pillars of the Global Compact on Refugees and of our recent policy paper Third Country Solutions for Refugees: Roadmap 2030 in consideration of the fact that effective integration pathways can be built and strengthened through social relationships between refugees and the local community. Highlight the role that host communities can play in facilitating this process. Share that, as per consultation with refugees, the ability to have points of reference in the local community, build friendships and personal relationships is an important key for refugees in their integration journey;

Before closing my intervention, I would like to mention that UNHCR has launched a community matching programme aimed at establishing social relationships between refugees and host communities, highlighting the centrality of the social relations for the well-being and the successful integration of refugees. Community sponsorship could offer a structured space to channel the resources of both the local community and refugees who have arrived in Italy through safe and legal channels. The first results of this programme are very encouraging and this pushes us to work further in this direction.