

Information Session - September 2015

# PRIVATE REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

## A Refugee is defined as:

*“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; is outside the country of his nationality; and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”*

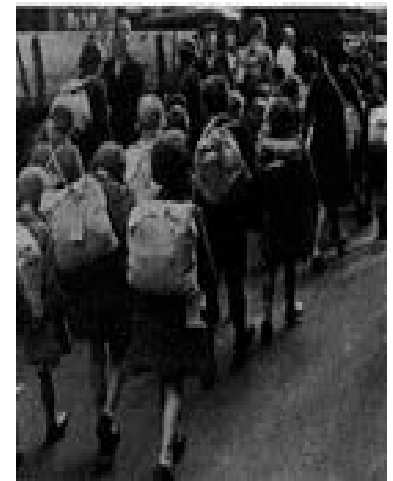
*1951 Geneva Convention*

# Who is a Refugee?

All kinds of people can become refugees; rich or poor; male or female; doctor or farmer.

**No one is a refugee by choice.**

A refugee is, first and foremost, a human being, a person with rights and dignity. Despite their differences, all refugees in the world have one thing in common: **they cannot live peacefully, in safety and dignity in their home country.**



# Durable Solutions

## Voluntary Repatriation

- returning home
- conditions must allow return in safety and dignity

## Local Integration

- integrating into the country of asylum

## Resettlement

- permanent move to a “third” country
- limited option for those who cannot go home, are not safe in their asylum country



# International Refugee Situation

- Globally, there are currently 51.2 million of people who were forced to flee their homes due to conflict or persecution
- Of these 16.7 million are refugees
- The United Nations are currently responding to refugee crisis from: Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

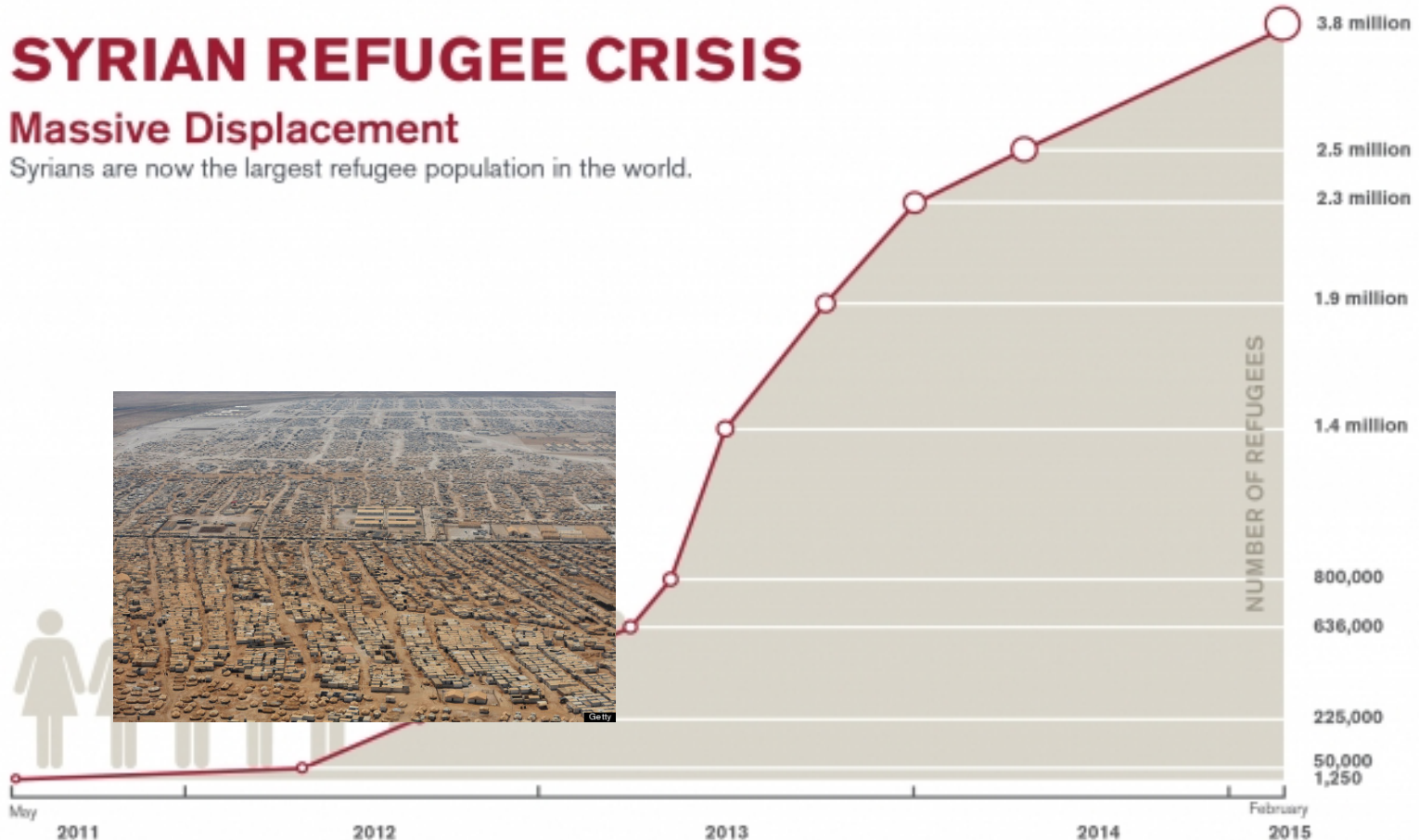


# Syrian Refugee Crisis

## SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

### Massive Displacement

Syrians are now the largest refugee population in the world.



# Refugees come to Canada through:

## 1. Inland Processing

Person arrives in Canada and makes refugee claim.

As a signatory to the Geneva Convention, Canada is obligated to offer protection to refugees who arrive on its shores and claim asylum.



## 2. Overseas Processing

Refugees are processed overseas and come to Canada as:

- a) Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)
- b) Blended Visa Office Referred Refugees (BVORs)
- c) Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

# Overseas Processing

Full Responsibility by Private Groups...Full Responsibility by Government

## Privately Sponsored (PSR)

Funded by the **sponsoring group**:

- Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH)
- Groups of Five
- Community Groups

## Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

Cost-sharing between government and sponsors. Logistical support provided by **sponsoring group**

*For refugees identified by visa office*

## Government Assisted (GAR)

Funded by the **government**

**Settlement agencies** are contracted to provide reception and integration under the Resettlement Assistance Program



## a) **Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)**

- refugees are selected by UNHCR and Canadian government. People in Canada (sponsors, relatives) **CANNOT** put anyone on the GAR list

## a) **The Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR)**

- cost-sharing program between Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and sponsors; both contribute to financially supporting the refugees.
- Refugees under this program have already met eligibility and admissibility criteria, making them travel-ready. However, they must be matched with a sponsor before they can travel to Canada.
- People in Canada (sponsors, relatives) **CANNOT** put anyone on the BVOR list.

## C. Private Refugee Sponsorship

- resettlement of refugees to Canada, in which the financial costs of sponsorship and settlement support is provided by **private groups or organizations**.
- legal commitment. Responsibilities of sponsors include providing refugee with accommodation, clothing and food, as well as emotional and settlement support for one year.



***“Privately sponsoring a refugee family was an enlightening and rewarding experience. It has allowed me a richer and deeper understanding of being a refugee in Canada.”***

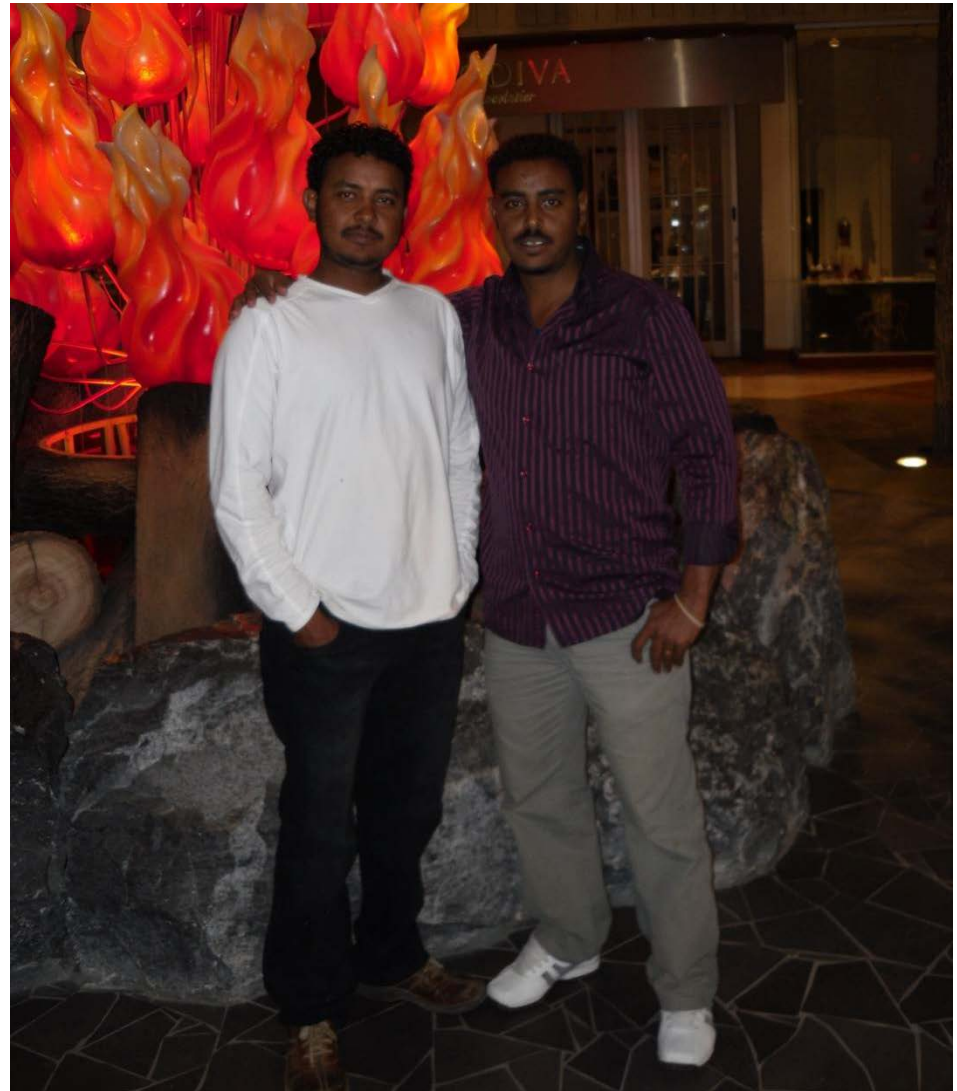
*Emilie Coyle*

*Chairperson of Neighbours for Refugees*

*Private sponsorship Group*



Refugees who are privately sponsored by a relative or friend are called “**Family-Linked sponsorships**”



# How do groups sponsor refugees?

## **Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH)**

- an organization that has signed an agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- often work with **Constituent Groups (CGs)** who raise funds to sponsor the refugee and settle the refugee upon arrival

## **Group of 5 (G5)**

- any 5 or more individuals that come together to sponsor refugees
- must show financial and settlement capability

## **Community Sponsor**

- group that comes together to sponsor refugees
- must show financial and settlement capability

## Please note:

- In recent years, very few applications have been successfully approved through the G5 and Community Sponsor stream.
- We recommend partnering with a SAH.



# How do you sponsor someone?

1. Form a group with a minimum of 5 people
2. Plan how you will fundraise
3. Contact a Sponsorship Agreement Holder
4. Meet the criteria set out by the Sponsorship Agreement Holder
5. Identify a refugee(s) to sponsor (often with the help of a SAH)
6. Complete a sponsorship application
7. Continue to fundraise and prepare for arrival
8. Upon arrival, assist refugee(s) to settle during their first year in Canada

# Who is eligible to be privately sponsored?

- Syrians **can be** sponsored from Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey.
- The person overseas must be a refugee by UN definition (outside of their country of origin). The Canadian government does not allow groups to sponsor Syrians out of Syria
- Refugees must **not** already have a durable solution (i.e. be locally integrated into their country of asylum). The Canadian government does not allow groups to sponsor refugees who are in Europe or the USA as they consider them to be locally integrated and have a durable solution.
- Canadian Embassy staff **must be able to interview the refugees in person.** Currently, due to security concerns, Embassy staff cannot interview refugees in Syria, Iraq, or Yemen.



# How much does it cost to sponsor a refugee?

## *Sponsorship Cost Table*


Family Size	12 Months of Income Support	Start Up Costs	Total
1	9,800	2,800	12,600
2	16,800	4,400	21,200
3	17,700	5,300	23,000
4	20,000	7,000	27,000
5	22,500	7,200	29,700
6	24,500	8,000	32,500
Add'l Member	1,500	1,000	2,500

# What if I don't have the money to help sponsor?

- Financial support can be raised collectively
- In-kind donations of housing are also needed
- Volunteers who can donate time will be needed to settle refugees once they arrive

In sponsorship, there is a role for everyone!

# How do groups identify a refugee to sponsor?

1. Named sponsorship	1. Blended Visa Office Referred
Identified by a local family/individual for sponsorship (also referred to as a 'named sponsorship' or 'family-linked sponsorship')	Identified by a Visa Office overseas (Blended Visa Office Referred or 'BVOR')
Fully funded by private sponsors	Start-up costs paid by sponsors 6 months income support paid by sponsors 6 months income support paid by CIC
Sponsors provide all financial and all settlement support	Sponsors provide <u>some</u> financial and all settlement support
Eligible for MSI (healthcare) Children and pregnant women <u>only</u> are eligible for IFHP (Interim Federal Healthcare Program – supplementary health care)	Eligible for MSI All are eligible for IHFP for 12 months
Processing times overseas can vary, as refugees must be interviewed and screened by Canadian Embassies overseas Allows for the reunification of families separated by war and conflict	Processing times are (usually) quick, as refugees' applications have been pre-approved and pre-screened Provides resettlement to refugees who have no family links to  Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia



# How long does it take?

## In-Canada Processing:

- Syrian applications are prioritized at the CIC office in Winnipeg, once approved they are sent overseas

## Overseas Processing:

- BVOR refugees may come 2-4 months after application is submitted to CIC (as the refugees are 'travel ready')
- Applications for Family-linked refugees depend on the processing times at each visa post
  - For example, Beirut, Lebanon currently takes 11 months before a refugee is called for an interview

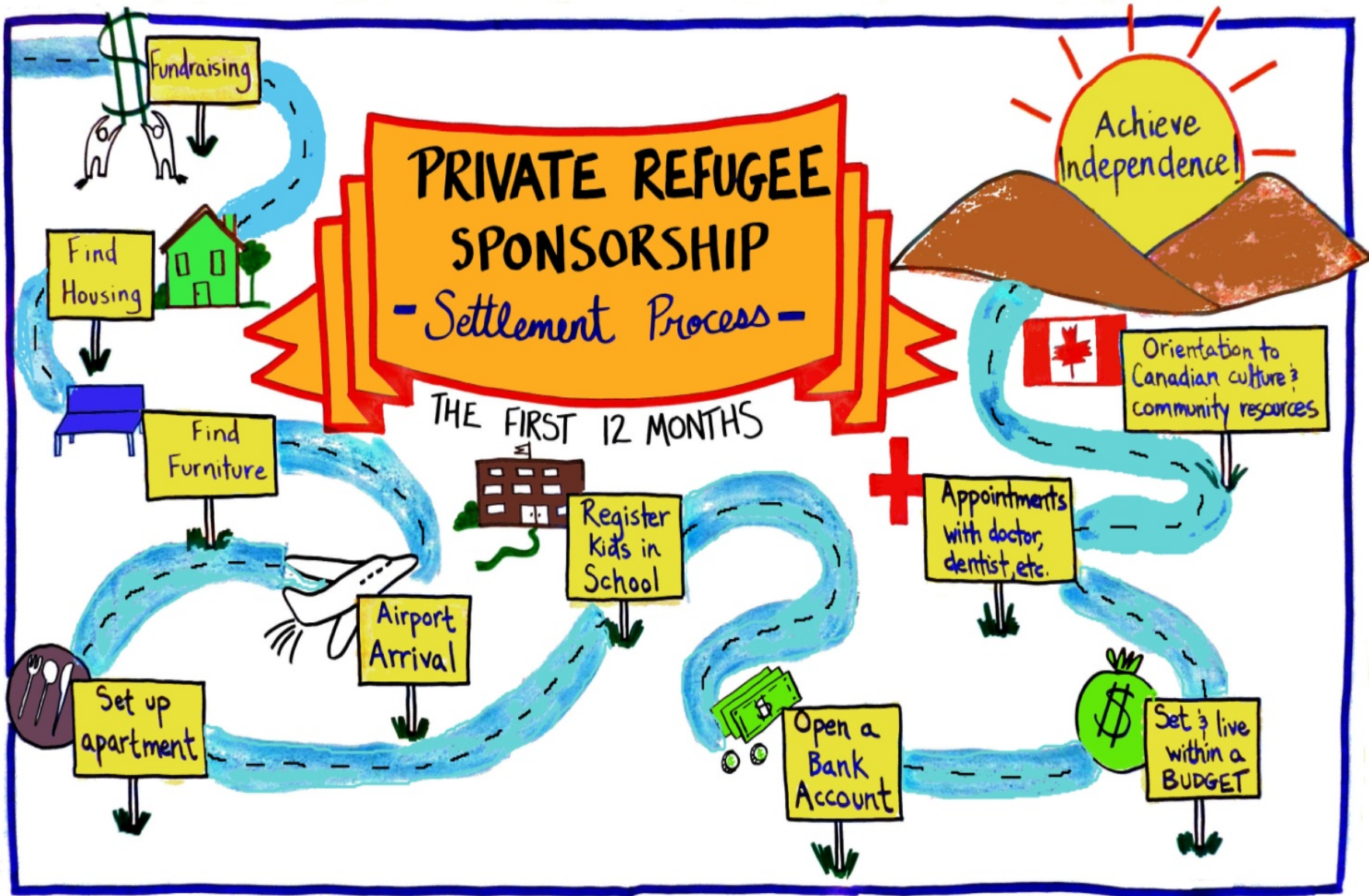
## Do:

- Continue to urge the government to immediately bring 10,000 Government Assisted refugees
- Talk to your friends and neighbours about this amazing opportunity to help people
- Join with others – sponsorship works best when there is a committed core group working together
- Support the resettlement of all refugees – Syrians, Iraqis, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Congolese, Sudanese, Somalis, etc.

## Don't:

- Start collecting furniture and clothing – you will be quickly overwhelmed. Wait until the application is submitted and you have an idea when the family will arrive
- Be discouraged if you can't do a full sponsorship, there are many ways to help





# Role of Groups

- financial support
- airport reception
- housing
- clothing
- food
- transportation
- day-to-day support
- orientation to neighbour and local services
- connecting the refugee(s) to essential programs (SIN, MSI, child tax benefits)



# Arrival in Halifax!







*Sponsoring Group Friends for Refugees greeting newly arrived family to Halifax*

# Other supports

Privately sponsored refugees are Permanent Residents when they arrive in Canada.

They can access free settlement services, such as:

- Settlement Orientation
- English Classes
- Employment Counselling

“It was a lot more work than I thought it would be, but looking back on the refugee sponsorship experience, I am happy that I did it. It is amazing to think that some effort on my part led one family to re-unite with their loved ones. I was able to be part of an effort that allowed one family to wake up each morning and not have to worry about their safety. It makes me feel a little better about myself.”

*Jen Powley,  
Co-chair of Friends for Refugees*



Questions?

**Thank You**