

Refugee
Sponsorship
Training
Program

Sponsoring Group Handbook

Groups of Five

This handbook focuses primarily on the concerns of individuals interested in sponsoring as a Group of Five.

Community Sponsors should consult the *RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook: Community Groups*.

Sponsorship Agreement Holders should consult the *RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook: Sponsorship Agreement Holders and their Constituent Groups*.

Groups sponsoring under the Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program should consult the *RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook: Joint Assistance Sponsorships*.

All handbooks are available electronically from the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Web site at:
www.cic.gc.ca.

This handbook has been produced by the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP).
The RSTP is a program of the Sponsorship Agreement Holder representatives to the
NGO-Government Committee on the Private Sponsorship of Refugees.

This handbook has been adapted from the RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook.
Original Handbook Writer: Loretta Rose, Coracle Consulting
Editorial Support: Refugee Sponsorship Training Program Steering Committee
Revisions: Barbara Treviranus, Wendolyn Schlamp, RSTP

Thank you to all who provided input and guidance in the development of this handbook.

This handbook is not a legal document.

Readers should note that Canada's immigration policies and procedures are regularly revised.
This handbook reflects the policies current at the time of publication.

This handbook has been produced and revised thanks to the financial assistance of
Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

March 2005

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND SPONSORSHIP IN CANADA 1

1.1	Who is a Refugee?	1
1.2	The World's Response to Refugees	1
1.3	Canada's Response to Refugees	2
1.4	What is Sponsorship?	2
1.4.1	Who Can Sponsor a Refugee?	2
1.4.2	Who Can be Sponsored?	3
1.4.3	Who May Not be Sponsored?	4
1.5	Types of Refugee Sponsorship	4

CHAPTER 2. THE SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS 7

2.1	Overview of the Process	8
2.1.1	Reasons for Sponsoring	8
2.1.2	Deciding Who to Sponsor	8
2.2	The Group Formation Process	9
2.2.1	Responsibilities of Sponsoring Groups	10
2.3	Preparing Your Group's Sponsorship Application	10
2.3.1	Completing the Financial Profile Forms IMM 5373B	10
2.3.2	Developing your Settlement Plan	12
2.3.3	Completing the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor	14
2.4	The Application and Screening Process	15
2.4.1	Submitting Your Group's Sponsorship Application	15
2.4.2	The Preparation of the Refugees' Files Overseas	17
2.4.3	The Screening Process	17
2.4.4	Expenses and Loans	19
2.4.5	Visa, Notification of Arrival, and Travel	19
2.4.6	CIC's Continuing Role	19
2.4.7	In Conclusion: Reaping the Benefits of Sponsorship	19

CHAPTER 3. SETTLEMENT PREPARATION IN DETAIL 21

3.1	Get Ready for the Refugees' Arrival: Required Preparations	21
3.1.1	Getting Started on the Checklist	22
3.1.2	Raise Funds	25
3.1.3	Gather Forms	26
3.1.4	Find Housing	27
3.2	Other Helpful Preparations	27
3.2.1	Flesh Out the Details of Your Settlement Plan	27
3.2.2	Develop Your Group's Support Skills	28
3.2.3	Develop Cultural Awareness	28
3.2.4	Learn About Rights and Responsibilities	28

3.3	Receiving the Newcomers	29
3.4	Orientation	30
3.4.1	Budgeting	31
3.4.2	Language Assessment	31
3.4.3	Employment Counseling	32
3.4.4	Immigration Loans Repayment	33
3.5	Confidentiality and Privacy	34
CHAPTER 4. ENABLING SETTLEMENT: THE FIRST YEAR AND BEYOND		35
4.1	Enabling Settlement: The First Year	35
4.1.1	Reviewing the Budget	35
4.1.2	Cultural Adjustment	36
4.1.3	Understand Family Issues	37
4.1.4	Non-Accompanying Family Members	38
4.1.5	Post-Traumatic Stress, Torture, and Healing	38
4.1.6	Support Newcomers to Get the Education They Need	39
4.1.7	Assist Newcomers to Find Employment	39
4.1.8	What if the Newcomers Want to Move?	39
4.2	After the First Year	39
4.2.1	Help Newcomers Work Towards Self-Sufficiency	40
4.2.2	Help Newcomers Link into a Social Network	40
4.2.3	Consider an Advocacy Role	40
CHAPTER 5. EVALUATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS		41
5.1	What is Evaluation? Why Evaluate?	41
5.2	How to Evaluate?	41
5.3	What to do With the Results	42
5.4	Celebrate!	42
APPENDIX		43
6.1	Interim Federal Health Program	43
6.2	Cross-Cultural Awareness	45
6.2.1	Cross-Cultural Resources and Activities	46
6.3	Group Listening and Communication Skills	47
6.4	Group Dynamics	48
6.5	CIC Coding for Resettlement Categories	49
6.6	Acronyms	50

CHAPTER 1. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND SPONSORSHIP IN CANADA

Who is a Refugee?

The World's Response to Refugees

Canada's Response to Refugees

What is Sponsorship?

Who Can Sponsor a Refugee?

Who Can be Sponsored?

Who May Not be Sponsored

Types of Sponsorship

1.1 Who is a Refugee?

No one is a refugee by choice. All kinds of people are refugees. Refugees are forced to flee out of fear for their lives and liberty. The United Nations defines a refugee 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 avail himself of the protection of that country.*”¹ This definition was established in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

But a refugee, first and foremost, is a person with rights and dignity. “A refugee has the right to safe asylum... International protection comprises more than physical safety. Refugees should receive at least the same rights and basic help as any other foreigner who is a legal resident, including certain fundamental entitlements of every individual.”²

1.2 The World's Response to Refugees

The international community helps refugees to find lasting, or *durable* solutions to refugee situations. The three durable solutions are:

- Repatriation
- Local integration into the asylum country
- Third country resettlement

The solution for most of the world's refugees is repatriation. This is possible when conditions have improved to allow them to return in safety and with dignity. The local settlement and integration of refugees into their country of first asylum is also a solution to the problems of refugees, particularly if voluntary repatriation is not likely. Finally, third country resettlement is a solution for a limited number of refugees internationally.

¹ United Nations, “1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees”, as quoted in *UNHCR, Protecting Refugees: Questions and Answers*, (Geneva: Public Information Section, 1996) 2.

² *Protecting Refugees: Questions and Answers* 4.

1.3 Canada's Response to Refugees

The 1976 *Immigration Act* was a milestone in Canada's response to refugees, establishing *refugees* as a class distinct from *immigrants*. The *Boat People* crisis of the late 70s and early 80s mobilized Canadians to respond. For the first time, ordinary people across the country became involved in assisting refugees to settle in Canada through private sponsorship, changing forever the way Canadians view their role. The 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* clarified the humanitarian goals of the program established to offer protection and a durable solution to refugees in need of resettlement. Through the **Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program**, over 180,000 refugees who would not have otherwise been able to come to Canada were resettled between 1979 and 2002.

Canada is one of the few countries in the world that annually offers resettlement places to thousands of government-sponsored refugees. But groups across Canada have become important partners, offering additional sponsorships above the government numbers. Private sponsorship does not rely on public resources, but rather taps the energy and funds of faith communities, ethnic groups, families and other benevolent associations. Private sponsors offer personalized local support that the government is not able to provide. Ultimately, private sponsorship has shown itself to be fulfilling for both refugees and the sponsors, as refugees gain an opportunity to establish themselves in a new land and sponsors gain a way to play a meaningful role in helping refugees become future Canadians.

1.4 What is Sponsorship?

Sponsorship is a commitment to working alongside refugees in order to ensure that they have the necessary support to integrate into life in Canada. Sponsoring groups commit to providing basic financial support (e.g., for lodging and food) and care for the sponsored refugee for up to 12 months, or until the sponsored refugee becomes self-sufficient, whichever comes first. In exceptional circumstances, the length of the sponsorship may be up to 36 months.

Sponsorship is a three-way partnership between sponsors, the Government of Canada, and the refugees themselves.

1.4.1 Who Can Sponsor a Refugee?

There are three ways that Canadians and permanent residents may sponsor refugees:

a) Groups of Five (G-5s)

Any group of five or more Canadian citizens or permanent residents, who are at least 18 years of age and who live in the community where the refugees are expected to settle, can sponsor refugees. In G-5 sponsorships the individuals act as guarantors that the necessary support will be provided for the full duration of the sponsorship. G-5s are usually *one time* groups formed in response to special situations that arise.

In order to qualify, all the members of the group must have fulfilled the obligations of any previous refugee or family class sponsorships. As well, the group must collectively prove that they have sufficient financial resources and the commitment and expertise to support the sponsored refugees and any accompanying family members for the sponsorship period.

b) Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) and their Constituent Groups (CGs)

Sponsorship Agreement Holders are established organizations that have signed the Sponsorship Agreement with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Currently there are over 90 SAHs across Canada, ranging from religious organizations to ethnocultural groups and other humanitarian organizations. Sponsorship Agreement Holders, or SAHs, assume overall responsibility and liability for the management of sponsorships under their agreement. Each SAH sets its own criteria for recognizing Constituent Groups that may sponsor refugees under its agreement.

c) Community Sponsorship

Any organization, association or corporation, which has financial capacity, is able to provide evidence of settlement support, and is based in the community where the refugees expect to live may sponsor refugees. It is **not** necessary that the group be incorporated under federal or provincial law.

Bars to Sponsorship: The following persons are **ineligible** to be a party to a sponsorship:

- persons convicted of serious criminal acts, if five years have not lapsed since the end of the sentence;
- persons in default of court-ordered support payments; and
- removable and incarcerated persons or persons subject to citizenship revocation proceedings.

This handbook focuses primarily on the concerns of a group preparing a Group of Five Sponsorship. **Community Sponsors and SAHs** should consult the *RSTP Sponsoring Group Handbook* specific to Community Sponsors or SAH/CGs. All handbooks are available from the CIC Web site at www.cic.gc.ca.

1.4.2 Who Can be Sponsored?

Convention Refugees Abroad and members of the Country of Asylum Class and Source Country Class are **eligible** to be sponsored. These classes and designations are defined as follows:

A **Convention Refugee** is any person who, by reason of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, and membership in a particular social group or political opinion:

- a) is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or
- b) not having a country of nationality, is outside the country of his or her former habitual residence and is unable or, by reason of that fear, unwilling to return to that country.

A **Convention Refugee Abroad** is any person who:

- a) is a Convention Refugee;
- b) is outside Canada;
- c) is seeking admission to Canada for the purpose of resettling in Canada; and
- d) in respect of whom there is no possibility, within a reasonable period of time, of a durable solution.

A member of the **Country of Asylum Class** is a person:

- a) who is outside of his or her country of citizenship or habitual residence;
- b) who has been and continues to be seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict or who has suffered massive violations of human rights;
- c) for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his or her situation within a reasonable period of time; and
- d) who will be privately sponsored or who has adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

A member of the **Source Country Class** is a person:

- a) who resides in his or her country of citizenship or habitual residence;
- b) who has been and continues to be seriously and personally affected by civil war or armed conflict;
- c) who has suffered serious deprivation of their right of freedom of expression, right of dissent or right to engage in trade union activity and who have been detained or imprisoned as a consequence;
- d) who fears persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion;
- e) for whom there is no possibility of finding an adequate solution to his or her situation within a reasonable period of time;
- f) who resides in a country that has been designated as a source country; and
- g) who will be assisted by the government, privately sponsored, or have adequate financial resources to support himself or herself and any dependants.

The Source Country Schedule is subject to revision. Consult your local CIC or the CIC Web site at www.cic.gc.ca for an update.

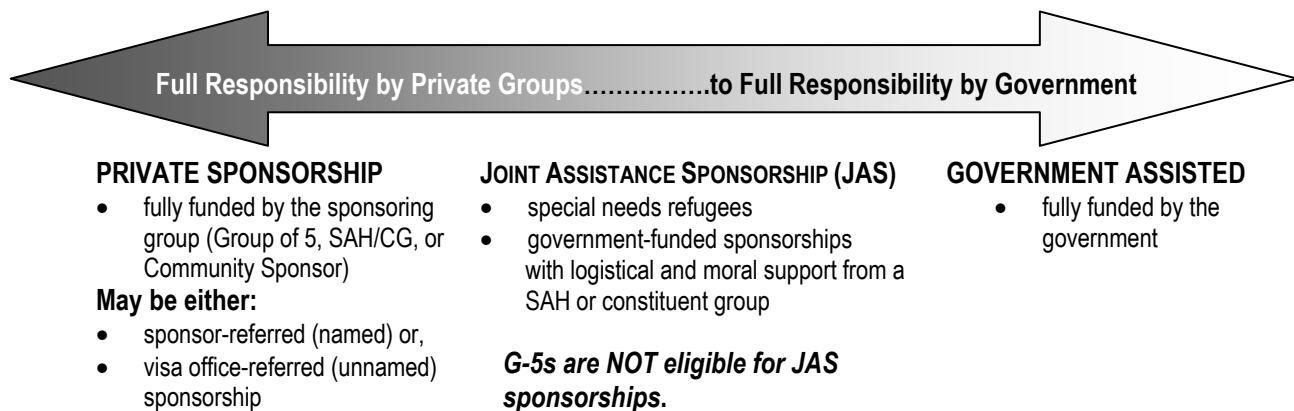
1.4.3 Who May Not be Sponsored?

The following people do **not** qualify for private sponsorship:

- People already in Canada. Such persons seeking Canada's protection as refugees should contact their local Citizenship and Immigration Centre for information on how to make a refugee claim.
- People who were the subject of a previous sponsorship application and were refused, unless
 - a) their circumstances have changed;
 - b) new information, which was not presented in the previous application has come to light; or
 - c) Canadian laws affecting the case have changed.
- People deemed to be Convention refugees by another country and allowed to live there permanently.
- People who fled persecution or civil war some time ago but who can now integrate into the country where they are residing or can return home safely.

1.5 Types of Refugee Sponsorship

Refugees selected overseas for resettlement to Canada may either be sponsored by the government or by a private sponsoring group. Special needs refugees may be jointly sponsored. These types of sponsorship can be described as a continuum, ranging from full responsibility by private groups on one end, to full responsibility by government on the other.



In **Private Sponsorship**, sponsoring groups are responsible for all material and financial support, and for providing emotional support and orientation during the sponsorship period (usually the refugees' first 12 months in Canada), or until the refugees becomes self-supporting.

Sponsoring groups may choose to identify the refugees they wish to sponsor (**sponsor-referred cases**), or may request a match with **visa office-referred cases**.

- In **sponsor-referred sponsorships**, a group sponsors specific refugees or refugee families in need of resettlement; people known through overseas contacts or through friends or relatives in Canada. The CIC process begins with the submission of the sponsorship Undertaking.
- By offering **visa office-referred sponsorships** the group provides sponsorship for individuals or family members already identified as in need of protection. Sponsoring groups can specify certain criteria (e.g., we can support a family of four). The Matching Centre matches your group's offer of a sponsorship to a refugee family in need. Because the overseas processing is almost complete, the refugees usually arrive in Canada very quickly. (See Section 2.1.2 for more information)

Under the **Joint Assistance Sponsorship Program (JAS)**, sponsors and the government work together. Specifically, for the first 24 months, the government provides financial assistance, while sponsoring groups provide community and emotional support and orientation, and ensure access to appropriate resettlement services.

- Only Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) having a formal agreement with CIC and their Constituent Groups may participate in the JAS program; Community Sponsors and Groups of 5 are not eligible.³
- This category has been set up specifically to allow the sponsorship of refugees whose needs, because of their special circumstances, may surpass the sponsoring group's resources.
- This category could include such persons as refugees with physical handicaps or especially large or single parent families.
- The refugees receive financial assistance through the federal government's Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) and initial orientation assistance from a settlement agency contracted to provide support to all government-assisted refugees.

The **Women at Risk (AWR)** program was set up to ensure that refugee women applicants are not unfairly disadvantaged when it comes to resettlement opportunities. Many of the women selected under AWR will be disadvantaged in terms of their ability to settle in Canada. In their traditional cultures these women may have been denied education and employment opportunities, as single parents, they may require additional assistance to successfully resettle, or they may have faced trauma and violence that has left them emotionally vulnerable and in need of extra assistance. Women at Risk may come as government-assisted, as privately sponsored, or under a Joint Assistance Sponsorship.

PLEASE NOTE: Family Class Sponsorships are dealt with quite differently than the refugee sponsorships mentioned to this point. Persons who are the close relatives (spouse, dependent children, parents, grandparents, orphaned minor brothers and sisters) of someone already in Canada should usually be sponsored by that family member. Family Class Sponsorships are processed faster, do not require that the persons meet the refugee eligibility definitions, do not require that the persons be able to establish themselves, and the persons have appeal rights. However, Family Class Sponsorships cannot be used for extended families, and sometimes the family members already within Canada cannot meet the financial criteria for a Family Class Sponsorship. In these cases, a Family Class Sponsorship is not possible. **As long as the person overseas qualifies as a refugee**, a private sponsorship may be submitted.

³ Note: a one-time special arrangement was made in the case of Kosovar refugees, which allowed G-5s to support these refugees under the JAS program.

One Group of Five

Abebe is the co-owner and waiter at a trendy café in Vancouver. Ten years ago, he arrived in Canada as a government-sponsored refugee from Ethiopia.

Abebe has been very worried about his brother Abera, who fled from Ethiopia because of his political activities in the student movement in the early 1990's. Abera, who cannot return to Ethiopia, crossed the border into Kenya on foot and has spent years in refugee camps in Kenya..

Moved by his concern for his brother's safety, Abebe's co-workers agreed to see if they could help him file a sponsorship. Over the years of working together, the café's staff members have formed a strong friendship and though none of them have been to Ethiopia or experienced refugee flight, they appreciate Abebe's desire to offer his brother protection. Initially worried that they didn't have a *wealthy* member in their group, they soon discovered that together they could manage to support Abera during his first year in Canada. Each member completed their financial profile, and together they worked on the settlement plan. The group submitted their application to their local CIC office, and after a few follow-up questions, the application was approved.

The settlement plan was carefully thought through. Abebe has room for his brother in his apartment and since Abera has previous experience in catering, there is part-time work available at the café. Working part-time will allow Abera the time to take English classes. The co-workers canvassed their family and friends for linens and extra furniture for the apartment. Two of them also budgeted to contribute money for start-up costs, including clothes. Even though Vancouver is balmy by Canadian standards, its climate is very different from equatorial Kenya. Abera will need winter clothes including a warm jacket and boots.

Of course, Abera will also need a monthly allowance to give him some independence. The co-workers pool a percentage of their tip money to provide Abera with an allowance to cover food, transportation to classes and his job as well as a few incidentals. The group members realize that they must also be prepared to cover the costs of a separate apartment, if Abebe and Abera are not able to live together.

One of the group members has volunteered to give Abera extra English tutorials- with a particular focus on restaurant and catering terms. Finally, between them the co-workers have a broad network of connections to help Abera find permanent work and a whole circle of new friends.

CHAPTER 2. THE SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Forming Your Sponsoring Group

- ▼ **FORM A GROUP OF FIVE:**
- ▼ Assess financial resources available, begin to raise funds

Submitting Your Group's Sponsorship Application

- ▼ **COMPLETE** Sponsor Assessment for each group member
- ▼ **COMPLETE** Financial Profile for each group member
- ▼ **RESEARCH and WRITE** your Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment
- ▼ **COMPLETE** Undertaking
- ▼ **CHOOSE IMM 6000** distribution option- (*send IMM 6000 to refugee if Option 3 is chosen*)
- ▼ **SUBMIT to CIC:** Completed Undertaking and supporting documents (*under Option 3 include completed and signed IMM 6000 forms received back from refugees*)
- ▼ **RECEIVE** signed Undertaking from CIC, with file number and CIC contact info (*Option 2- Send IMM 6000 to applicant with copy of signed Undertaking*)

The Preparation of the Refugees' File Overseas

- ▼ **CIC FORWARDS** Undertaking to Visa Office overseas
- ▼ **Visa Office SENDS IMM 6000** to refugees (*Option 1*)
- ▼ *Option 1 and 2: Refugee COMPLETES* and **RETURNS IMM 6000** to Visa Office
- ▼ **Visa Office OPENS FILE**, assigns refugee applicants a **VISA POST NUMBER**

The Screening Process

- ▼ Refugees are **WAIT-LISTED** for interview
- ▼ **Screening or INTERVIEW...** if accepted sponsoring group notified and...
- ▼ **MEDICAL EXAM...** if cleared...
- ▼ **SECURITY AND CRIMINALITY CHECK ...** if cleared...

Expenses and Loans

- ▼ Refugees **SIGN** immigrant loan forms

Visa, Notice of Arrival, Travel and Landing

- ▼ **GRANTED VISA**
- ▼ **IOM** arranges travel
- ▼ **NOTICE OF ARRIVAL** sent to sponsoring group
- ▼ Refugees **BOARD plane to CANADA**
- ▼ Refugees are given *permanent residence* on arrival

Arrival

- ▼ **Sponsors greet NEWCOMERS!**

2.1 Overview of the Process

This chapter is an outline of the overall group formation and application process in chronological order. Please read it carefully, as it contains a host of details on the procedural issues your sponsoring group will face, including:

- **Forming your sponsoring group**
- **Preparing and submitting your group's sponsorship application**
- **The preparation of the refugees' file overseas**
- **The screening process**
- **Expenses and loans**
- **Visas, notification of arrival, travel and landing, and CIC's continuing role**

Refer to the flow chart at the beginning of this chapter to see how all these activities fit into the entire application process.

2.1.1 Reasons for Sponsoring

Private sponsors make a humanitarian commitment of their personal time, energy, and often their money to assist an individual or family in need of resettlement. Volunteering to assist refugees is a response of the heart and the spirit to the injustice in the world. Individuals may decide to form a sponsoring group for many reasons, such as:

- They know about international refugees' protection and resettlement needs.
- They know of someone in need of sponsorship.
- Sponsorship is an expression of their faith.
- The group receives a request from their community, local CIC, or other source.

To initiate this process:

- 1) Obtain the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) *Refugee Sponsorship Kit: Group of Five IMM 5414* from:
 - CIC Web site at www.cic.gc.ca
 - CIC Call Centre, Tel: 1-888-242-2100
- 2). Download the ***Guide to the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program*** from the Web site www.cic.gc.ca , or order a copy by faxing CIC's Communications Branch at (613) 954-2221.

2.1.2 Deciding Who to Sponsor

Groups of Five often begin with one or two members who are concerned about particular refugees or refugees' families, and recruit other members to join them. In this case, start by first assessing whether the refugees you are interested in sponsoring are likely to meet the eligibility criteria as described in Chapter 1. A refugee sponsorship should only be submitted for someone who is likely to be found eligible.

Other groups may wish to become involved in sponsorship but lack a particular refugee case to sponsor. In such instances, your group can choose to sponsor a refugee identified by a Canadian visa office as someone in need of sponsorship (visa-office-referred). To start, obtain the application kit entitled ***Request for a Refugee Profile (IMM 5496)*** from the CIC Web site or Call Centre, and complete the form contained within (IMM 5438) prior to submitting an Undertaking/Application to Sponsor. Following your group's submission of this form, you can expect to receive a profile on a refugee case that may be suited to your community. You will need to decide whether the match is suitable for your group.

2.2 The Group Formation Process

The process begins with forming a group. While each sponsoring group has the same basic obligations towards the refugees they sponsor, the composition of sponsoring groups can vary widely. Once you have determined that the refugees are likely to be found eligible, you need to proceed with finding additional members who can help you to meet the needs and financial costs of the sponsorship.

A Group of Five Sponsorship can involve more than five members, but must have at least five members willing to sign the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor. When considering whom to include in your *Group of Five*, remember that members may have different strengths and contributions, and they all do not need to contribute equally of their money or their time. It is recommended that at least three of the members be financial contributors to the sponsorship.

HOW DOES A GROUP OF FIVE QUALIFY TO SPONSOR?

In order to qualify to sponsor, EACH individual member of the Group of Five MUST:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident;
- Be at least 18 years of age or older;
- Reside in the community where the refugees will settle; and
- Have fulfilled the obligations of any previous refugee or family class sponsorships.

You need to consider what the likely costs of the sponsorship will be, and be upfront about the commitments required when approaching other potential group members. Consider whom you need as part of your group. How much money can you contribute and how much still needs to be contributed by others? Do you know others in your community that have been involved in previous sponsorships or other refugee related work who may be able to help with the processing, provide donations, or assist in the settlement of the newcomers? Do you have work colleagues who might get involved? As you consider the requirements of the sponsorship, you will begin to find others who will be able to join you in the partnership of sponsoring.

Sponsor Assessment Form

When forming your group you should also be aware that some people are not eligible to participate in a sponsorship. This includes those who have been convicted of serious criminal acts and those who are in default of court-ordered payments. Each person who signs the sponsorship Undertaking must also sign a Sponsor Assessment Form which details the circumstances that exclude an individual from participating.

It is important to be aware that privately sponsored refugees can be quite vulnerable, and that your group will have considerable power over the lives of the refugees after their arrival. Your group should be aware of the potential for the abuse of this power. Your group representative signs a declaration that states: *“to the best of my ability, I will not knowingly or deliberately allow any individual to participate in the group's settlement activities who may be considered a threat to the safety and security of the refugee(s).”*

Making the Decision to be a Member of a Group of Five

Group members must be well informed and committed. Each member should carefully read this handbook and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada application kit guide in order to understand the program and what your group needs to do to provide the necessary finances, emotional support and time.

2.2.1 Responsibilities of Sponsoring Groups

Remember that your group members will need to work together intensively for up to three years (taking into account the application, processing and sponsorship period). The group must prove that they have sufficient financial resources and the expertise and commitment to support the sponsored refugees for 12 months from the date of arrival in Canada. In exceptional circumstances, and with the option of withdrawing the sponsorship, the group may be asked to commit to a sponsorship period of up to 36 months .

During the Sponsorship Period the SPONSORING GROUP promises to provide:

Reception

- Meet the refugees upon arrival in the community, provide an orientation to life in Canada

Lodging

- Provide suitable accommodation, basic furniture, and other household essentials

Care

- Provide food, clothing, local transportation costs and other basic necessities of life

Settlement Assistance and Support

Help the refugees:

- Complete required forms including health insurance, social insurance, and child tax benefits
- Learn English or French (e.g., help them with getting into an ESL or FSL class)
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of permanent residents
- Find employment
- Get access to resources including community support groups, settlement services, etc.
- Register children in school and guide them in dealings with the school system
- Locate a family physician and dentist
- Become independent.

Sponsors provide ongoing friendship and emotional support.

However, SPONSORING GROUPS are NOT responsible for:

- Repaying any immigrant (transportation, admissibility or assistance) loans.

2.3 Preparing Your Group's Sponsorship Application

Once you have made the decision to proceed with a sponsorship, your Group of Five should begin by having each member of the group who intends to use their income as a means of supporting the refugees complete a **Financial Profile (IMM 5373B)**. It is recommended that at least three of the members contribute financially. It is important to begin with this form and then come together as a group and seriously evaluate the financial commitment your group is able to make. If there are not enough funds generated from your members, you will need to look at what sources are available for additional funds. You may need to begin to raise that money or consider adding other members to your group.

2.3.1 Completing the Financial Profile Forms IMM 5373B

Only those members who ARE contributing financially from their income need to complete the Financial Profile form (IMM 5373B). Each of these members must provide details on their employment, a summary of their total annual income, and the amount available to contribute to the sponsorship. CIC also requires proof of income such as a copy of your most recent T4, the Canadian Revenue Agency's response to your most recent income tax return, or documents from an employer. *NOTE:* This handbook is intended as a supplement to the CIC application. There is detailed information about completing these forms contained in the **Refugee Sponsorship Application G5 (IMM 5414)**. Please read the complete kit for further details.

Each box of the form must be completed. Each contributing member must supply the following figures:

Box A: This amount represents the sponsor's total annual income for the past 12 months from the following sources: employment, business, self-employment, rental, investment and interest, social benefits and pension income.

Box B: This amount represents the amount the sponsor is committed to contributing to the sponsorship, and will be added to the contributions of the other group members. Sponsors should take care when appraising their own family's living expenses, so that the amount available for the sponsorship is a realistic figure.

Notes on Assessing a Member's Ability to Contribute Financially

The information provided by each group member in their Financial Profile is used by CIC to determine the financial feasibility of your group's application. The Sponsorship Cost Table on Page 3 of the Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment (IMM 5373A) is used by CIC to calculate the costs of supporting a refugee family, and is also used as a guideline to assess each group member's ability to contribute to the sponsorship, based on the amounts claimed in Boxes A and B.

For example: Jane Doe earns \$20,000/year and supports 2 children. Jane would enter 3 (including herself), in Section C, Box 4, of her financial profile. Jane enters \$20,000 as her Total Income (Section G, Box A), and indicates in Box B of Section G that she will commit to providing \$6000 (Funds Committed to Sponsorship).

If this financial profile were assessed according to the Sponsorship Cost Table (P. 3 of IMM 5373A), Jane's submission might be rejected. The Table shows that for 12 months of income support, a family of three needs at least \$14,750, but Jane's intention to commit \$6000 of her annual \$20,000 would leave her with only \$14,000 to support her own family for that 12-month period. In order to show that she will have sufficient funds to support herself and her children, she will need to include other income sources (rental income, child support, self-employment earnings, etc). Or, she may wish to reduce the amount of her Funds Committed to Sponsorship.

Sample Case: The Northern Heights G5 Sponsoring Group

A and **B** are a couple. They met a young man, **C**, in their community who was desperately looking for a way to get his sister and her two young children out of an insecure refugee camp and to safety in Canada. **A, B, and C** decided to work together to submit a Group of Five Sponsorship. Using the Sponsorship Cost Table, they considered the financial needs of the refugees and what resources they would need to gather. They needed to find two more people to make up a Group of Five. **A and B** asked a friend, **D**, from their local community centre and **C** asked a work colleague, **E**, who had been involved in a sponsorship a few years earlier. All five agreed to participate and each one prepared a *Financial Profile* (IMM 5373B). Then they compiled the information to assess their resources:

Member	Family Composition	Annual Income	Funds Committed to Sponsorship	Other Contributions	In-Kind Donation Deductions
A	Married to B, no children	\$30,000	\$2,500	Health issues, collect furniture	-\$1,350 (furniture)
B	Married to A, no children	\$28,000	\$2,500	Collect clothing and household effects	-\$800 (clothing) -\$375 (household)
C	Married, student wife, no children	\$32,000	\$0	Housing, orientation, interpreting, friendship	-\$6650 (accommodation)
D	Married, 2 children	\$50,000	\$3,000	School registration, arranging childcare.	
E	Single	\$45,000	\$3,500	Provide office work	
TOTALS			\$11,500		- \$9,175

When they transferred this information from the individual *Financial Profiles (IMM 5373B)* to Section D: Financial Assessment of the *Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment (IMM 5373A)*, it was clear that the Northern Heights Group had met the minimum income required to submit a sponsorship for the mother and her two children. However they had only \$1,375 surplus, and might wish to raise extra funds for emergencies.

<u>Financial Commitment</u>		<u>Financial Requirement</u>	
Other sources of funds	+ \$ 0	Total Cost of Sponsorship:	\$ 19,300
Member 1 Financial Commitment	+ \$ 2,500	Total In-Kind Deduction:	-\$ 9,175
Member 2 Financial Commitment	+ \$ 2,500		
Member 3 Financial Commitment	+ \$ 0		
Member 4 Financial Commitment	+ \$ 3,000		
Member 5 Financial Commitment	+ \$ 3,500		
Total Financial Commitment:	= \$ 11,500	Final Cost of Sponsorship:	= \$ 10,125
Surplus set aside for unexpected costs:	<u>\$1,375</u>		

2.3.2 Developing your Settlement Plan

A copy of the **Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment (IMM 5373A)** is included with the *Refugee Sponsorship Application Kit: Group of Five (IMM 5414)* and must be submitted to CIC with your Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM 5373). The plan, along with the Financial Profiles of the individual members of the group (IMM 5373B), provides CIC with the necessary information to make a decision about the group's ability to carry out the sponsorship. Each member's contribution to the sponsorship must be detailed in the Settlement Plan.

A Settlement Plan is simply a plan detailing what you will do to orient and support the newcomers during the sponsorship. It will provide your group with a framework for working through the many details of who will do what, when, and how, with what resources—and where those resources will come from. It is understood that this initial Settlement Plan will need to be revised during the settlement period, and Chapter 3 of this handbook gives more detailed guidance on settlement preparations.

You will need to set up a budget, such as the one that follows, for the person(s) you are sponsoring, taking into consideration any special needs:⁴ The sponsorship cost table included in the application kit gives you an indication of the social assistance rates that your group can use as a guide for support levels. Remember, however, that your local cost of living may be higher.

Be sure to include the initial, one-time start-up costs in the total budget. In calculating your overall budget, factor in any in-kind donations your group has received. These will reduce the amount of money your group has to raise. However, please remember that every newcomer needs some new items as well; not everything should be second-hand (e.g., new linens, socks, underwear, etc!).

A contingency plan is also an important element to include in your Settlement Plan. For example, in the Group Formation Sample Case found in Section 2.3.1, the refugees were able to live with the mother's brother when they arrived in Canada. But the sponsoring group should have also considered what the back-

⁴ Betty Miller, "Refugee Sponsorship for Dummies," unpublished handbook, Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, 1998, 13.

up plan would be if they had *not* been able to live with her brother. They might consider holding a community fundraiser to raise extra funds.

Factor in the fact that low-income newcomers with children qualify for the Child Tax Benefit. Don't forget the extras associated with raising children! For example, if there are school age children, your group might contact the school and ask the cost of monthly extras such as field trips, pizza lunches, gym uniforms and shoes, swim suits, etc.

SAMPLE MONTHLY BUDGET AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER		
Item:	Cost:	Questions to Consider
Rent	\$/mo	Is rent at a level the newcomers will be able to afford after sponsorship ends? Budget for reasonable rent costs during the year, unless the newcomers are very close family members that will live permanently with relatives already in Canada.
Utilities	\$/mo	Include electricity, heat, and water.
Food	\$/mo	Take into account the newcomers' need to have some national foods in their diet. Help newcomers to comparison shop and buy in bulk.
Transport	\$/mo	Look into bus or metro passes.
Clothes	\$/mo	Show newcomers how to make use of second-hand and bargain stores.
Phone/Post	\$/mo	Decide whether to fund long distance calls and, if so, to what extent. Investigate phone cards. Newcomers will need to communicate with family and friends back home.
Supplies	\$/mo	Take into account laundry and cleaning supplies, as well as toiletries.
Furniture	\$/mo	Use donations and second-hand stores. Furniture should be the newcomers to keep.
Health	\$/mo	Plan for costs not covered by medical insurance, any special costs.
Discretion	\$/mo	Pocket money; recreation.
Education	\$/mo	School trips, books, and day care to allow parents to study English and to look for jobs.
Reserve	\$/mo	Allow a minimum extra of 5% for unanticipated expenses.

In addition to budgetary concerns, you'll need to plan around a number of other activities, including:

Sample Preparation Checklist: Have you planned for the following?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ lodging upon arrival ✓ locating/securing housing ✓ home furnishings ✓ meeting the refugees on arrival ✓ locating an interpreter ✓ selecting a family doctor ✓ a medical emergency ✓ health registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ initial provision of food ✓ provision of clothing ✓ application for family allowance and child tax benefits (if applicable) ✓ application for SIN ✓ enrolment of children in school ✓ child care arrangements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ language training ✓ assistance in finding employment ✓ transport to appointments /interviews ✓ familiarization with public transit ✓ banking systems, etc. |
|--|--|--|

2.3.3 Completing the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor

You must complete the Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM 5373) included in the **Refugee Sponsorship Kit: Group of 5 (IMM 5414)** as this form provides CIC with the details on your group, and on the refugees you have chosen to sponsor.

If you are sponsoring a visa office-referred case, your local CIC will provide you with the details about the refugees that are required to complete the application. If you are submitting an application for a sponsor-referred case, your group must be very careful to ensure that you have available all the required details on the refugee or refugee family.

One of the most important details is ensuring that your group has complete information on all the family members and other dependants, and that this information is included on the sponsorship Undertaking. The individual with the strongest refugee claim should be listed as the principal applicant, and the sponsorship must include the refugee's spouse and all dependant children. Take care to ensure that the spellings of the names and the dates of birth are consistent with the refugee family's documents. Inconsistencies can cause delays.

It is important to list all family members even if their whereabouts are unknown, or if they are presumed dead. The *One Year Window of Opportunity* provides a mechanism to reunite spouses and dependent children who are missing or unable to be processed together with the principal applicant, as long as they are listed on the IMM 0008. Your group's settlement planning should take into account the settlement needs of these *non-accompanying family members* as your group would be expected to sponsor them as well, if they are located and submit an IMM 0008 within one year of the arrival of the principal applicant.

Your group's sponsorship should also include dependants who do not meet the immigration definition of *family member* but who are financially and/or emotionally dependent on the family. These *de facto* dependants may include orphaned children who have not been formally adopted, or elderly family members who are part of the same household. Your group will need to complete a separate Undertaking for each *de facto* family member.

In order to prevent delays, it is particularly important to be sure that the mailing address for a sponsor-referred refugee is reliable.

At the time of preparing your Undertaking, your group must also choose how the **Application for Permanent Residence in Canada: Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad** (IMM 6000) will be sent to the refugees. This application (which includes the IMM 0008 application, Schedules 1 and 2, the Authorization to Release Information and instructions for completing the forms) must be completed by the refugee and may be obtained from www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/conref.html or by contacting the CIC Call Centre. There are three options for the distribution of the IMM 6000:

Option 1: Visa office sends IMM 6000 to refugee applicant

This has for many years been the standard process, but sponsors should be aware that this process often takes many months. The local CIC sends the approved Undertaking to the visa office, and the visa office

mails the IMM 6000 to the refugee applicant. The applicant completes all the forms and returns the completed application to the visa office.

Option 2: Sponsoring group sends IMM 6000 to refugee applicant

Under Option 2 the sponsoring group sends the refugee applicant a copy of the approved sponsorship Undertaking and the IMM 6000. The refugee completes all the required forms and sends them back to the visa office WITH the copy of the approved sponsorship Undertaking and all other required documents.

Option 3: Local CIC submits completed IMM 0008 and approved Undertaking to visa office

Under Option 3 the sponsoring group sends the IMM 6000 to the refugee applicant. The refugee completes the forms and sends them back to the sponsoring group with all the required attachments and photos. The sponsoring group submits the refugee's application to the local CIC along with their sponsorship Undertaking. The local CIC then forwards the entire application and approved Undertaking to the visa office.

2.4 The Application and Screening Process

2.4.1 Submitting Your Group's Sponsorship Application

The complete application for Groups of 5 includes:

- A completed and signed Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (IMM 5373);
- A Sponsor Assessment (IMM 5492) completed for each group member with attached documentation providing proof of citizenship/permanent residence;
- A Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment (IMM 5373A);
- Financial Profile forms for each group member who will contribute financially (IMM 5373B), with attached documentation providing proof of income;
- Proof of funds (if applicable); and
- Completed Document Checklist (IMM 5437).

Groups wishing to choose Option 3 of the IMM 0008 distribution options should also include:

- Completed IMM 0008, Schedule 1, Schedule 2 and all required attachments (see Section 2.3.3 for details).

Consider the following details when preparing your application package:

- Each member must contribute to the sponsorship, but they do not all need to contribute financially. A group member may be included primarily to provide their time and settlement assistance. It is recommended that at least three members commit to sharing the financial expenses.
- Be sure to explain the in-kind donations, especially an offer of free accommodation.
- Other sources of funding such as corporate donations and money from fundraising activities must be placed in an account with a Canadian financial institution. A statement of account must be submitted.
- Be careful to list the name and date of birth of the principal applicant on each form or document.
- Make sure that each contributing group member has signed his or her Financial Profile, and that all group members have completed and signed a Sponsor Assessment form.

Send your completed Undertaking/Application to Sponsor, together with your Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment, Financial Profiles, all Sponsor Assessment Forms, Document Checklist and all supporting documents to your local Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) office.

On receipt of your Undertaking/Application to Sponsor, the local CIC has the responsibility of assessing your application and deciding whether to accept or refuse the sponsorship. In certain cases they may send a letter explaining the reasons for their decision, and where appropriate, ask for additional information in order to make their decision. Be sure to provide as much information as possible in the initial application package to avoid any delays.

In reviewing your application the local CIC will verify the following:

- Whether any group members are involved in the sponsoring of other refugees or family class cases (that are either in process overseas or have now arrived in Canada). If they are, does the member have independent resources available to meet their obligations under each of the sponsorships?
- That each group member has fulfilled the obligations of any previous refugee or family class sponsorships. If a sponsored person sought and obtained provincial or municipal social assistance the sponsor is considered to be in *default*. A sponsorship Undertaking will be refused if any party of the sponsoring group has defaulted on a previous sponsorship obligation, and has not repaid the full debt to the satisfaction of the provincial or municipal authorities.

CIC will also review your Settlement Plan based on the following guidelines:

- Does the group have the necessary funds available to meet the sponsorship obligations?
- Do you have a reasonable budget?
- Is there a back-up plan in case circumstances change?
- Do your group members understand that they are liable if one of the members cannot meet their financial obligations?
- Does your group have a clear plan of how to orient and support the newcomers throughout the year? Are there plans to use the settlement services provided by settlement agencies?
- Does the applicant intend to live in the same community as the sponsoring group?
- Are there enough individuals who are willing to provide support? Does the time they plan on providing to the settlement of the refugees seem reasonable? Do they have enough time to commit to the applicant?
- Does the settlement plan include arrangements for: housing, interpreters, settlement services, transportation, health care, education, schooling, dealing with crisis or trauma, other?
- Do the in-kind donations seem reasonable? Does the group explain the in-kind donations? For example, what type of apartment the refugees will be provided with?
- How is responsibility shared among all members of the group?

Your local CIC will review your application and when everything is in order will send your group's contact person a signed copy of the IMM 5373 with a file number to indicate that your application is now *in process*. Note that this first file number is from the local CIC in Canada and is not related to the Visa Post Number (beginning with the letter B) that will be assigned overseas. The responsibility for communicating with your local CIC lies with you.

PLEASE NOTE: The overseas process for sponsor-referred refugees starts when you submit your sponsorship application. Visa-office-referred refugees will already have been interviewed overseas, and may be ready to travel very soon after the match to your sponsoring group has been made.

2.4.2 The Preparation of the Refugees' Files Overseas

From the sponsoring group's point of view, the submission of the application to CIC is the beginning of a long period of *waiting*. Overseas, however, sponsor-referred cases follow a number of steps:

- CIC forwards the Undertaking to the relevant visa office overseas.
- The visa office opens a file and assigns a **Visa Post Number** to it (this number begins with B).
- In visa office-referred cases, refugees have already completed their own application. In a sponsor-referred sponsorship, the next step is ensuring that the refugees' individual **Application for Permanent Residence in Canada: Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad** (IMM 6000 including the IMM 0008 forms) are:
 - a) already completed by the refugees and submitted with the Undertaking (*Option 3*), or
 - b) sent to the refugees at this point (*Option 1-by Visa Post; Option 2-by Sponsoring Group*).

The submission of the IMM 0008 and its Schedule 1 and 2 really begins the overseas processing. The forms must be completed fully and accurately, and returned to the visa office quickly.

Sponsored refugees should be advised to:

- Check off the *access to information* box authorizing release of information to the sponsor on Schedule 2, and complete the Use of a Representative (IMM 5476).
 - List ALL family members, even those not coming to Canada, missing, or presumed dead.
 - List a safe mailing address (advise both the visa office and their sponsor of any address changes).
 - Ensure that all required copies of documents are attached.
- Upon satisfactory completion and return of the IMM 0008 forms with all required photos and documents, the sponsor-referred refugee (family) is wait-listed to be called to an interview with a visa officer (the visa office-referred applicant has already been interviewed). The wait for an interview can be up to two years.

Helping Sponsored Refugees Understand the Process

To help advise the refugees you have sponsored, send them a copy of RSTP's **Information for Privately Sponsored Refugees**. This document gives refugees an overview of the immigration process and what they need to do, as well as information on both their responsibilities and their sponsor's responsibilities after arrival in Canada. It has been translated into a number of the languages spoken by refugee groups currently resettling to Canada. Contact your local CIC for copies. English and French language versions of this document are available on the CIC Web site at www.cic.gc.ca.

Find out more about the selection criteria and the overseas process

Ask your local CIC office to lend you a copy of the RSTP video: **Who Can Be Sponsored?: Private Sponsorship of Refugees to Canada**. Featured in the video are on-camera interviews with recently arrived refugees, a visa officer, and experienced sponsors. This 20-minute video has an accompanying study guide.

2.4.3 The Screening Process

Visa officers use Canada's specific **eligibility** and **admissibility** criteria to screen applicants. You may wish to refer back to the definitions provided in Section 1.4.2.

To be **eligible**, a person must be either a member of the Convention Refugees Abroad Class or a member of the Country of Asylum or Source Country Class. To evaluate **eligibility**, the officer will be considering:

- Does the applicant meet the definition of a Convention Refugee Abroad, or a member of the Country of Asylum or Source Country Class?
- Is repatriation possible?
- Has the applicant already integrated in the asylum country?
- Is resettlement to Canada the preferred durable solution?

A person must also demonstrate the ability to successfully settle and become independent in Canada. To be **admissible**, the family must pass the medical, security and criminality checks.

To assess the applicant's **ability to successfully establish** in Canada, the officer will be trying to weigh contributing factors such as:

- What are the education, work experience, and skills of the applicant?
- What is the applicant's age? How adaptable, motivated, and resourceful is the applicant?
- How many dependants accompany the applicant, and what are their ages and skills?
- Does the applicant have any funds with which to support themselves?
- What support (sponsors, family members) does the family have in the community of resettlement?

However, visa officers are directed to balance the refugees' protection needs very carefully against the assessment of their ability to become independent, and to ensure that families are kept together. The greater the need for protection, the less emphasis placed on the ability of refugees to establish. Refugees identified as vulnerable or in urgent need of protection are exempt from demonstrating the ability to establish themselves.

Note: Visa officers can request an extended sponsorship (up to three years) in exceptional cases. Contact your local CIC if your group is asked to sign a private sponsorship for longer than one year.

After the interview, refugees will be provisionally accepted or refused. Refugees should receive notification from the visa post of the outcome of the selection interview, and in approved cases, an estimated processing time to visa issuance. However, communications can be a serious challenge. It is important for you to stay in direct contact with the refugees you have sponsored and to forward to your local CIC any important information about address changes or changes to the family composition.

If accepted at interview:

Refugees and all dependants must complete a **medical exam** to determine whether they have a medical condition that presents a danger to Canadian public health or safety. The applicant will receive instructions regarding the medical exam—where to go, when, and the cost. In most places, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or Red Cross will pre-pay the medical exam, and be repaid by the refugee if their application for refugee status is successful. If they cannot afford to pay for the exam, its cost is added to their loan (see following). The sponsor is not responsible for these costs; if approached to pay, contact your local CIC office.

- Under the 2002 *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* refugees will **not** be found inadmissible on the basis that their health condition is expected to cause an excessive demand on Canada's health or social services. Your group should be informed of any significant medical issues that will impact the settlement of the refugee family. **Note:** The pre-departure medical exam is very limited, and check-ups should be scheduled for all newcomers soon after arrival in Canada.
- Applicants with a condition considered a danger to public health or safety **are** inadmissible to Canada. (If the condition is treatable, such as tuberculosis, the applicant may be scheduled for a follow-up medical, after treatment.)
- If any one member of the family is found to be inadmissible, the entire family is inadmissible.

Refugees and all their dependants, including dependants 18 years and over who are not coming to Canada with the principal applicant will also be subject to a **security check** and **criminality check** to verify information in the application and to ensure that the applicant is admissible under these criteria. There may be long delays involved in the security check process, especially if there are concerns about membership in an organization that is suspected of being involved in terrorist acts or war crimes.

If cleared on medical, security and criminality checks:

The refugees will be informed that they are accepted for resettlement to Canada, and the processing for departure will begin.

2.4.4 Expenses and Loans

Most refugees do not have vast personal resources, but there are a number of expenses refugees must pay themselves, including the cost of medical exams and travel. Government loans are available to pay these costs. The visa officer will take into account refugees' savings when considering eligibility for loans, and will also assess their ability to repay a loan after arrival in Canada.

The following loans are available to eligible applicants from the Government of Canada:

- The **Transportation Loan**, which enables applicants to pay for transportation to their place of final destination in Canada.
- The **Admissibility Loan**, which enables applicants to cover the costs of their medical exam and other processing costs.

In cases where the officer is concerned about the sponsored person's ability to repay, the sponsoring group may be asked to pay a portion or all of these costs. (See Section 3.4.4 for further information on Immigration Loans.)

2.4.5 Visa, Notification of Arrival, and Travel

- Refugees will be granted a permanent residence visa.
- Refugees without travel documents may be issued a Single Journey Travel Document (IMM 5485).
- Refugees may be required to secure exit permits from their country of asylum. This may involve paying penalties for *illegal stays*.
- In most cases the IOM (International Organization for Migration) will arrange transportation.
- The visa office sends a Notice of Arrival to CIC.
- The local CIC will notify sponsors of the refugees' date and time of arrival.
- The refugees will travel to Canada.
- Upon arrival, the refugees are *landed* and become permanent residents of Canada—refugees no longer, but now newcomers.

2.4.6 CIC's Continuing Role

Your local CIC has a continued role after arrival. The office can provide contact information for organizations that offer services and support, referrals, assistance with registration for the Interim Federal Health Program, and on-going monitoring.

2.4.7 In Conclusion: Reaping the Benefits of Sponsorship

In the process of reaching out, sponsoring groups gain a lot. They may benefit from the satisfaction of fulfilling a political or activist mandate of their group (for example, if the group has a goal of advocating for human rights in a troubled country or region). If they are sponsoring someone from a different culture or group, the participants will be enriched through cross-cultural learning. Certainly, all groups will benefit from the experience of building relationships with newcomers, learning a range of new relational and organizational skills, and having a means of putting into action their humanitarian values. Most importantly, sponsoring groups will be reaching out to offer others protection and a chance to rebuild a life in safety and freedom.

Some Things That Can Create Delays—And How to Avoid Them!

When you are in touch with refugees, emphasize the importance of the IMM 0008 forms that they have received either from your sponsoring group, or from the visa office. It may be tempting for the applicants to leave out or gloss over information they feel may make them less eligible for entry into Canada, such as health problems, or number of dependants. However, it is **vitaly important that refugees disclose the full truth**, since discrepancies in information, or any perceived untruths will most certainly work against them. (Under the *One Year Window of Opportunity*, missing spouses and dependent children located later may be resettled to Canada under the same sponsorship— if they were listed on the original application by the Principal Applicant. Contact your local CIC for further information).

Advise the applicant to authorize the *release of information to the sponsor* by checking off the *yes* box on Part D of Schedule 2, and also to complete the form entitled, *Use of a Representative (IMM 5476)*. These forms are both included with the IMM 0008 in the *Application for Permanent Residence in Canada: Convention Refugees Abroad and Humanitarian-Protected Persons Abroad (IMM 6000)*. This option may not be pointed out to them, and the lack of information flow can cause delays.

Be in touch as often as possible. If you are aware of a change of address for the refugees, you must forward it to the visa office. This will help prevent delays caused by visa office letters going astray.

Why Was the Refugee Turned Down? Eligibility vs. Admissibility

Up to 50% of private sponsorship applications which are sponsor-referred are refused. This can be devastating to everyone involved.

To help avoid refusals on eligibility, carefully review the details of the refugees' situations before signing a sponsor-referred sponsorship. Many refugees are refused because the circumstances have changed in their country of origin or their country of asylum and they are considered to have another durable solution.

If you think that the refugees' situations will *not* qualify for any of Canada's refugee programs, submitting a sponsorship for them will only result in disappointment for them and your group.

Your group should be aware that even though refugees may be found to be eligible, they may still be refused. There can be a variety of reasons such as:

- refugees have a medical condition that makes them inadmissible;
- refugees did not pass the security or criminality check; or
- refugees may be deemed unlikely to ever be financially independent in Canada even with an extended sponsorship.

Refusals are a hard reality to accept, and there is no formal appeal mechanism.

CHAPTER 3. SETTLEMENT PREPARATION IN DETAIL

Get Ready for the Refugees' Arrival

Required Preparations

Other Helpful Preparations

Receiving the Newcomers

Orientation

Confidentiality and Privacy

3.1 Get Ready for the Refugees' Arrival: Required Preparations

The overseas processing can take a long time, and waiting can sometimes be frustrating. However, there is no lack of things to be done during this time! This chapter provides you with information about how to prepare, including required preparations that you must complete in order to support the newcomers and suggested preparations that may be very helpful to you. You'll need to learn a great deal about the newcomers' needs, regarding the following key areas:

HOUSING

- Stocking the house

SHOPPING

- For food
- For clothing
- For household items

FINANCES AND MONEY MANAGEMENT

INTERPRETERS

- Cultural sensitivity
- Using interpreters appropriately

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

TRANSPORT

CLOTHING

- Seasonal information
- Cultural information

LANGUAGE TRAINING

- Rights and obligations
- Available resources

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

CHILD CARE

HEALTH CARE

EDUCATION

- Options and opportunities

3.1.1 Getting Started on the Checklist

The first step in preparing is to learn about all the local resources available. Before you can help the newcomers, you need to educate yourself about your community resources. This may require some research, for there is no section in the Yellow Pages that compiles such a list. What are the kinds of resources you will want to research? You want to find out about anything that will help you accomplish the tasks in the following checklist. Here are some detailed suggestions:

PREPARATION CHECKLIST AND RESOURCES

PREPARATIONS: Things You Need to Make Sure You Do...	RESOURCES: Getting Started and Important Issues to Consider
<p>FIND HOUSING and STOCK THE HOUSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scout appropriate housing before the newcomers arrive. ✓ Is rent within the guidelines? At a level that's affordable after sponsorship ends? (Take into account the cost of utilities as well.) ✓ Is the location convenient for transit, stores, schools, etc.? ✓ Is the landlord sensitive to cultural issues? ✓ Will the refugees feel safe there? ✓ Prepare temporary housing before the newcomers arrive. 	<p>You'll need to find out about affordable housing options in your community, venues for searching for rental units, and the specifics of the rental laws and local bylaws that apply in your community. Most importantly, you'll need to get out into the community and look at housing so that you get a very good idea of what's available and what's affordable. When the newcomers arrive, it may be with very little notice, so it is good to have scouted out the possibilities in advance.</p> <p>Having an interim housing option is ideal, as this gives the newcomers the chance to participate in the permanent housing decision. When stocking the apartment with food, take into account the kind of food the newcomers are used to. Stocking food from home can go a long way toward easing the stress around all the new things newcomers face.</p>
<p>SHOPPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Help newcomers learn to shop for food in Canada. ✓ Take into account the newcomers' need to have national foods in their diet. ✓ Introduce them to Canadian food and cooking. 	<p>Since newcomers will have very limited funds to work with, learning how to shop economically will be a priority. Shopping may be quite different in their country of origin—for example, they may be used to bargaining on prices; or alternatively, they may be used to fixed prices for staple foods, and may not realize they need to comparison shop. Find out what economical shopping venues are available in your community: from bulk food to discount stores, to second-hand shops.</p>
<p>FINANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist newcomers with opening a bank account. Help them learn about handling money in Canada, how to use bank services, rights and obligations, income tax, etc. ✓ Find out about support provided by community groups. Some multicultural groups will provide financial counselling to newcomers in their own language. ✓ Provide guidance in budgeting, including an explanation of the costs of long-distance phone bills, utilities, and other variable costs. 	<p>Some multicultural groups offer financial planning and management counselling to members of their community, in their own language. Although you will certainly provide orientation in this area, it can be tremendously helpful to newcomers to have someone from their own culture—who understands the differing cultural perceptions around handling money—to provide the bridge into the Canadian way of approaching money matters. As well, you may want to talk to bank managers to find out whether any banks in your community have special cross-cultural sensitivity or expertise.</p>
<p>INTERPRETERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ You may need an interpreter often, especially at first. ✓ Find out about interpreters in your community. In choosing an interpreter, take into account age, gender, and political sensitivities. ✓ Interpreters may deal with very personal matters so they must be highly trusted. 	<p>Most newcomers, unless their English is very good, will require the use of interpreters at some point. At the beginning, this may be extensive and indispensable. You'll want to have interpreters identified before arrival. Settlement agencies or multicultural councils may be able to make recommendations. There are a number of important considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given that you will very likely be discussing some quite personal matters, is the interpreter's gender and age appropriate? • If the interpreter is from the same country as the newcomers—is the interpreter from a group that has historical hostility with the newcomers' group? This situation can be both explosive and painful for everyone.

PREPARATIONS: Things You Need to Make Sure You Do...	RESOURCES: Getting Started and Important Issues to Consider
<p>INTERPRETERS con't...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ As soon as possible, newcomers should be encouraged to interact without the use of an interpreter. This will build their confidence and help them build other connections to become independent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the interpreter have an understanding of refugee situations and issues? If not, the interpreter may benefit from some information and awareness-raising. • Is the interpreter easily available? At the beginning especially, the interpreter may be needed on short notice, and at virtually any hour of the day or night. • Is the interpreter known and recommended within the multicultural community? Unless you can understand the language that will be spoken, you will depend upon the interpreter to accurately convey information. Therefore, you and must place a great deal of confidence in this person. • Does the interpreter understand the need for strict confidentiality?
<p>SETTLEMENT SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out what settlement agencies, refugee/ethnocultural groups and community social support groups exist in your community and the services they offer. <p>Help the newcomers to connect with those groups that will be able to offer appropriate assistance or ongoing support.</p>	<p>Many agencies provide counselling, support, referrals, and a variety of ongoing services, and can provide invaluable advice and contacts. So, visit your local agency to understand exactly what services and resources will be available to the newcomer. Plan to build on this. Note: Although you may feel you are capable of providing the counselling yourselves, keep in mind that the newcomers may make friends and important contacts through groups at agencies.</p>
<p>TRANSPORTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about bus or metro passes. ✓ Show the newcomers how to use the transport system; show them around your town 	<p>When checking out transportation options, keep in mind the limited resources of the newcomers, and make sure you find the most economical options. As well, consider the convenience of bus routes, always remembering that the newcomers will be juggling many things: housing and employment search, child care, and ESL classes.</p>
<p>CLOTHING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Help newcomers to buy required clothing, and show them how to make use of second-hand and bargain stores. <p>Advise them on dress appropriate for our Canadian climate.</p>	<p>Be sensitive to issues of cultural appropriateness, especially concerning the use of second-hand clothing. Budget for at least some new clothing. Adequate winter clothing is essential.</p>
<p>LANGUAGE TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Research available ESL (English as a Second Language) courses in your community. Settlement agencies can explain the testing/referral process in your area. ✓ Help newcomers to find and register for the most appropriate course (e.g., some ESL courses focus on language in the workplace related to a specific job; others are more general). 	<p>You will need to research what ESL and language training courses are available in your community. The newcomers may be eligible for government-funded language instruction courses specifically organized for newcomers. Language classes are offered through various types of organizations (educational institutions, non-profit organizations, government organizations), and in various formats (community-based, workplace-focused). Adult immigrants who have not acquired Canadian citizenship are eligible for these classes. To find out more, visit the CIC Web site at www.cic.gc.ca or contact your local CIC. Other courses may also be available through the local adult education program, college, or high school. Newcomers may even want to consider distance education courses in English or tutoring with a private volunteer. When researching courses, find out about their focus, the <i>target</i> student group, and how, where and when assessment and placement is conducted.</p> <p>Your sponsorship budget should allow newcomers to take language classes when they first arrive rather than requiring them to begin working immediately. Newcomers that learn an official language settle better in the long term.</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about employment counselling services in your community. Ethnocultural groups or settlement agencies may provide counselling or even some training (e.g., using a computer) that is tailored to the needs of newcomers. 	<p>Looking for employment is one of the most important tasks facing newcomers during the first year of settlement. Maybe you have experienced how scary it is to walk into an office where everyone speaks a different language and the <i>rules</i> of seeking employment are foreign. To assist the newcomers, advance research can be very helpful. If you know anything about the newcomers' skills set and background, you can start researching employers in your area needing those skills. Visit your local Canada Employment Centre to find out what resources are offered, and whether job counselling is available.</p>

PREPARATIONS: Things You Need to Make Sure You Do...	RESOURCES: Getting Started and Important Issues to Consider
<p>EMPLOYMENT con't...</p> <p>Find out about the services of the Employment Resource Centres such as access to the Internet, fax, computers and printers for job search, workshops on job search, counselling services, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about the employment preparation workshops such as resume writing, interview skills, networking strategies, etc. ✓ Help newcomers to learn the <i>how to</i> of searching for jobs in Canada—searching ads, using the Canada Employment Centre, getting together a resume, <i>knocking on doors</i>, etc. ✓ Provide lots of practical help and emotional support. ✓ If applicable research re-qualification procedures for newcomers who may have professional skills and education (see the following Education section). 	<p>Begin to check out the many Web sites for job hunting, such as +Jobs Canada, (www.canada.plusjobs.com/), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Job Bank, (www.jobbank.ca), Canada Jobs (www.canadajobs.com/), the Job Bus Canada (www.JobBus.com/), Canada's biggest job site (www.workopolis.com) and CanWest Global's Working.Canada.com, which covers job listings from major newspapers across Canada (www.working.canada.com).</p> <p>These are only a few of the many, many job sites available. In addition to listing jobs, many such sites also provide information and resources on writing good resumes and successful job hunting. As well, you should be able to find printed resources in your local library that give valuable job-hunting advice, such as the classic <i>What Color is Your Parachute?</i> by Richard Nelson Bolles. Do all of this while keeping in mind that newcomers will need to learn how to find and use all this information themselves—in other words, with an eye to mentoring the newcomers into the effective use of the employment and job hunting resources that are out there.</p>
<p>CHILD CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about child care options in your community. ✓ Keep in mind access to public transport, proximity to ESL classes, cost and cultural sensitivity. ✓ Remember that for mothers to attend ESL classes, child care may be one of their first needs. 	<p>When researching child care resources in your community, keep in mind the likely income level of the newcomers after support ends. In addition to the normal care and safety concerns, consider cost, access to transportation and sensitivity to cultural issues. Consider too that parents may be uncomfortable leaving their children with strangers and will only participate in programs where child care is on site.</p>
<p>HEALTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Get forms to register for provincial health insurance. ✓ Ask local CIC about the process for registering for Interim Federal Health Program (IFH). ✓ Assist in finding a family doctor and explain the Canadian medical system, etc. ✓ Investigate which vaccinations are required for school registration. ✓ If sponsoring a refugee family with special medical needs, research the sources of special equipment, care and support. 	<p>To receive provincial health coverage, newcomers must meet the provincial rules for eligibility. Privately sponsored refugees are also eligible for Interim Federal Health coverage until they become eligible for provincial health coverage. Under this program they will be partially covered for visual, dental and pharmaceutical costs during the sponsorship period.</p> <p>It is worthwhile registering even for partial IFH, but this program is intended to be emergency care, and covers specific, basic healthcare needs within very strict guidelines. You'll need to be aware of these guidelines, be prepared to help the newcomers understand them, as well as budget for costs not covered. (See the Appendix for a more detailed description of the IFH program.)</p>
<p>EDUCATION/JOB TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about schools in the area and assist the newcomers with getting their children into school. ✓ Provide information about the Canadian school system and Canadian views towards education. ✓ Support newcomers as they learn about school trips, homework expectations, etc. ✓ Find out about job training, credential assessment and upgrading possibilities. 	<p>In addition to ESL courses, there are now a wide variety of workplace training, adult education, and targeted skills development courses available both in-class and through distance learning. Organizations such as the Centre for Education and Training (CET) have services that are developed specifically to help newcomers assess and build their skills and language competency for the Canadian job market (for more information on CET, check www.tcet.com/).</p> <p>Many local colleges also offer courses that are intended to develop specific skills for the Canadian market. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges' Work Keys program provides detailed and specific job profiling, skills assessment and instructional support that is geared towards the Canadian job market. For more information, check ACCC's Web site at www.accc.ca or contact ACCC at 200-1223 Michael Street North, Ottawa, ON, K1J 7T2; Phone (613) 746-2222. This sort of assessment may be a very good way for newcomers to effectively address their employment skills.</p>

PREPARATIONS: Things You Need to Make Sure You Do...	RESOURCES: Getting Started and Important Issues to Consider
<p>RELIGION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If appropriate, and the refugee family has informed you of their religious observance, locate places of worship in your community. ✓ Discuss with your group how to ensure that meetings with the newcomers are planned in locations where they feel comfortable if they are not of your faith. 	<p>Religion is a very sensitive area. You must be very careful not to impose your religious beliefs on newcomers. Newcomers have the right to religious freedom, and cannot be required to join your group's church, mosque, temple or other worship group. Invitations to religious activities and worship must be approached cautiously and sensitively even if the newcomers are of the same faith as your group.</p> <p>Newcomers of different faiths than your own may not feel comfortable coming to a meeting or social event at your place of worship. If issuing an invitation to an event, explain the context carefully. Some newcomers may welcome an invitation to your group's religious service, whereas others might prefer to meet and express their appreciation to their sponsors outside of a place of worship.</p>
<p>CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about the newcomers' culture. (See www.settlement.org/cp/ for cultural profiles available.) ✓ Raise your own awareness about culture. ✓ Learn how your cultural assumptions (e.g., regarding gender roles) may affect and even cause stress to the newcomers. ✓ Plan how you'll support the newcomers' cultural adjustment. 	<p>Your work on raising your cultural awareness has already helped you find out about many of these cultural differences. But you will also want to find out specifically about ethnocultural groups that provide employment counselling, crisis counselling, and so on. If your town has a multicultural society or council, this is a good place to start.</p> <p>If appropriate, you may want to find out about community groups, centres, etc., that the newcomers may be interested in affiliating with on their arrival. Keep in mind, however, the pluralism of a community and the refugee experience. Newcomers may not necessarily feel affinity with a certain group. See Section 4.1.2, for specific suggestions on supporting newcomers in their cultural adjustment.</p>
<p>CRISIS AND TRAUMA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contact your local settlement agency for information on appropriate trauma treatment or counselling in your area. 	<p>Refugees have been through traumatic situations. Once they've taken care of their immediate settlement needs, crisis and trauma counselling may become a real necessity for some. Find out in advance the appropriate resources that are available in your community. Visit the Web site of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) to find out about torture and its treatment. (See Section 4.1.5 for details.)</p>
<p>RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find out about recreation facilities. ✓ Help the newcomers learn how to use them, if necessary. ✓ Be sensitive to cultural issues (e.g., dress and mixed-gender activities). 	<p>Check out facilities in your area, particularly those that can be used at a low cost or for free.</p>

3.1.2 Raise Funds

When you decide to sponsor, you take on a significant financial obligation. If you need to raise funds it may be useful to set up a committee to deal strictly with fundraising, and certainly you will want to ensure that finances are carefully and appropriately monitored. When planning fundraising activities, think about:

- How much time will it take? Do we have enough volunteers?
- How much money will it raise?
- Are there legal or insurance implications? (e.g., Do you need to block off a street for your activity?)
- How will money be gathered and tracked?
- Will tax receipts be given?
- How will gifts in-kind be tracked?

Consult the Canada Revenue Agency for up-to-date information on how to handle fundraising. This will vary depending on whether your organization is a registered charity, a non-profit organization or a group with no such official standing (see the Canada Revenue Agency Web site at www.cra-arc.gc.ca).

The following is a list of some activities that non-profit groups have used successfully to raise funds. Use these ideas to get your own brainstorming started:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEDICATE a percentage of your collections to refugee sponsorships • SOLICIT DONATIONS from your community or group members • SOLICIT DONATIONS from businesses • ART AUCTIONS • BINGO GAMES • GALA EVENTS <p style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHOWS • DANCES • DOOR-TO-DOOR SELLING • CHILI FESTS • GOLF TOURNAMENT • RAFFLES • With local businesses, ORGANIZE A TOUR of local pubs, breweries, factories, research facilities, | <p style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i></p> <p>other interesting facility to which the public would not normally have access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOLICIT SERVICES for free or at a reduced cost from businesses (e.g., providing eye glasses) • GIFT-WRAPPING SERVICES • FASHION SHOWS • SELL TICKETS to win a balloon ride (or other fun activity) • BAKE SALES • CRAFT SALES • HOST/SELL TICKETS to a curling bonspiel or other community sports event • CORN ROASTS • HOST/SELL TICKETS to a community <i>theme</i> tea (Halloween Tea, | <p>Valentine's Tea, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FITNESS EVENTS • SPECIAL DINNERS (e.g., mystery or theatre dinners) • BARBEQUES • RESTAURANTS around town donate one evening's earnings on desserts • SILENT AUCTIONS • HOST/SELL TICKETS to a wine and gourmet food tasting event • TEA BAG and LETTER CAMPAIGN in your community (have a cup of tea and please read the letter, requesting a donation) • GARAGE SALES |
|--|---|--|

3.1.3 Gather Forms

As soon as the newcomers arrive, there will be a number of forms to fill out in order to ensure they have access to everything they are entitled. The period of waiting and preparation is an ideal time to gather these forms so this work can be completed quickly. These forms include:

APPLICATION FOR SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER (SIN)

You can download the SIN application form from the Government of Canada's Human Resources and Skills Development Canada Web site, at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca. Otherwise, refer to the Government of Canada pages in your telephone book, under the heading *Social Insurance Number*; or write to Social Insurance Registration, P.O. Box 7000, Bathurst, NB, E2A 4T1.

APPLICATION TO PROVINCIAL MEDICAL PLAN

Information forms can be found on provincial Web sites. Use this formula: www.gov.xx.ca. Where the xx appears, substitute the two-letter abbreviation for the province (i.e., AB for Alberta, BC for British Columbia, etc.). Otherwise, find contact information for your provincial health department in the provincial government pages of your phone book.

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL CHILD TAX BENEFIT

The application for the Federal Child Tax Benefit can be downloaded from the Canada Revenue Agency Web site at www.cra-arc.gc.ca or, contact Canada Child Tax Benefit at 1-800-387-1193. As well, check with your provincial government to find out whether any provincial benefits apply.

3.1.4 Find Housing

Finally, as you approach the time of the newcomers' arrival, finding appropriate housing becomes a priority. By this point you should already have done extensive research so that you can rent housing on short notice. It's a tricky waiting game: you can't rent until you really know the refugees are on their way, yet you want to ensure the newcomers have a new home waiting for them. To do this, you need to have temporary accommodations lined up for the first few days, as well as a *roster* of appropriate housing options. **However, don't actually rent anything until the newcomers arrive.** There are several reasons for this:

- You won't know exactly when the newcomers will arrive; even if you're given times, these could change without notice;
- The family composition of the newcomers may not be the same as what you were told; and
- Most importantly, the newcomers should be given the opportunity to decide for themselves where they want to live.⁵

3.2 Other Helpful Preparations

3.2.1 Flesh Out the Details of Your Settlement Plan

Your basic Settlement Plan has already been developed, but it's not detailed. During this waiting time, you should identify all the things that need to be completed, along with the exact activities, and who will do what and when. Such a plan might look like this:

SAMPLE DETAILED SETTLEMENT PLAN

What Do We Need to Achieve?	Activities	Who?	By When?	Resources Required?	Who Needs to Know?
Monthly budget developed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research local cost of living 2. Find out about community resources for budget planning support for the newcomers. 3. Design budget, etc.... 	<p>Mrs. B. Mr. C.</p> <p>Ms. M.</p>	<p>Aug. 31 Sept. 15</p> <p>Sept. 15</p>	For each item, list all resources required: money, materials, etc.	Finance Committee
Apartment rented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Search local vacancies in \$500 - \$700 range. 2. Talk to prospective landlords, etc.... 	Mrs. P, Ms. M. Etc...	Oct 15	Will need \$1000-\$1400 for first and last month's rent.	Finance Committee Housing Committee
Furnishings and household items in place	Etc....	Etc...			

⁵ The United Church of Canada, *And You Welcomed Me: A Handbook on Refugee Sponsorship* (Etobicoke: Division of Mission in Canada. 1998) 13 – 14. Note: You can find this handbook on the United Church of Canada Web site at www.united-church.ca.

3.2.2 Develop Your Group's Support Skills

Your group will work together for an extended period of time—possibly up to three years or more—from the time you start thinking about sponsorship to the time when the newcomers launch out on their own. You may want to give some attention to building your group's support skills in order to increase your effectiveness. This could include everything from listening and communications skills, to building your understanding about participation, developing consensus, and effective decision-making as a group. See the Appendix for a collection of ideas and resources for group building skills.

3.2.3 Develop Cultural Awareness

Many sponsoring groups will be assisting newcomers who come from a culture and background very different from their own. Such groups may want to plan some activities to develop their cultural awareness and skills. There are many activities that can help: reading, seeing films, role-playing, and outings. See the Appendix for ideas and resources.

It may be important to raise your own group's awareness regarding gender issues. If you're sponsoring a woman under the Women at Risk (AWR) program, it's important to ensure that a female member of your group is the primary contact with the newcomer. This can help overcome gender barriers and may be critical when sensitive issues arise. At the same time, North American women's roles may differ radically from the practices of the newcomer's culture and may therefore challenge her and her family dynamics. It may be equally difficult for newcomer men to discuss their concerns with a mixed-gender group of sponsors. Everyday things that seem simple and even harmless to us can be challenging and unnerving—the way eye contact is made to expectations around how business and social activities are conducted between the genders. The more aware you can become of these cultural differences, the better you'll be able to approach them with sensitivity and compassion.

Some groups receive newcomers from their own cultural background. In these cases, the challenge is to help the newcomers understand the new culture from the perspective of someone who's already gone through the adjustment. This requires becoming more conscious of one's own reactions in the new culture. Again, a wide variety of cross-cultural activities, such as the ones in the Appendix can help develop this self-awareness.

3.2.4 Learn About Rights and Responsibilities

As a sponsor, you need to be aware of your rights and responsibilities. As you discovered in Chapters 1 and 2, by agreeing to sponsor refugees, you take on certain financial, social, and emotional support obligations during the sponsorship period. You are responsible for ensuring that the newcomers understand Canadian laws and their rights and responsibilities in Canada. As well, you need to respect the newcomers' right to privacy and confidentiality and their right to make their own religious and cultural choices. You may become involved in very private and sensitive issues. You have a responsibility to maintain the newcomers' confidentiality.

Because you'll be assisting the newcomers in so many ways you can begin to feel a sense of ownership over the decisions made. Remember, however, that even if you don't agree with them, newcomers have the right to make their own decisions about the issues that affect their life. Your role is to advise and to support. Ultimately, the newcomers must decide, how they will respond to each responsibility.

NEWCOMERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- **Paying the cost of transportation to their final destination in Canada.**
- **Repaying any immigration loans or other debts they take on.**
- **Participating with the sponsors in planning their immediate and long-term future.**
- **Keeping the sponsorship group informed of their plans and cooperating with sponsors.**
- **Showing initiative in adjusting to life in Canada.**
- **Contributing to their own support upon finding employment.**
- **Being law-abiding.**
- **Becoming independent.⁶**

3.3 Receiving the Newcomers

Every newcomer remembers their arrival in Canada. The reunion with family members or the first meeting with sponsors leaves a lasting impression. Some of the things you need to be aware of when you first receive the newcomers are listed in the following checklist.

CHECKLIST: Immediately Before and Upon Arrival

	Who will meet the newcomers? (Must be available on short notice at any time of day.) Backup, in case greeters are not available.		Provide appropriate written information in newcomers' own language (something very brief).
	Is the temporary housing ready?		If appropriate, take photos at the airport.
	Is interpreter needed at the airport? Is interpreter available on <i>stand by</i> ?		Provide a chance to go to the bathroom at the airport before piling into cars.
	Provide newcomers with names and phone numbers of group members.		Take newcomers to where they are staying.

Keep in mind that the newcomers will be experiencing a bewildering number of things all at once, including:

- When newcomers arrive they may be exhausted, scared—they may not even feel particularly happy to be in Canada. Keep in mind that they have not left their country by choice. Their feelings may be quite different than yours, and may be very mixed.
- Meeting new people can be exhausting. Choose carefully the best people to greet the newcomers at the airport, and keep in mind that having too many greeters can be overwhelming. Although you may feel like celebrating immediately after arrival, the newcomers' first need will likely be for rest.
- Make sure you always communicate to the newcomers what you are doing and why.
- Allow the newcomers as much privacy as possible.

⁶ United Church of Canada, *Building on a Rock*, Refugee Sponsorship Handbook, 18 – 19.

3.4 Orientation

The first 24 hours and the first few days are critical time in a newcomers' life. This is the time when first impressions are formed, and vivid memories of these days will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Therefore, while you want to ensure that you are addressing the necessary practical issues during this time, focus on the newcomers' emotional needs. A checklist can be helpful. The following is a sample.

Orientation Checklist

FIRST 24 HOURS Assist Newcomers, if necessary to...		FIRST FEW DAYS Assist Newcomers to...	
	Know how to use things in their house or apartment (e.g., different types of faucets, telephones, and basic household equipment can be confusing to figure out, and objects such as fire alarms may be unknown).		Complete and submit the SIN, medical coverage (IFH application – see Section 6.1), and Child Tax Benefit forms you collected earlier.
			Understand both theirs and your rights and obligations regarding sponsorship.
	Know how to contact someone at all times (this may entail learning how to use a pay phone). Leave several numbers. If their English is poor, you can develop a <i>warning</i> system where the newcomers can call someone with a code word, and whoever receives the call will know they need help. ⁷		Have a tour of the immediate neighborhood and help them learn how to get around.
			Shop for food and clothing.
	Call their family at home. Explain whether, or to what extent, your group is willing to cover long distance calls.		Receive any needed medical attention (Set up an appointment for a physical examination soon after arrival). School-age children may need to have their vaccinations updated before they are permitted to register.
			Open a bank account and begin the budgeting process. Explain the sources of funds and the expectations around managing money.

These are the immediate practical concerns. Important emotional concerns include:

- Be careful to introduce the newcomers to all the members of the sponsoring group, and to explain how your group has divided the responsibilities. Meeting group members early in the sponsorship is important even if a family member in Canada will take on most of the support requirements.
- Be sensitive to the emotional ups and downs newcomers will experience. Give them privacy and enough time to rest.
- Be sensitive to the *overload* newcomers will experience as they are introduced to many, many new things all at once. Be patient, and be prepared to explain anything as many times as necessary. Don't assume the newcomers will feel comfortable asking for information or help; be aware of signs of confusion.
- Be sensitive to culture shock and the frustrations of adjustment.
- Be aware of the newcomers' need to make their own decisions right from the very beginning. Never make a decision *for* the newcomer; make the decision *with* the newcomer, aiming, whenever possible, to be a mentor providing alternatives and resources.

⁷ *And You Welcomed Me*, 15.

Orientation Checklist

FIRST FEW WEEKS and MONTHS: Assist Newcomers, if necessary to...			
	Look for permanent housing.		Receive employment counseling and begin job search.
	Enrol children in school. Find child care.		Understand rights and obligations regarding loans and loan repayment. (See Section 3.4.4.)
	Complete a language assessment and enrol in ESL classes.		Become aware of rights and responsibilities, including family law and parenting obligations.
	Become oriented to life in the community including shopping, public transport, settlement services, recreation and culture.		Be aware of culture shock, family stresses, and effects of crisis. (See section 4.1 for specific suggestions.)

3.4.1 Budgeting

You have already developed detailed budget sheets during the planning and fundraising you've conducted to get prepared. Soon after their arrival, sit down with the newcomers to discuss their budget. They should have all budgetary information explained to them fully and be given autonomy over their own income and budget once the information has been given.

3.4.2 Language Assessment

Unless the newcomers' English is very good, language training will be one of the first things needed on the path to finding a job and developing relationships, friendships, and meaning in their new life in Canada. During your preparation time, you researched available language training resources. Now is the time to take the newcomers to the language assessment centre, if there is one nearby. If not, explain the options to the newcomers. As you present options, keep in mind the newcomers' skills and training (some language classes are geared towards providing vocabulary for work in a specific field). You may want to arrange a visit to an ESL class early on so the newcomers have some idea about what to expect. As always, when providing information and resources, remember:

- **Newcomers have the right to make their own decisions.**
- **You are in the role of *enabler*, not *provider*.**
- **You don't want to foster dependency. Don't just provide information; show how you found the information.**
- **In conjunction with language study options, you may need to discuss child care and transportation options.**

One of your on-going contributions will be speaking English with the newcomers in an open, non-judgmental and non-threatening way, and, when appropriate, giving feedback on language usage that other people might not provide.

3.4.3 Employment Counseling

Once the newcomers have begun their language studies, you can begin discussing employment and developing a job-search plan with them. You may have discovered in your research on settlement agencies, that they can provide employment counseling, information on employment law, and even some skills development (e.g., learning how to use a computer) in the newcomers' own language. In any case, by now through your research, you're aware of a range of resources available. You may already have some information about the newcomers' skills and experience, now, however, it will be helpful to find out more. If the newcomers choose to share their future career dreams with you, this can be very helpful in narrowing down which employment avenues will be most fruitful to explore. Share the resources and options with the newcomers (perhaps a bit at a time, as too much information all at once can be overwhelming); but, as previously mentioned, remember:

- **Newcomers have the right to make their own decisions.**
- **You are in the role of *enabler*, not *provider*.**
- **You don't want to foster dependency. Don't just provide information; show how you found the information.**

But can you actually help someone with the *nitty-gritty* of getting out there and knocking on doors? Though the newcomers will have to do the knocking, there is actually much you can do. The following are some ideas for activities that may be helpful:

- ASSIST the newcomer with having their skills and credentials assessed. (See Section 3.1.1 for references on resources.)
- DISCUSS WHAT A HIRING PROCESS LOOKS LIKE in Canada, from beginning to end. Have several members of your group in different jobs contribute, as the hiring process varies from sector to sector. Together you'll build up a *picture* for the newcomers to help alleviate some of the fears of the unknown—and you'll probably learn something new, too!
- DISCUSS ISSUES such as: How long is it appropriate to wait before calling back to check on the status of your application? What do you have to respond to in a job interview (e.g., when the prospective employer asks personal questions)? When not responding to a job ad (making cold calls)—who is the right person to speak to? What is the expected protocol?
- If the newcomers want to start up a business, what LOANS, ASSISTANCE, AND GUIDANCE might be available? What are the legal issues to be aware of? (See Industry Canada's Web site at www.strategis.ic.gc.ca.)
- CIC offers an ASSISTANCE LOAN to cover costs of required tools, licensing fees, clothing, etc.
- ROLE PLAY a job interview.
- SET UP A PANEL OR DISCUSSION GROUP on Workplace Culture. This is the kind of topic that almost anyone in your group or community may be interested in, and should not be aimed only at the newcomers. You may even want to bring in some people with special expertise. You'll learn a lot, and also discover how much variation there is within Canadian culture. Discuss the Canadian view of: working in teams, performance evaluation, attitudes regarding office relationships (friendships/working relationships), ideas about formality/informality in the workplace, appropriate communication style in meetings (do you joke in meetings? stand up when you speak), views about leadership (hierarchical, participative), sexual harassment policies, hiring and pay equity policies, non-discrimination and inclusiveness policies, how planning is done, view of time and time management concepts, customs regarding space and touch, gesture and eye contact in the workplace, workplace rituals, etc.

3.4.4 Immigration Loans Repayment

As stated in Section 2.4.4, privately sponsored refugees are eligible for immigration loans from the Canadian government. The newcomers' overall loan usually includes:

THE TRANSPORTATION LOAN:

Enables applicants to pay for transport to their place of final destination in Canada

THE ADMISSIBILITY LOAN:

Enables applicants to cover the costs of their medical exam

Newcomers may also apply for a CIC **Assistance Loan**, which enables the applicant to cover any extraordinary costs after arrival in Canada that may not be covered by the sponsoring group. For example, labour market access costs such as the purchase of tools or work clothes, cost of licensing examinations where employment is offered, etc.

The repayment of these immigration loans is the responsibility of the newcomer. The size of the loan determines the interest-free period, as shown in the following table:

Amount of Loan	Interest-Free Period
• up to \$1,200	12 months
• over \$1,200 but less than \$2,400	24 months
• over \$2,400	36 months

The sponsoring group can help the newcomers work out a manageable plan for the repayment of the loan. Newcomers are expected to begin repaying their loans as soon as possible. In fact, the first written demand for repayment will be mailed shortly after the newcomers arrive.

Newcomers may request a **deferral** in the commencement of the repayment of the loans. You can assist newcomers with writing a request for this deferral. The deferral period may be up to 24 months, although it may be granted in six-month periods. Please note that this deferral is NOT automatic, but must be requested. If your sponsoring group has not included loan repayments in your sponsorship budget, requesting this deferral for the sponsorship period is particularly important.

When setting up a repayment schedule, the newcomers should be aware that it is possible to negotiate the size and timing of the payments. A repayment schedule is suggested in the bill sent to the newcomers, but it is possible to negotiate monthly payments that are feasible from a limited budget. Start by helping the newcomers to write a letter with an explanation to the Immigration Loan Officer, or calling the number on the letter sent to the newcomers. The following table shows CIC's suggested loan repayment periods:

Amount of Loan	Repayment Period
• up to \$1,200	within 12 months
• over \$1,200 but not exceeding \$2,400	within 24 months
• over \$2,400 but not exceeding \$3,600	within 36 months
• over \$3,600 but not exceeding \$4,800	within 48 months
• over \$4,800	within 72 months

Newcomers should be aware that their ability to sponsor relatives under the family class will be affected if their loan is in arrears. A loan is considered in arrears if newcomers pay less than the minimum amount suggested, even if this lower amount has been approved by immigration.

Please remind newcomers:

- Do not ignore requests for payments.
- Inform the Immigration Loan Officer of all address changes within ten days of relocation until the loan is repaid in full by writing: *The Chief Revenue Accounting, Jean Edmonds Tower North, 300 Slater St, 4th Floor, Ottawa, ON K1A 1L1*
- Call Collection Services at 1-800-667-7301 if there are any problems.

3.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

During the settlement process, keep in mind that there are many reasons to maintain the privacy of refugee newcomer families. Some are related to common sense, others to the law in Canada.

A basic guideline will be to envision how you would like to have your privacy and the confidentiality of your situation and that of your family ensured. Add to that the needs of refugee families who have been traumatized and are now in a society and a context that they do not know or understand. The trust that you are able to develop with refugee newcomers will depend to a great extent on how well they perceive that you guard their privacy and safety.

Some basic do's:

- Do telephone first or make an appointment before going over to refugees' homes. This is common practice in Canada. It also allows refugee newcomers to know that their homes are theirs.
- Wait for an invitation to enter their homes.
- Take down information on those wishing to contact the family and then relay that information to the refugees and help them make the connection if they wish to do so.
- Discussion within the sponsorship group around practical aspects of settlement is important but those matters that are very personal should be discussed on a *need to know* basis among those who are directly involved in providing support. It is very important to avoid *gossip*.
- Provide protection from media attention by acting as a mediator and determining the interest of the refugees in responding to media interest.
- In accessing support from settlement agencies and other community organizations, act as a liaison to connect the refugee newcomers directly with the support service.

Some don'ts:

- Do not publish, promote or distribute to anyone or any organization the names, address and telephone number of any member of the refugee families without their specific permission.
- Do not discuss their private and personal affairs with any individual or any member of an organization without their permission. This includes discussion with other members of the sponsorship group and with settlement organizations.
- Do not talk *around* refugee newcomers with others when they are present unless the refugees are directly involved in the dialogue.
- Do not expect agencies and organizations to keep you completely informed on their work with the refugee newcomers. They are bound by privacy legislation.

CHAPTER 4. ENABLING SETTLEMENT: THE FIRST YEAR AND BEYOND

THE FIRST YEAR

Review the Budget

Cultural Adjustment

Understand Family Issues

Non-Accompanying Family Members

Post-Traumatic Stress, Torture and Healing

Support Newcomers to Get the Education They Need

Assist Newcomers to Find Employment

PREPARE FOR THE LONG TERM

Help Newcomers Work Towards Self-Sufficiency

Help Newcomers Link into a Social Network

What if the Newcomers Want to Move?

Consider an Advocacy Role

4.1 Enabling Settlement: The First Year

During the first year, newcomers learn a tremendous amount and move from a large degree of dependence to a large degree of independence. Through it all, your role is that of an enabler, helping newcomers to equip themselves, make their own decisions, and find out as much as possible about their new environment. Above all else, you are helping to provide warm friendship and support.

One important task will be to clarify expectations on all sides. While the government expects certain *results* (finding employment, learning English, learning life skills to function in Canada), newcomers and sponsoring groups have aspirations that both include and go beyond this. They will want to learn about each others' backgrounds and develop a sense of community. Sponsoring groups may hope to increase their skills through this learning experience; newcomers may hope to motivate their sponsors to become more activist. Newcomers may hope to be supported while they study or re-qualify for certain trades or professions and sponsors may hope that the newcomers find work as quickly as possible. If these hopes and aspirations can be expressed and agreed on, the potential for misunderstanding and disappointment will be reduced.

During the busy first months when there are so many details to take care of, *the bigger picture* may be forgotten from time to time. Following are some of the important things you will want to consider during periodic times of assessment.

4.1.1 Reviewing the Budget

No matter how well we plan, a budget is something that always requires adjustment. You may agree to sit down with the newcomers on a quarterly basis to review the budget and assess whether expectations on both sides are appropriate. In particular, you may want to make an assessment once it is clear what kind of employment the newcomers will seek, or once they have found a job. As well, you will need to take into account immigration loan repayments. If the newcomers are clearly lacking in budgeting skills, they may want to take advantage of counseling services through local volunteer groups, settlement agencies, or from someone in your group.

When discussing financial issues, newcomers will need to know about taxes. Provide information about Canada's tax system, the law, and how tax deductions are handled by employers. In budget planning, explain that salary earned will not be equal to take-home pay.

4.1.2 Cultural Adjustment

Most people are familiar with the term **culture shock**. As the name suggests, it refers to the period of disorientation experienced when encountering a new culture, and **is a normal part of cultural adjustment**. While culture shock is extremely painful, it should not be viewed negatively, for the end result is profound learning. **Cultural adjustment** is typified by the stages shown in the following chart. As you read about them, keep in mind that the pace at which people are able to progress through the stages is highly individual and family members may progress at quite different rates. This process may last three to five years. You can provide specific supports at each stage.

STAGE	CHARACTERIZED BY:	SUPPORT TO PROVIDE DURING THIS STAGE
Honeymoon Stage	An initial reaction of enthusiasm, fascination, admiration, and cordial, friendly, superficial relationships with hosts. (Note: Refugees have not come to Canada by choice, and may be less enthusiastic.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and information • Focus on the practical aspects of becoming competent in the new situation (i.e., getting around, looking for a job, language training).
Challenge and Crisis	Differences in language, concepts, values, and symbols lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, anxiety, and anger. During this time, studies show that most people find the most difficult situations to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making friends your own age • Dealing with someone who is cross • Approaching others • Appearing in front of an audience • Getting to know people in-depth, intimately • Understanding jokes, humour, sarcasm • Dealing with people staring at you • Being with people that you don't know very well • Complaining in public/dealing with unsatisfactory service 	<p>Give empathy, friendship and support; accept that anger and frustration are normal and legitimate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about culture shock. • Help newcomers to see his/her competencies. • Provide opportunities for the newcomers to talk about their culture. • Provide opportunities to learn together about cross-cultural communications. • Talk about the most difficult situations. Share how these things are dealt with in both your cultures. • Share jokes from your different cultures; talk about why they translate (or not). • Set up a fun time for role plays or role reversals (see Appendix). • If the newcomers are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or other psychological problems, help them to find appropriate help.
Recovery	The crisis is resolved as the person learns the language and culture of the host country. Life factors known to reduce stress and aid recovery include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Having a sense of purpose • Being socially or politically involved • Having opportunities (esp. re: career) • Maturity • Having strong social support • Having structure in one's life • Equal or greater status than before 	<p>You will notice that in a number of these areas, neither you nor the newcomer has any control. In fact, in some areas such as <i>status</i> newcomers are very likely to be worse off than before. However, there are things you can do to enhance a sense of purpose, belonging and structure. During this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the newcomers to find employment and to map out an employment strategy that will lead to a fulfilling job. • Help the newcomers to see the positive contribution they are making to your community. • As the newcomers' English abilities increase, set aside more times for storytelling—this is both an opportunity for the newcomers to teach you about their situation, and a way for them to structure/make sense of events.
Adjustment	Newcomers begins to work in and enjoy the new culture, though there may be some instances of anxiety and strain.	Continue to provide friendship and support; and continue to expect to learn as you walk alongside the newcomer. ⁸

⁸ For more information on culture shock and cultural adjustment, see Sheila Ramsay, "Creating a Context: Methodology in Intercultural Teaching and Training", *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*, vol. 1, ed. H. Ned Seele, (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1996). See also Adrian Furnham and Stephen Bochner, *Culture Shock: Psychological Reactions to Unfamiliar Environments* (Methuen, 1985).

4.1.3 Understand Family Issues

Whenever there is a big change in a family's life, there is stress on the family system. There are some circumstances that are especially difficult for newcomers. For example, if a family has young children and the mother stays at home rather than going to English classes, she may soon find herself feeling alone, stranded, friendless and depressed as she watches her other family members develop competency and relationships in Canada. She may begin to find it very difficult to leave the house at all. Winter weather may complicate transportation options, increasing a sense of isolation. Or, her culture may prevent her from making friends outside the home, especially if gatherings and relationships tend to be mixed male/female. There may be other issues related to gender roles in a new context, such as women being employed in menial jobs while men look for *good* jobs (which, at times, can lead to men not being employed at all); or the opposite: jobs available to women that are not traditionally acceptable in the newcomers' home cultures. Dealing with these new situations can be very confusing and distressing.

Teenagers tend to adjust less well than other family members (at least initially), and face difficulties with fitting in, learning new patterns of relating to adults, authorities and parents, and struggling with different sets of values. Young children tend to adapt rapidly, but this in itself may cause disruption. They may begin to be relied upon to interpret for their parents, even taking on jobs such as shopping, filling out application forms and so on—which is more responsibility than they can handle. This kind of reversal of child/parent roles is at best inappropriate, and can be damaging. Keep your eyes open for signs of family stress.⁹

Whenever there is family stress, the possibility exists that there may be abuse in the family. It's important that newcomers are helped to understand Canadian definitions of child and spousal abuse, and the legal implications. What may be considered *discipline* in one context, might be considered *abuse* in Canada. It may seem unfair to newcomers to be judged by the standards of another culture; but it's only fair to newcomers that they know they will be held legally responsible for their actions. As well, it's important that you and the newcomers are aware of where to go for help. Find out whether there is a trauma counseling centre, a community centre, a social services agency, or a women's shelter in your community to which you can turn for help in a crisis.

What can you do?

- Recognize that you cannot *fix* their situation; the newcomers will be in a state of flux for a long time, and will face cultural and social challenges for the rest of their lives. Accept that the struggle is normal, with the aim of being supportive throughout the year.
- Talk about how family life differs in Canada from the newcomers' country.
- Help the family to see their areas of competency. Help them to see how much they are achieving in all their adjustments to their new situation.
- Be especially supportive of women experiencing isolation. Try to help them develop relationships outside the home, and especially, to learn English. If necessary, provide extra English tutoring in the home.
- If a family situation is severe, find out about professional counseling. Some counseling facilities now provide specialized cross-cultural counseling.

⁹ For more information on stresses that affect different family members, see J. Krupinski, "Psychological Maladaptation in Ethnic Concentrations in Victoria, Australia," *Cultures in Collision*, ed., I. Pilowsky (Adelaide: Australian National Association of Mental Health, 1975). See also Furnham and Bochner.

4.1.4 Non-Accompanying Family Members

If the sponsored family includes a spouse or children who are missing or were not able to travel, the family's first focus is likely to be on contacting these family members. The family separation may delay the newcomers' willingness to focus on their own settlement and may lead to counseling and support needs. The Red Cross offers a tracing and reunion service that can be of assistance.

4.1.5 Post-Traumatic Stress, Torture, and Healing

Because of the terrible situations that create refugees, newcomers are likely to have experienced very traumatic situations of deprivation and violence. They may even have survived torture. **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a condition that affects people who "have been exposed to violent events such as rape, domestic violence, child abuse, war, accidents, natural disasters and political torture." It can result in ongoing symptoms such as depression, flashbacks, nightmares, experiences of overwhelming emotions of grief and fear, numbness, avoidance of intimacy, irritability, trouble concentrating and remembering, dizziness, nausea, and panic attacks, to name just a few.¹⁰

Torture is one kind of event that can lead to PTSD. The dictionary defines torture as "the act of inflicting severe pain."¹¹ We generally use the term to refer to government-sanctioned violence against individuals. Torture affects every part of the person and inflicts deep psychological, emotional and spiritual wounds, in addition to physical injuries. The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) notes that, "While torture may be used to obtain information or signed confessions, this is not its primary purpose. **Torture is directed towards instilling and reinforcing a sense of powerlessness and terror in victims and the societies in which they live. It is a process which generates a situation designed to destroy the physical and psychological capabilities of survivors to function as viable individuals.**"¹² As a supporter of someone who has survived torture, this is important for you to know. Gaining a sense of control over one's own life is critical to a survivor. Therefore, your support should never *take over* the newcomer's life; it must always result in empowerment.

While all sufferers of PTSD may experience the aforementioned symptoms, victims of torture face additional repercussions. They may be unwilling to disclose information about their experiences, and may feel suspicious, frightened, or anxious to forget about what has happened. These feelings may discourage them from seeking the help they need. In addition, what to most people are everyday situations may throw them into a state of terror. They may be adversely affected by officials in uniform, signing forms, visiting doctors' offices, being admitted to hospitals or even encountering staff of government agencies. For further information, see the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture Web site at www.ccvvt.org.

Many treatment methods are used to aid recovery from PTSD and torture; whatever treatment is recommended, they all have in common an emphasis on restoring a sense of control and safety. **For your group, there are several important things to be aware of and act on:**

- Post traumatic stress disorder must be dealt with by trained professionals.
- Love and support are critical for healing to take place. Your group can have a very important role here.
- Each person's healing proceeds at its own pace. You have no way of knowing how long it may take for an individual to heal, nor can you judge whether the individual has made *enough* progress. Your role is to support and encourage, not to judge.

¹⁰ American Psychiatric Association (APA) Web site, at www.psych.org.

¹¹ Random House Dictionary.

¹² Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) Web site at www.ccvvt.org.

- Maintain appropriate boundaries. Empathy is appropriate, but taking on the emotions as if they were your own, is not. Only the individual can heal—it is not something you can do for someone. There is a delicate balance here, which you'll need to examine often. If you're providing support for someone in therapy, it may be appropriate at some point to speak with the therapist to find out how to be most supportive and how to maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Healing is hard work. Don't be surprised if the individual seems exhausted, distant, or overwhelmed.
- If you are providing support, it's appropriate to find ways to celebrate together the individual's progress, and acknowledge their strengths and successes.

4.1.6 Support Newcomers to Get the Education They Need

Once some progress has been made in learning English, newcomers may want to begin planning for other aspects of their education and skills development. Your previous research on skills assessment and training courses will allow you to show them some of the many options available. (See Section 3.1.1)

4.1.7 Assist Newcomers to Find Employment

Finding employment can be one of the most stressful events in a newcomer's life. We all know how difficult job hunting—and the inevitable rejections—can be. In addition, however, many refugees are highly skilled and trained and may even have gained a high status in their own country. In Canada, they are suddenly back at the bottom of the ladder and their qualifications may not even be usable. They may be facing years of re-training, additional education, or having to choose a completely different career. They may need to settle for a menial and low-paying job at first. Because of their struggles to learn a new culture and language, they're aware they may sometimes come across (and be treated!) as childlike, even though they are confident and competent in their own environment. All these things are very, very hard on self-esteem. Newcomers will need all the support, sensitivity, and encouragement you can provide during their job search. You can help by drawing on all your group's appropriate contacts to find job openings.

Remember that newcomers are NOT necessarily expected to become fully self-supporting during their first year in Canada and most resettled refugees require longer social support. It may take some longer to learn English or upgrade their skills, and others may simply require a longer period to adapt and adjust. Assist these newcomers with applying for provincial social assistance after the end of your private sponsorship period. Recognize the contribution your group has made to their adjustment—whether or not they become independent within their first year.

4.1.8 What if the Newcomers Want to Move?

Your group's responsibilities under the sponsorship undertaking are to help the newcomers to settle in your community. Every permanent resident has the right to relocate however, and newcomers do sometimes choose to move to another part of Canada. Please contact your local CIC immediately if the newcomers are considering moving or if there are any other major concerns that could lead to sponsorship breakdown. Depending on the circumstances, your group may be responsible for continued financial support if the sponsorship period is not completed and the newcomers are not self-supporting.

4.2 After the First Year

From the beginning you and the newcomers need to prepare for the long-term. Ask the question: "What will things look like when this sponsorship period is over?" The following are some issues you may want to consider.

4.2.1 Help Newcomers Work Towards Self-Sufficiency

A famous Chinese poem says,

Go to the people, Live with the people. Learn from them, Love them.

Start with what they know. Build on what they have.

But with the best leaders, when the work is done

The people all say, "We have done it ourselves." Lao Tsu (China) 700 B.C.

This describes beautifully the process of helping, with an eye towards independence. The core of self-sufficiency is that people are able to make their own plans and decisions in order to attain their own dreams. When a group sponsors refugees, this can be a delicate balance to maintain. Out of a desire to help, groups may *do for* rather than *do with* newcomers, reducing their learning opportunities—and eventually, their chances to survive independently in Canada. Independence does not imply that the refugees will sever ties with your group (though this possibility must also be allowed for). You may remain life-long friends. But your help should always be given with the long-range goal of self-sufficiency.

4.2.2 Help Newcomers Link into a Social Network

One important way for newcomers to increase their chances for self-sufficiency is to link into a secure and supportive social network. This network may include your group, but it may not. Networks are built over time. A year is a short time to develop relationships with a wide variety of people. Yet, if approached intentionally, it can be achieved. In preparing for the newcomers' arrival, you have already greatly expanded your network of contacts through talking to people about employment options, language courses, settlement services, cultural awareness, and so on. Later, when the newcomers arrive, as you pass on this knowledge by *learning through doing*, you also pass on much of this network. At the same time, the newcomers have been busy developing their own set of relationships and contacts. Remember that newcomers cannot be required to repay your group, or participate in future sponsorships.

4.2.3 Consider an Advocacy Role

The dictionary defines an advocate as "a person who pleads for or on behalf of another."¹³ Most advocacy groups see themselves in this role as *a voice* for a cause. They view this activity as going hand-in-hand with educating the public; and, increasingly, they see themselves as partners with the groups on whose behalf they advocate. Advocacy is a voice for change. This can be done in many ways: showing films, talking with school children, raising funds for a cause or bringing speakers to community events, etc. As you work through the sponsorship process, you will become more aware of the need for advocacy on refugee issues. This may prompt you to join a formal refugee advocacy group or you may concentrate on education and awareness-raising within your community. Both are legitimate responses, and indeed, go hand in hand.

Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is a "non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world, and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada."¹⁴ CCR conducts research and policy analysis, and provides networking and information exchange amongst groups working with refugees. Contact: www.web.net/~ccr/, 6839 Drolet #302 Montréal, QC, H2S 2T1; Tel: 514-277-7223; ccr@web.net.

Amnesty International is another well-known group, working to prevent the violation of people's human rights worldwide. Contact: www.amnesty.ca, AI Canada (English Speaking), 312 Laurier Ave. East, Ottawa, ON, K1N 1H9; Tel: (613) 744-7667 or 1-800-AMNESTY.

¹³ Random House Dictionary.

¹⁴ Canadian Council of Refugees (CCR) Web site at www.web.net/~ccr/.

CHAPTER 5. EVALUATING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

What is Evaluation?

Why Evaluate?

How to Evaluate

What to Evaluate

What to do With the Results

Celebrate!

5.1 What is Evaluation? Why Evaluate?

Evaluation—that means being tested, right? Not really. The dictionary defines evaluation as determining the worth or significance of something, through careful appraisal and study.¹⁵ That doesn't imply pointing out everything that went wrong. Instead, evaluations are most successful if we can find out what worked best, and build on that for the future.

Thus, evaluation can be defined most simply as:

*Looking back with a critical eye,
in order to move forward with your best foot!*

If your group thinks it may sponsor other refugees at some point, evaluation will be important to you.

5.2 How to Evaluate?

The most basic evaluation method is simply to ask questions. Most evaluations ask questions from two angles: what were the results? And, how were these results achieved (process)? Examples of the questions you might ask in these two areas are:

Results:

- What did we set out to achieve?
- Did we achieve it?
- Did we achieve other things also?
- How did these results affect everyone involved?

Process:

- What methods did we use to achieve our goals?
- Of these methods, which was/were most effective?
- What would we do differently next time to achieve better results?
- What would we do differently next time to achieve the same results more effectively or more efficiently?

Another important part of evaluating is to make sure you give everyone who participated, a chance to give their opinion. Situations look different to different people, so only by including the views of as many as possible can you get a full picture.

¹⁵ Merriam Webster Dictionary.

5.3 What to do With the Results

You have a *picture*—now what? This is the time you'll want to ask *the big picture* questions: What does this all mean? What are the life lessons we learned?

You may want to write up your results, and, if appropriate, some stories to illustrate them, so they can be shared amongst your group and with other sponsoring groups. This kind of record can be very useful if, at some time in the future, you decide to sponsor again. You'll not only have reminders about some of the significant things you learned, but reading about your experience will take you right back to those earlier memories. In any case, if you evaluate your experience, it will help you to see how rich it has been and equip you better for the future.

5.4 Celebrate!

To wind up your evaluation and bring closure to the entire year, plan a celebration to honour your achievements. A dance, a special meal together, a street party, a multicultural potluck, or a games night can be fun and can easily include, if desired, other partners and community members who supported the newcomers and your group. Mark the anniversary of the newcomers' arrival. It's time to celebrate the past year! It's time to look forward to future possibilities!

Reflections on Being a Private Sponsor

Once you have taken on a sponsorship there is one particularly important thing that you can do to help make the experience a success for all participants —sponsors and sponsored alike.

Build and utilize networks with others who have been sponsors or are well-acquainted with the sponsorship process. Learn from their knowledge and experience in the development and implementation of your settlement plan. Important resources in your network include your local CIC contact person. In addition, local multicultural and settlement services organizations can be a wealth of information and advice. Reaching out to find others in your community involved in sponsorship can provide excellent contacts for advice on planning or trouble-shooting issues that emerge once newcomers arrive in your community.

These networks can also offer guidance if you encounter surprises or challenges not foreseen in the planning stages. They will also provide important help in shaping your expectations and those of newcomers in gauging progress.

Soon, your experience will also be part of the wealth of resources that can be called upon to help refugees who seek protection and the opportunity to build a new life in Canada.

APPENDIX

6.1 Interim Federal Health Program

Register newcomers for the Interim Health Program (IFH) at your local CIC. Privately sponsored refugees are eligible under this program, but must apply. The guidelines are specific, and must be followed exactly. The IFH Program is not meant to replace provincial health plans, nor does it provide the same extent of coverage. Privately sponsored refugees are eligible for full benefits under the IFH Program until coverage under their provincial health plan begins. Depending on the province of destination, the waiting period for provincial health-care coverage can be as much as 90 days after the refugees have arrived in the province. Once provincial coverage has started, refugees are eligible for partial benefits under the IFH Program for up to 12 months from the time of their arrival in the country.

SERVICES THAT ARE COVERED

- *Essential health services only* for the treatment and prevention of serious medical/dental conditions (see page 11, Dental Care Regulations, for further information).
- Contraception, prenatal and obstetrical care.
- *Essential medications only*, which must be Compendium of Pharmaceutical Specialties (CPS) prescription drugs. These prescriptions must be the lowest cost alternatives as found on the current IFH drug list (see site www.fasadmin.com) or life supporting drugs such as insulin or nitroglycerin.

Fees paid are based, if possible, on the provincial health care plan. Fee codes (where applicable) must be supplied on the provider invoice. Invoices must be submitted within 6 months of the date of service.

Note to specialists: IFH will pay Provincial Health Insurance Plan Fee rates for specialists for emergency and/or essential care, where a patient has been referred by a General Practitioner. If no referral is involved, payment will be at General Practitioner rates. Prior approval is required for prolonged care.

SERVICES COVERED ONLY WITH PRIOR APPROVAL

Requests for prior approval must be submitted by mail or fax to: Medical Director, IFH/CIC, 219 Laurier Ave. West, 3rd Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1 FAX: 1-800-362-7456

- Elective surgery (e.g. rhinoplasty)
- Diagnostic services (surgical, laboratory, or x-ray) when no significant medical short-term complications are foreseen
- Non-emergency dental services
- High-cost procedures such as transplants or lithotripsy

**Additional
Information &
Resources On:**

**Interim Federal
Health Program**

**Cross-Cultural
Awareness**

**Cross-Cultural
Resources and
Activities**

**Group Listening and
Communication
Skills**

Group Dynamics

**CIC Coding for
Resettlement
Categories**

Acronyms

- Plastic surgery for esthetic purposes only (some exceptions may be allowed, e.g. with severe disfigurement)
- Ambulance services/transportation (unless emergency)
- Alcohol treatment centres
- Allergy testing/desensitization
- Eye wear (visual acuities required for all patients)
- General Practitioner provided general assessments, counseling and psychotherapy
- Hearing aids
- Infertility work-up
- Orthotics
- Wheelchairs and other rental equipment.
- Podiatry
- Speech Pathology
- Sports Medicine and Physiotherapy
- Over-the-counter medications (even if prescribed by a physician), other than nitroglycerin/diabetic supplies

Invoices and photocopies of original identity/IFH eligibility documents to be mailed by health-care providers only to: **FAS Benefit Administrators Ltd.**, 9707-110th Street, 9th Floor, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 3T4. Information for health professionals only: 1-800-770-2998.

SERVICES NOT COVERED BY THE INTERIM FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAM

No routine medical examinations (e.g., yearly physicals, eye examinations, pre-employment examinations) are covered by IFH.

- Acupuncture treatments
- Routine examinations and treatment
- Any medical/dental service or medication provided solely due to a patient's request (e.g. cholesterol test)
- Chiropractic treatments
- Fertility treatments
- Homeopathy/Naturopathy
- Massage Therapy
- Motor vehicle accidents when automobile insurance is applicable

Dental Care Regulations

Only *emergency/essential* dental services are covered by IFH. (Emergency services are defined as urgent procedures needed to alleviate pain, active infection, hemorrhage or the results of oral trauma. Essential services are procedures for serious dental problems that remain once the emergency services have been provided. These services which are defined below must be submitted to FAS for predetermination.). Although emergency benefits are not subject to a dollar maximum, allocation to emergency treatment will be carefully scrutinized and enforced. Dentists should evaluate treatment on a priority basis.

THE INTERIM FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAM IS INTENDED TO COVER ONLY THE FOLLOWING:

- Initial services are limited to emergency relief of pain or infection only. Where the treating dentist considers further treatment necessary and essential, submission to FAS for predetermination must be made before treatment is begun.
- Emergency exams (no more than once every 6 months per dental office). Complete oral exams and recall exams are not covered.
- Panoramic radiograph **or** 8 peri-apical x-rays (**not both**) will be allowed during the entire eligibility period. X-rays must be clear and discernible and properly labeled or they will be returned. Bite-wing x-rays are not a covered expense. NB: digital X-rays are acceptable.
- All restorations must be predetermined by submitting clear and discernible x-rays. Restorations are covered for severely affected teeth only. Prior approved permanent fillings are restricted to the following: non-bonded amalgam fillings on molars and bicuspids, bonded composite resin fillings on anterior teeth. Fillings will be paid on a continuous surface basis only. Restoration of incipient lesions or those not visible on an x-ray are considered routine care and will not be covered.
- Scaling and root planing are not covered.
- Emergency extractions are covered but ALL claims using *difficult* extraction codes must be submitted with x-rays for justification.
- Drug prescriptions (only those needed to treat the emergency condition(s)).
- Denture placement will be considered when there exists significant problems with eating or where frontal tooth deficits cause an untoward appearance—predetermination is mandatory. Partial dentures to replace only posterior teeth will not be covered. Relines will be considered only after 6 months of placement of dentures. All prosthetic requests should be accompanied by the completed Dental Predetermination Form and submitted with either 8 peri-apical x-rays or Panorex.
- Anesthetic: under age 13, (4) units allowed; age 13 and older, (8) units allowed. All anesthetic must be submitted for predetermination.
- Each dental claim submitted requires x-rays.

EXCLUSIONS TO DENTAL CARE The following dental services and fees are not covered under this program:

- ROOT CANAL TREATMENTS, ORTHODONTICS AND PERMANENT PROSTHETICS
- INTRAVENOUS SEDATION AND NITROUS OXIDE
- PROPHYLAXIS AND FLUORIDE
- FACILITY FEES
- SPECIALIST FEES (unless specially approved for oral surgeons and pedodontists)
- PULPOTOMIES AND STAINLESS STEEL CROWNS

Effective December 1, 2004, dental claims can be submitted electronically. The FAS unique identifier or *BIN* is 610614. The policy number is 999. Both CDAnet Version 2 and Version 4 are supported. **NB:** Please use the Client I.D. Number found on the IFH document when submitting claims, NOT a Social Insurance Number. If you do not know your provider number, please call 1-800-770-2998 to speak with a FAS Call Centre Agent. Payment will be made to providers only.

FEES Payment will be made at 100% of applicable, current, General Practitioner Provincial/Territorial Dental Fee Guide. Where the guide may allow a fee range, only the lowest fee of the applicable range will be reimbursed. Predetermination requests should be mailed with x-rays and all fee codes to FAS Benefit Administrators Ltd.

6.2 Cross-Cultural Awareness

RSTP has produced two training modules to help sponsoring groups: ***Cross-Cultural Awareness***, and ***Conflict Management and Resolution***. Contact your SAH for copies of these modules.

What is culture? An important aspect of preparation is developing cultural awareness. Culture has been called “the story of reality” that individuals and groups value and accept as a guide for organizing their lives.¹⁶ This is a helpful way to think about culture, for although there are physical manifestations of it (such as the way people dress); we know that this, in itself, is not *culture*. Culture is subjective: each group has a different *story of reality*.

Through this commonly held story, people create meaning in their lives, upon which are built values, and in turn, behaviors. Culture runs as deep as anything can in human life. It is very difficult to understand even our own culture; indeed, we are not even aware of it most of the time. Therefore, developing awareness of someone else’s culture may seem daunting. As you build your awareness about the newcomers’ culture, you will begin to gain some understanding of the challenges they will face upon arrival in Canada.

Everyone is capable of learning about and functioning in other cultures. The key is building awareness, learning some core concepts, and practising this knowledge in real-life situations. One important concept is *ethnocentricity*. We are ethnocentric when we judge people’s actions by our cultural criteria rather than by their own. This is a very natural and normal thing to do; however, it is not helpful when communicating and working with someone from another culture. Just being aware of your own tendency to be ethnocentric can be a great help. You can learn to question why something happened, rather than simply reacting to a situation and being angry or upset.

Another important concept is that of cross-cultural competence. If you’ve ever had the chance to work with people from another culture, you’ll be aware of how impossible it would be for you to truly become *one of them*. And, indeed, it would not be appropriate or healthy for you to abandon your own culture. The important thing is that you are able to function competently with people of that culture when you’re with them. Think about this from the newcomers’ point of view: they want to become Canadian, but certainly not to abandon their own heritage. Instead, they strive to be sensitive and open, to learn and to function well. This is the idea of cross-cultural competence. Both you and the newcomers will be learning and making adjustments and developing cross-cultural competence. Although the biggest adjustment and greatest amount of work will be on the part of the newcomers, it’s helpful and important to remember that cultural adjustment is never a one-way street.

¹⁶ Ramsay in *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*.

There are many, many ways to develop cultural awareness. Most of us are fortunate to live in culturally rich and diverse places that offer a wide variety of opportunities for learning. Keep in mind that, although reading about other cultures is good, any activity that involves you in relationships with people from other cultures will be vastly richer. Thus, for example, hosting a Hispanic dinner to which members of the Latin American community are invited will be a much more fruitful experience than going to a Mexican restaurant. Keep the culture of the newcomer you have sponsored in mind, as you review these ideas for building your cultural awareness:

- Use the RSTP *Cross-Cultural Awareness Training Module* to organize a workshop for your group
- Read a refugee's story
- Contact a local ethnocultural group for information and education
- Attend local music and cultural events, films
- Conduct research
- Read about culture shock
- Host a multicultural dinner or potluck
- Read ethnocultural magazines
- Host a display of cultural art or provide a venue for artisans to show off their work
- Host dances, drama, and musical events
- Contact your local multicultural centre
- Do volunteer work in an ethnocultural community
- Get involved in advocacy issues with ethnocultural groups
- Invite ESL teachers or students, or members of multicultural societies to talk to your group
- Meet with other sponsoring groups or newcomers to hear their stories
- View films and videos about the refugee experience
- Find info on the World Wide Web (but note the sources, and note that not all info is reliable!)
- Take a Cross-Cultural introductory course at your local college or community adult education organization
- Take a cooking course
- Set up a chat room with people of like interest

These are only a few suggestions; you will no doubt come up with more. In all these activities, remember that the more open-minded you can be when asking respectful questions, the more you'll learn. The more relationships you develop, the more this learning will become part of your life.

6.2.1 Cross-Cultural Resources and Activities

Beyond the RSTP training modules, there are a variety of simulations, games, resources, and activities that teach cross-cultural awareness. A few (along with contact information) are described in the following paragraphs.

Barnga Barnga, through a simple card game, simulates the experience of encountering people from other cultures and discovering that they are operating under different *rules*. Though faced with ambiguity and barriers to communication, one must understand and reconcile the differences in order to function effectively in a cross-cultural group. For nine or more to play in 45 to 90 minutes. Participant instructions are provided in English, French and Spanish. Contact Intercultural and Community Development Resources Inc., 9938-81 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1W6 Canada; Tel: 780 437-8013 or 1-800-378-3199 Fax: 780 439-6879 www.icdr.com.

BaFá BaFá "BaFá BaFá begins with an introduction describing what happens in the simulation. The group is then divided into two cultures: Alpha and Beta. In separate rooms, each group learns the rules specific to its own culture. Alpha is an in-group/out-group oriented, touching culture, and Beta is a foreign-language-speaking task-oriented culture. Once participants learn and practice the rules of their own culture, observers and visitors are exchanged. After each exchange, participants return and try to describe their experiences in observing and interacting with the other culture. When everyone has had the opportunity to visit the other culture, the simulation is ended. Participants from the two cultures are brought back together to discuss and analyze the experience."¹⁷ The resources required to run the simulation are available from Simulation Training Systems, P.O. Box 910, Del Mar, California 92014; Tel: 858-755-0272 or 1-800-942-2900.

¹⁷ R. Garry Shirts, "Beyond Ethnocentrism: Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding with BaFá BaFá," *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross-Cultural Training Methods*, vol. 1, eds. Sandra M. Fowler with Monica G. Mumford (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc., 1995) 95.

The Squiggle Game

On a flipchart page, draw a large squiggle. Ask people to take a couple of minutes to decide what it represents. “After a few minutes they begin to see—or think they can see—some emergent shape in the squiggle: a cow, a skyline, a ship in a storm. Once people have had a chance to say what they see, have them form groups of three or four, with the assignment of coming to consensus on what the squiggle really means. This process generates a lot of heated debate. People are quick to imagine that their interpretation of a random set of marks on paper is the right one; that they have seen reality and their colleagues are somehow lacking in the percipience with which they have been richly and unusually endowed.” **Discussion:** Rationally, no one answer is correct. Why do we defend our own point of view so heatedly? Once you saw the “cow” or the “ship,” describe the emotional attachment you felt to this interpretation. Discuss the functional purpose of interpreting “raw data” and defending one’s own interpretation. When is this useful? When is it not useful? How can we be aware that our “interpretation” is getting in the way of communication or relationships? What are some of the ways we can try to see someone else’s interpretation? What will we gain by doing so?¹⁸

6.3 Group Listening and Communication Skills

Communication involves both listening and speaking. Listening is especially important, and is the vehicle for developing trust. One definition of listening says: “Listening is paying attention, with empathy and acceptance.” In particular, two *small* steps can radically improve communications.

ON THE LISTENING SIDE:

- **Check to see whether you’ve understood the other person.**
- **In receiving the message, you may have heard something different than what was intended by the speaker.**

ON THE SPEAKING SIDE:

- **Make *I* statements rather than *you* statements.**
- **You can’t really know about others’ motivations, feelings, or assumptions—only your own.**

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

1. **Focus feedback on BEHAVIOUR rather than on the person.**
2. **Focus feedback on OBSERVATION rather than on inference.**
3. **Focus feedback on DESCRIPTION rather than on judgement.**
4. **Talk about MORE/LESS rather than either/or, good/bad.**
5. **Talk about SPECIFIC SITUATIONS rather than abstract situations.**
6. **Focus on SHARING IDEAS AND INFORMATION rather than giving advice.**
7. **Focus on EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES rather than providing answers/solutions.**
8. **Focus on WHAT IS SAID rather than on why it is said.¹⁹**

¹⁸ Adapted from Charles Elliott, *Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry*, (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1999) 10 – 11.

¹⁹ Adapted from “Aids for Giving and Receiving Feedback” (Author Unknown), Robert Kohls with Herbert L. Brussow, *Training Know-How for Cross-Cultural and Diversity Trainers* (Duncanville, Texas: Adult Learning Systems, Inc., 1995) 167 – 169.

6.4 Group Dynamics

Developing Consensus

The most important part of developing consensus is having enough discussion—effective discussion—before making a decision. In general, any method that keeps the discussion going on topic is helpful in eventually building consensus. If your group is really hopelessly stuck over a contentious issue, it may be worth bringing in an outside person to facilitate your discussion—someone with facilitation and/or conflict resolution training.

Participation

After all the work your group will do to prepare for the arrival of the refugees, you may (whether consciously or not) begin to feel that you *own* the process. Of course, your support is very important; but the process *belongs* to the newcomer. Your role is that of an enabler—and a good enabler helps people to imagine, create, and live out their own dreams. Another way of looking at this is in terms of the level of participation. One framework divides participation into 5 different levels, beginning at the bottom with *virtually no participation* and working all the way up to the top with *full participation*.

Ideally, you want all your group work to take place at the top level of full participation:

LEVEL 5: Full participation: the person decides and lives out their own vision for the future.

LEVEL 4: The person participates in planning and implementing activities.

LEVEL 3: Minimal level of participation: the person involved is consulted.

LEVEL 2: The person acts on activities prescribed by others.

LEVEL 1: Virtually no participation.²⁰

This is extremely important for a number of reasons. You know from your own experience that it's only when you're able to make your own decisions that you feel empowered by what you do. Having others make decisions for you is depressing and de-energizing. More importantly, the chances of being able to carry on an activity (e.g., job hunting) after support has been withdrawn, is very low unless participation by the newcomer is very high—Level 5, or Level 4, at the very least.

Appropriate Boundaries

Ensuring that there is an appropriate level of participation by the sponsoring group and by the newcomers goes a long way to ensuring that appropriate boundaries are observed. Boundary issues are complicated by the cross-cultural nature of the interaction; but it still holds true that newcomers need to be in charge of their own lives. Through a desire to help, sponsoring groups can easily take on more than they should. Or, they may want to look into the newcomers' personal life more than they should or ask inappropriately personal questions.

It is helpful to ask:

- Am I *doing for* or *doing with*?
- Will this activity help the newcomers to become more independent?
- Who *wants* this to be done?
- What am I getting out of it?
- How does this make me feel? Do I have any clues about how the newcomer feels?

Honest answers to questions like these will help to clarify whether there are appropriate boundaries.

²⁰ Adapted from "Stages in Participating," drawing by Nancy Bergau for the Sulawesi Rural Development Project.

6.5 CIC Coding for Resettlement Categories

CONVENTION REFUGEE ABROAD CLASS

CR1	Convention refugee abroad, government assistance required for up to 12 months
CR3*	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for up to 12 months
CR4	Convention refugee abroad, self-supporting, government assistance not required
CR5	Convention refugee abroad, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance Sponsorship
CRC	Convention refugee abroad, with a community sponsorship
CRS	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a SAH
CRG	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group of five
CRX*	Convention refugee abroad, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for 12-24 months

SOURCE COUNTRY CLASS (Resettlement-Source)

RS1	Source Country, government assistance required for up to 12 months
RS3*	Source Country, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for up to 12 months
RS4	Source Country, self-supporting, government assistance not required
RS5	Source Country, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance Sponsorship
RSC	Source Country, with a community sponsorship
RSS	Source Country, sponsored by a SAH
RSG	Source Country, sponsored by a group of five
RSX*	Source Country, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for 12-24 months

COUNTRY OF ASYLUM CLASS (Resettlement-Asylum)

RA3*	Country of Asylum, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for up to 12 months
RA4	Country of Asylum, self-supporting, government assistance not needed
RA5	Country of Asylum, special needs case selected under Joint Assistance sponsorship
RAC	Country of Asylum, with a community sponsorship
RAS	Country of Asylum, sponsored by a SAH
RAG	Country of Asylum, sponsored by a group of five
RAX*	Country of Asylum, sponsored by a group of five or corporation for 12-24 months

Note: Codes marked with an asterisk (*) will be inactive under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.

Forms:

IMM 0008	Application for Permanent Residence in Canada
IMM 1442	FOSS Full Document Entry - Generic
IMM 5355	Immigration Loans (Assistance Loan)
IMM 5373	Undertaking/Application to Sponsor (Groups of Five)
IMM 5373A	Settlement Plan and Financial Assessment (for Groups of Five)
IMM 5373B	Financial Profile (Groups of Five)
IMM 5414	Sponsorship Kit (Groups of Five)
IMM 5437	Document Checklist (Groups of Five)
IMM 5438	Request for a Refugee Profile (application form)
IMM 5492	Sponsor Assessment Form
IMM 5496	Request for a Refugee Profile Kit
IMM 6000	Application Kit for Permanent Residence in Canada, includes IMM 0008, Schedule 1, Schedule 2, and IMM 5476 Use of a Representative

6.6 Acronyms

AWR	Women at Risk
CAIPS	Computer-Assisted Immigration Processing System (CIC's tracking system of cases)
CCLB	Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CCTB	Canada Child Tax Benefit
CCVT	Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
CET	Centre for Education and Training
CG	Constituent Group
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Immigration Centre
CLTA	Centre for Language Training and Assessment (A branch of CET)
CPC	Case Processing Centre (CPC-Vegreville, CPC-Mississauga, etc.)
CR	Convention Refugee
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
CSQ	Certificat de sélection du Québec
DMP	Designated Medical Practitioner
ESL/FSL	English as a Second Language/French as a Second Language
FAC	Foreign Affairs Canada
GAR	Government-Assisted Refugee
G-5	Group of Five
HDC	Humanitarian Designated Classes
IFH	Interim Federal Health Program
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRPA	<i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i> (Implemented June 28, 2002)
ISA	Immigrant Serving Agencies (Also known as SPOs)
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
JAS	Joint Assistance Sponsorship
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
MC	Matching Centre (at Citizenship and Immigration Canada Headquarters)
NAT	Notification of Arrival Transmission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Principal Applicant
PSR	Privately Sponsored Refugee
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
ROLF	Right of Landing Fee
RSTP	Refugee Sponsorship Training Program
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SPO	Service Provider Organization (Also known as ISAs)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees