

The Effects of Sponsorship on Public Attitudes and Social Connection

Gabriella D'Avino



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Series editors:

Eliza Bateman, Vickie Knox, Nathan Benson

*The **Knowledge Brief Series** is produced by the University of Ottawa Refugee Hub. The Briefs are intended to briefly summarize the global state of knowledge on topics related to community-based refugee sponsorship.*

I. Summary

Broadly defined as “programs that empower groups of ordinary individuals... to lead in welcoming, supporting, and integrating refugees” ([Bond and Kwadrans 2019:89](#)), community refugee sponsorship programs bring together newcomers and members of the hosting communities. They play a vital role in providing newcomers with access to invaluable resources that facilitate positive integration outcomes, which professional agencies are unable to offer ([Fratzke and Dorst 2019](#)). Early encounters between new refugees and their sponsors can potentially play a strong “transformative” function in building positive public attitudes towards refugees. Negative attitudes towards refugees are often the result of more generalized worries among the host community about unemployment, recession, terrorism, radicalism, and welfare dependency of newcomers. Such concerns can diminish citizens’ awareness of the nation’s legal obligation to assist displaced people (More in Common 2017, 2018). Local communities can become more inclusive and welcoming by mobilizing ordinary people to support refugee newcomers through sponsorship. The transformative power of community sponsorship can be further extended at national and international levels because these programs bring together a wide range of stakeholders, thus helping to mitigate the often-polarised narratives about refugees ([Valcárcel Silveira 2019](#); Bond 2021). Evidence shows that even individuals with less positive attitudes towards refugees support the development of community sponsorship programs as a solution to facilitate newcomers’ integration into the community (More in Common 2017b).

Public attitudes and social connections are strongly linked. Refugee newcomers who feel welcome are more likely to develop positive social relationships with the hosting community ([Hynie 2018](#)). Some studies demonstrate the positive effects of newcomer-sponsor relationships through community sponsorship programs, though there is also evidence that such relationships can be stressful and counterproductive (Labman and Cameron 2020). Sponsors can provide invaluable support in helping refugees in their settlement processes, but the importance of supporting refugees to maintain and/or build relationships with people of their same ethnic group, race, nationality or religion cannot be dismissed. Connections with other refugees and diaspora communities enable newcomers to maintain their primary identity (e.g., as Syrian men and women) while negotiating their new identity (e.g., as Syrian refugees) in the hosting country ([United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \[UNHCR\], 2021](#)). Additionally, increasing the diversity of sponsor participants—not only in terms of ethnicity—is highly recommended because refugees are not a homogenous group; shared ethnicity alone may be insufficient ground on which to forge new relationships ([Hynie et al. 2019](#); [Karimi et al. 2020](#); [Senthanaar et al. 2020](#)). Race, gender, sexuality, and religion are multiple and complex elements of refugees’ multiple identities and recognising their diversity and intersectionality is fundamental to achieving positive integration outcomes. Currently, community sponsorship groups in many countries are predominantly composed of white, middle class, older and highly educated women ([Haugen et al. 2020](#); [Macklin et al. 2020](#); [Phillimore et al. 2020](#)). Involving a wide range of individuals of different socio-demographic backgrounds can be beneficial to moulding social cohesion, facilitating integration, and building positive public attitudes towards newcomers.

II. Sponsorship and public attitudes

Community sponsorship programs have the potential to shift public attitudes in several ways and at different levels. At the local level, the participation of informed ordinary citizens in sponsorship programs can help to erase misleading myths about newcomers; sponsors learn not only about refugees’ issues, but also about how services and welfare systems work. Their increased awareness and knowledge enable sponsors to sympathize with the plight of disadvantaged people and to advocate for a more equitable society ([Environics Institute for Survey Research 2018](#); [Schmidtke 2018](#)). Community sponsorship’s positive effects extend beyond the individuals who directly support newcomers. Sponsors can become ‘trusted messengers’ who, in sharing their beliefs and experience with their social networks, can create positive narratives about newcomers, and reduce negative attitudes (More in Common 2019 cited in Bond 2021). Such transformative power has the potential to create more welcoming communities; they can counter the growth of anti-immigration sentiment and policies, and pressure governments to preserve and strengthen refugees’ protection systems (Bond 2021). At the

global level, positive public attitudes generated through community sponsorship can also have an impact by increasing local citizen participation in finding solutions to issues that affect refugees, for instance, while eroding narratives of newcomers as threats to the existing social order ([Schmidtke 2018](#)).

II.1 Effects of sponsorship on public attitudes at the community/local level

Community sponsorship programs offer the local community opportunities to establish relationships with refugee newcomers. These encounters help to educate society about the causal factors of refugees' displacement and the challenges of resettlement. They can also help reduce the stereotypes, false beliefs and negative attitudes towards refugees ([Amundson 2018](#)). As a result, community members can become more accepting of newcomers' ethnic, racial and cultural differences ([Phillimore and Reyes 2020](#)). Positive attitudinal changes have been recorded even in less diverse hosting communities whose members are not used to interacting with people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds, for instance ([Phillimore and Reyes 2020](#)).

The positive effects of community sponsorships are not only documented amongst individuals and groups who are directly involved in the programs, but also amongst members of the wider communities ([Reyes and Phillimore 2020](#)). This can increase support for refugee resettlement, even among people not involved in sponsorship or only indirectly involved ([Environics Institute for Survey Research 2018](#)). In exploring the effects of community sponsorship in less diverse communities, Reyes, and Phillimore (2020) found that even service providers without previous experiences of working with and/or living alongside refugees enjoyed learning through their cross-cultural interactions with sponsored newcomers. Research has found that community sponsorship could “act as a quiet force for change, creating opportunities for movement towards more openness to diversity, and building new kinds of social relations, whilst pushing back against concerns generated by negative media” (Reyes and Phillimore 2020:19). Furthermore, as sponsors help newcomers navigate access to welfare and other essential services, they can become more knowledgeable of and more sympathetic to the difficulties endured by people on low incomes or living in vulnerable situations at home and abroad ([Tempesta2019](#)). A study found that participation in community sponsorship raised “concern about such global issues as hunger/famine, human rights abuses, religious and ethnic hatred, and global migration” among individuals ([Environics Institute for Survey Research 2018:35](#)). Consequently, community sponsorship has the potential to mobilize citizens to advocate for a fairer and more equitable world, while reducing the beliefs that generate negative attitudes towards newcomers (More in Common 2017b).

However, some studies show that a positive attitude towards refugees extends only to the sponsored refugees, with some sponsors demonstrating less care about the situation of ‘other’ refugees ([Macklin et al. 2020](#)). A European Commission inquiry into sponsorship found that an increase in local-level participation is evident when community sponsorship allows local community groups —rather than government or organizations —to be directly responsible for newcomers' resettlement ([European Commission 2018](#)). Community sponsorship groups actively engage with a wider range of actors before and after the newcomers' arrival, generating a ‘ripple effect’ as new local-level relationships develop between community members, as well as between local authorities and civil society (International Catholic Migration Commission [ICMI] [Europe and Caritas Europa 2019](#)). Conversely, the Polish sponsorship program, which consisted of a single organisation instead of ordinary citizens involved in supporting newcomers, proved less effective in connecting newcomers with the broader community, and many sponsored newcomers subsequently relocated ([European Commission 2018](#)). Community sponsorship programs that bring together a mix of actors from civil society are recognized as having the potential to deal with management issues, but also of finding solutions and building consensus from the bottom ([GiannettoandPonzo2019](#)).

II.2. Effects of sponsorship on public attitudes at the national level

By providing opportunities for members of the public to support refugees, community sponsorship programs offer refugee newcomers additional resources that the government may be unable to provide ([European Commission 2018](#)). Notably, the development of community sponsorship programs across ten European countries has increased public participation in refugee protection systems ([European Commission 2018](#)). Moreover, people's awareness of issues concerning refugees increased, and consequently, were more welcoming ([Balta Ozgen 2019](#)). Increased public participation further expands and scales up sponsorship capacity ([ICMC Europe and Caritas Europa 2019](#)). For instance, greater awareness of global issues among sponsors and non-sponsors resulted in 61 % of Canadians agreeing that their country should continue to welcome the same or even greater numbers of refugees (Environics 2018; Bond 2021).

On the other hand, community sponsorship can decrease governments' roles and responsibilities for refugee protection ([European Commission 2018](#)). While governments can use community sponsorship to develop a welcoming narrative towards refugees, community sponsorship can also be employed to reduce governments' commitment to support newcomers, thus shifting responsibilities onto members of civil society ([Lam 2019](#); [Wood 2020](#)). In Canada, for instance, stories about community sponsorship, publicised by government and news media, strengthened the national narrative of Canada as a welcoming society for refugees. However, they can also have the unintended effect of masking the existence of racism and ongoing anti-racist work to address discrimination against newcomers ([Lama 2017](#)).

Despite evidence indicating that community sponsorship can improve public attitudes toward refugees, there remain some concerns regarding the effects that an overly positive emphasis on sponsorship can have on political discourse, for instance, on the drafting of immigration policies. If community sponsorship programs are promoted as an alternative to the governments' commitment to resettle refugees, the role of sponsorship as an additional tool for protection is denied, and countries' obligations to provide protection for refugees can be overlooked or weakened in practice ([Labmanand Garnier 2021](#)). Additionally, there is the risk that community sponsorship may be used to reinforce the distinction between 'good' resettled refugees and 'bad' refugees who seek asylum after arriving in a country (Bradley and Duin 2020). The development of community sponsorship programs exclusively for specific nationalities, as happened with Syrians or Afghans, further generates a [hierarchy of 'deservingness'](#) among individuals waiting to be resettled ([D'Avino 2021](#)). Showing preference for one refugee group over others can result in tension among refugees' communities when some refugees are excluded from initiatives ([Mendonca 2018](#)). "Advocates and agencies are concerned that individuals in need of protection from other countries are considered less of a priority, creating a two-tier system, where "non-prioritized" cases are either not addressed or seriously delayed" ([Shauna and Pearlman 2018:445](#)).

While we should acknowledge risks associated with community sponsorship programs and their growth, we should also not detract attention away from sponsorship's "broadest and most potent potential: the capacity to mobilize millions of people and to impact the politics that underpin refugee resettlement" (Bond 2021:162). Community sponsorship is a tool that ordinary citizens can employ to positively shape the refugees' protection system (Bond 2021), for instance, advocating for more sympathetic attitudes towards newcomers ([FratzkeandDorst2019](#)). In Canada, the general public support for resettlement programs has been attributed to the fact that almost two million Canadians have been directly involved in sponsoring Syrian refugees, while another seven million people personally knew a sponsor ([Environics Institute for Survey Research 2018](#)). Research indicates that Canadians judge the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program positively, and express an interest in sponsorship which is less dependent on their socio-demographic characteristics and where they live ([Environics Institute for Survey Research 2021](#)). The direct and indirect engagement of one-third of the Canadian population in refugee sponsorships since the 1970s seems to have generated a more positive approach towards migration and diversity ([Adams 2018](#)). Examples of good practices set by community sponsorship can result in better service for refugees and support for formal resettlement programs and they can further encourage the participation of several actors, such as employers and educational institutions, in the refugees' protection system ([Wood 2020](#)).

II.3. Effects of sponsorship on public attitudes at the global level

Through community sponsorship, ordinary people can learn about the lives of refugees before resettlement and to better understand the forces that lead to the displacement of people from their homelands, forcing them to seek refuge in other countries ([Nasri2020](#)). Fostering positive attitudes towards refugees at the national level can then positively impact the approach employed to frame refugee issues at the global level. With its socializing and educational effects, community sponsorship can help generate more pragmatic and less nationalist-populist discourses in response to the global refugee crisis, displacing narratives that see refugees' arrival as a threat to national identity, cohesion, and security ([Schmidtke2018](#)).

By bringing different members of society together, community sponsorship can be a positive “example of a whole-of-society approach to refugee protection” ([Tan 2020](#)) that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees [GCR] to increase access to third-country solutions for refugees (United Nations [UN] 2018). International and regional institutions recognize the transformative potential that community sponsorship can have in welcoming new communities and building social cohesion. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] [Three-Year Strategy](#) (2019-2021) underlines how positive narratives about refugees generated through community sponsorships can create bottom-up support for refugee inclusion (UNHCR 2019).

At the European level, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum also recognizes the capacity for community sponsorship programs to increase available homes and services for individuals in need, facilitate integration, build welcoming communities, and reduce onward movements (European Commission 2020). To expand community sponsorship programs, the European Union provides “funding, capacity building and knowledge-sharing” to countries interested in developing private or community sponsorship (European Commission 2020b). In 2019, “as part of the EU efforts to provide more legal channels for the growing number of displaced persons in need of international protection”, the European Commission (under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)) further allocated funds to support new and existing sponsorship (European Commission 2020c). The promotion of these initiatives is based on evidence showing that offering ordinary citizens the opportunity to engage with refugees directly can dismantle prejudices, promote social cohesion, create welcoming communities, and raise awareness of resettlement and humanitarian protection ([European Commission 2018](#)).

III. Effects of sponsorship on social connections

“Sponsors have identified building meaningful relationships as the most transformative part of the sponsorship process” ([Dyck 2017](#)). Community sponsorship programs offer the opportunity to build relationships between people of different backgrounds.

These bridging connections are essential to achieve planned and positive integration outcomes, alongside bonding relationships between people of different backgrounds, and linking relations with institutions ([Ndofor-Tahet et al. 2019](#)). Bonding capital is still the most substantial social capital for refugee newcomers, while bridging capital may be employed to access job opportunities and housing (Hanley et al. 2018). Social connections between sponsors and newcomers are not without challenges, but they have the potential to develop through close and reciprocal relationships. Such ties can then alleviate newcomers' feeling of isolation and potentially facilitate their access to resources, as sponsors link newcomers with members of the wider community ([FratzkeandDorst2019](#); [Tardis 2019](#)). Community sponsorship programs can also positively affect connections among sponsors ([Amnesty International 2018](#); [Phillimore et al. 2021b](#)).

III.1. Types of connections

In Canada, privately sponsored refugees often have several family members in their social networks ([Hanley et al. 2018](#); [Nakhaie 2018](#)). The presence of family members in the networks of refugees resettled in Canada can be explained by the fact that the Canadian sponsorship program allows sponsors to name the individuals they want to welcome. Sponsored refugees also have a high number of connections with people of the same ethnic group ([Hanley et al. 2018](#)). Nevertheless, when compared to government-assisted refugees, sponsored refugees in Canada seem to develop relationships with their sponsors rather than with people who originate from their same country, or share their language, culture, or religion ([Ali et al. 2021](#)). The study conducted by Ali et al. (2021) also found that as time spent in Canada increases, both privately sponsored and government-assisted refugees are likely to build relationships with people of their same nationality and ethnicity.

The composition of refugees' networks depends on the contexts in which refugees are resettled and varies according to some individual characteristics. For instance, sponsored male refugees have fewer friends than women, and older refugees are more likely to have fewer friends than other age groups ([Hanley et al. 2018](#)). In less diverse areas, when refugees do not find people of their same ethnic communities, they tend to develop these bonding connections through social media ([Hassan and Phillimore 2020](#)). Some male newcomers used social media to find friends and establish relationships ([Phillimore et al. 2020](#)).

Sponsors in the UK introduced new Arabic-speaking refugees to other refugees and Arabic speakers, who provided newcomers with emotional support and knowledge about employment, local services, and other issues ([Phillimore et al. 2021](#)). However, sometimes these sponsor-organised encounters between refugees resulted in embarrassment, or made newcomers feel even more isolated when they did not bond with the settled refugee family to whom they had been introduced ([Phillimore et al. 2020](#); [Hassan and Phillimore 2020](#)). On some occasions, embarrassment arose because sponsors had not informed the sponsored newcomers that they had organised meetings with other refugee families ([Phillimore et al. 2020](#)). Despite sponsors' efforts to introduce newcomers to members of the wider community, establishing connections remains a challenge for refugees ([Reyes and Phillimore 2020](#)).

In terms of linking connections, sponsored newcomers are more likely to have fewer relationships with settlement agencies than government-assisted ones. This is probably due to the high levels of support sponsored newcomers receive through their sponsorship networks, although some sponsors and sponsored newcomers might be unaware of the available services and the possibility of accessing them ([Drolet and Moorthi 2018](#); [ARI 2019](#)). Sponsored newcomers tend to rely more on community services ([Drolet and Moorthi 2018](#); [Nakhaie 2018](#)), with sponsors facilitating newcomers' access to service provider organizations ([Hassan and Phillimore 2020](#)). For instance, compared to government-assisted newcomers, sponsored refugees had a higher rate of access to healthcare providers ([Oda et al. 2019](#)).

III.2. Nature of social connections

Sponsored newcomers and sponsors often refer to their relationship as “family-like” connections ([Ali et al. 2021](#)) or as friendships ([Amnesty International 2018](#)). However, despite these fictive kinship relations, it can be challenging for refugee newcomers to have in-depth conversations with their sponsors, primarily due to language barriers ([Hassan and Phillimore 2020](#); [Ali et al. 2021](#)). Additionally, some sponsors adopt a paternalistic approach, which hinders integration and the authentic development of “family-like” relationships between sponsors and newcomers ([Ali et al. 2021](#)). [Macklin et al. \(2020\)](#) argue that the comparison between kinship and sponsorship—which often leads sponsors to adopt a paternalistic approach—depend on the structural features of sponsorship. Critiques of the Canadian policy framework argue that the newcomer-sponsor connection is framed as “a family-like relationship” not only because community sponsorship prioritizes the resettlement of families over individuals, but also because the language employed in sponsorship seems to construct sponsors as parents and the newcomers as their children ([Macklin et al. 2020](#)). Similarly, in the UK, [De Vries \(2021\)](#) argues that a power imbalance between sponsors and newcomers is intrinsic to the Community Sponsorship Scheme's framework ([Refugee Hub 2021](#)). However, it is worth noting that even in

traditional resettlement programs, instances of paternalism can also be found in the relationship between newcomers and caseworkers, often resulting from rhetorical representations of refugees as needy and helpless (Dykstra 2016). Given the practical and economic restrictions under which caseworkers find themselves operating, the option of having a sponsor may be seen by newcomers as an appealing and pragmatic solution that enables them to exercise their agency and to acquire autonomy in decision-making (Campbell 2016).

Despite the challenges, sponsor-newcomer connections can evolve in more equal relationships if sponsors recognize sponsored refugees as individuals, rather than as people in need (Refugee Hub 2021). The sponsor-newcomer relationships can also benefit from recognising boundaries and from having clear and consistent communication within the community sponsorship group, between sponsors and newcomers, interactions which can be facilitated by interpreters (GRSI 2020). Effective communication can also help manage expectations, improving sponsor-newcomer relationships (Refugee Sponsorship Training Program [RSTP 2021]).

The development of friendships between sponsors and newcomers' is not without challenges as sponsors may struggle "to know what support they should legitimately provide as a group or as a friend" (Phillimore et al. 2020:28). Nevertheless, community sponsorship offers a great opportunity to develop and deepen friendships, not only between sponsors and newcomers, but between members of the community (Amnesty International 2018). As sponsors cultivate more friendships through community sponsorship, they also feel "greater affection for their community more generally" (Phillimore et al. 2021b). Friendship among sponsors can further result in sponsorship groups having more consistent communication with newcomers, which help manage expectations, and improve sponsor-newcomer relationships (Phillimore et al. 2020; GRSI 2020). Through community sponsorship, sponsors and newcomers can establish open and respectful relationships, discussing even more sensitive topics such as sexuality and gender equality which may positively impact attitudes beyond the end of the sponsorship agreement (Appiah 2017; Reyes and Phillimore 2020).

III.3. How social connections support and hinder social capital and integration

Developing social connections between sponsors, host communities and refugees has the potential to build social capital, "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:119). According to the seminal work of Putnam, bonding capital reinforces identities within a group and produces closed communities, while bridging capital boosts social cohesion through relationships between different individuals (Putnam 2020).

Sponsor-newcomer relationships can generate social capital which in turn can facilitate integration, but only if sponsors are adequately prepared to assist refugees (European Commission 2018). Through their connections with sponsors, refugees can learn the hosting country's language quickly (ICMC Europe and Caritas Europa 2019), access employment opportunities, and build friendships and connections with the wider community. Accruing social capital can help newcomers feel less isolated, impart a stronger sense of belonging and status, and so achieve better integration outcomes (FratzkeandDorst2019). Around a quarter of sponsored newcomers participating in Hanley et al.'s (2018) study on social networks claimed to have people in their network whom they could trust and ask for support (Hanley et al. 2018). Additionally, social connections between sponsors and newcomers based on mutual respect, when sponsors treat refugee newcomers as equals, can help to encourage acceptance of cultural differences (Haugen et al. 2020).

In rural areas, social connections are essential to overcoming challenges posed by the lack of services and amenities which are more readily available in urban areas (Haugen 2019). Building relationships is not always easy for newcomers in rural areas, as demonstrated by newcomers who were resettled in Italy and France through Humanitarian Corridors (Paravatiand Ricci 2020). Privately sponsored refugees in Italy and France, for instance, expressed difficulties in establishing relationships with neighbours and in creating friendships, though some claimed that sponsors helped them to develop

some social connections (Paravati and Ricci 2020). In France, competition amongst sponsors offers a possible reason why newcomers struggle to establish relationships with neighbours (Paravati and Ricci 2020). Yet, for some newcomers placed in small towns and rural areas, the presence of a strong network between community members helped overcome challenges related to the lack of adequate services, and provided newcomers with innovative and ad hoc solutions ([Tardis 2019](#)).

Despite the importance of the social connections between newcomers and sponsors in integration processes, these relationships alone are not enough to make refugees feel “integrated over time as they struggle to achieve the desired independence” ([Phillimore et al. 2021:17](#)). Firstly, the importance of social connections that newcomers develop with people of their same ethnic background must be recognized. Studies conducted in Canada show that sponsored refugees strongly rely on family and friends for accessing employment and housing opportunities ([Hyndman and Hynie 2016](#); [Hanley et al. 2018](#)). Having relationships with people who share the same culture and language can also help refugees feel less isolated ([ICMC Europe and Caritas Europa 2019](#)). Additionally, newcomers’ relationship with sponsors does not always turn into a friendship, especially when newcomers feel inadequately supported by their sponsors ([Phillimore et al. 2021](#)), or when paternalistic sponsors reduce newcomers’ ability to make decisions by themselves ([Smith et al. 2017](#)).

When sponsored refugees are not adequately trained and well-equipped to take on responsibilities, the connection between sponsors and newcomers can hinder integration, especially when sponsorship relationships break down ([European Commission 2018](#)). The fear of losing sponsors’ support can worry newcomers and negatively impact their sense of stability in the hosting country ([Vatanparastet al. 2020](#)). Additionally, all the actors involved in community sponsorship, including sponsors and settlement agencies, should be well informed about their role and responsibilities, and ensure that newcomers have access to the services to which they are entitled (Allies in Refugee Integration ([ARI 2019](#))).

Arguably, community sponsorship programs create unique relationships between hosting community members and newcomers which can build social capital and ease integration ([Krivenko2016](#)), “but the reality is that these relationships are sometimes fraught” (Labman and Cameron 2020:305). Bonding capital is still the most substantial social capital for refugee newcomers, while bridging capital is less employed to access job opportunities and housing.

IV. Knowledge gaps

- There is a lack of comparative studies that explore the effect of community sponsorship on public attitudes towards refugees ([Amundson 2018](#)).
- More studies are also needed to understand how newcomers perceive attitudes towards themselves and how perceptions impact the integration processes ([Balta Ozgen 2019](#)).
- As some countries have only recently developed community sponsorship programs, there is little evidence of the sponsorship’s impact on public attitudes in the long term ([Phillimore and Reyes 2020](#)).
- More studies are needed to understand the role of sponsor-newcomer relationships in supporting economic and political integration (Labman and Cameron 2020; [Ali et al. 2021](#)).
- Further studies should also focus on the effect of sponsorship connections in rural areas ([Haugen 2019](#)).
- Further studies should identify factors that turn bridging relationships into bonding ones to better understand sponsor-newcomer relationships ([Phillimore et al. 2021](#)).
- A significant gap in the literature is the lack of studies on community sponsorship effects on public attitudes outside the sponsor-newcomer relationships. Specifically, there is a paucity of evidence on sponsorship programs’ impact on the broader community, including individuals not directly involved in community sponsorship.

V. Ongoing research

The future of community sponsorship depends strongly on the sponsors' experience of the program, including the relationships sponsors build inside their sponsorship groups. Macklin and her colleagues aim to explore sponsorship group dynamics following the 2020 publication of their working paper *The Kinship between Refugee and Family Sponsorship*.

Leonie Ansems de Vries at King's College, University of London, is carrying out a study exploring social relationships between sponsors, refugees, and wider communities with an aim to understand how constructive relationships are built and how community sponsorship in the UK can be improved.

Natasha Nicholls at the University of Birmingham is focusing on sponsorship relationships from the point of view of sponsors to understand how volunteers' engagement with the UK Community Sponsorship Scheme (CS) shapes relationships with the refugee families and how volunteering within a community sponsorship group affects sponsors' journeys through sponsorship.

At the University of Birmingham, Gabriella D'Avino is comparing the social networks built by refugees resettled in the UK through the Community Sponsorship Scheme and the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme [VPRS] with a view to understand the interrelationship between the established social connections and the support received by these social relationships, and how the combination and/or the absence of social networks and resources accessed through established social connections shape refugees' integration. Hassan, Phillimore and D'Avino further explore the role of newcomers' social networks in supporting integration in a forthcoming article.

In collaboration with the University of Notre Dame, Ilaria Schnyder von Wartensee and Clemens Sedmak are conducting a [research project](#) which aims to understand and narrate the encounters between newcomers who arrived in Italy through the Humanitarian Corridors and hosting communities' members (Kellogg Institute 2021).

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