

**Economic Commission for Europe****Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management****Eighty first session**

Geneva, 6-8 October 2020

Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda

**Review of the implementation of the programmes of work 2018-2019 and 2020: affordable, adequate, energy efficient and healthy housing: Affordable, adequate and healthy housing****Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE region: challenges and practices****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

At its seventy-seventh session in 2016, the Committee decided to prepare a study on how countries are addressing the migration crisis through the provision of affordable housing (ECE/HBP/184). In response to this decision, the Committee secretariat developed a study which examines current challenges and practices and through a compendium of best practices illustrates how housing for migrants and refugees can positively support local economies and facilitate migrants and refugees' integration.

The study was presented and discussed at the eightieth session of the Committee in 2019. The Committee agreed to undertake an additional review of the study through the organization of informal meetings with permanent missions in Geneva in order to submit a revised draft for consideration of the 81st Committee session (ECE/HBP/201). This information document contains the version reflecting the output of those consultations.

The Committee is invited to take note of the study and approve it as an official digital ECE publication in English and Russian.

This is an unedited version and it will be edited before submitted as a publication.

# Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE region: challenges and practices

## Foreword

Cities around the world are facing a pressing challenge to meet the housing needs of a growing urban population, which by 2050 will reach 6,5 billion people, or two thirds of the overall global population. Major global phenomena such as urbanisation, international migration and the global financial crisis and economic recession have had a critical impact on the housing sector's capacity to deliver adequate and affordable housing for all. With governments struggling to meet the housing need of the local population, mass irregular migration has often been seen as adding further pressure to shrinking public budgets.

In 2016, during its seventy-seventh session, the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management adopted a decision to prepare a study on how countries are addressing the migration crisis through the provision of affordable housing (ECE/HBP/184). In response to this decision, the Committee secretariat developed a study on Housing for Migrants and Refugees which examines challenges and practices, and through a compendium of best practices, it illustrates that housing for migrants and refugees can positively support local communities and economies and facilitate regular migrants and refugees' integration. Best practices and recommendations presented in this study can be used for finding best approaches to the provision of affordable and adequate housing for other groups.

It should be noted that as stated in the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing (UNECE, 2015), persons and groups in situation of vulnerability vary from country to country, dependent on the conditions and policies of the individual states in which they reside. These may include youth; older persons; large families with children and single parent families; victims of domestic violence; people with disabilities; irregular migrants; refugees; Roma communities and other minority groups.<sup>1</sup>

Housing holds a fundamental role in the integrative process of regular migrants, refugees and representatives of other groups as location, accessibility and affordability significantly determine their opportunities for life and work (?) in a city or a rural settlement. In order to leave no-one behind, as pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> this study calls on all housing stakeholders, the public, private and not for profit sector alike to embrace a paradigm shift whereby housing strategies and projects are based on a long-term vision and include active participation in decision-making and in the management of housing.

This study highlights the key role of cities and local administrations, as well as the need to further coordinate policies, programmes and actions across sectors and levels of government.

## Acknowledgements

This study is the output of a joint effort led by the secretariat of the Committee on Urban Development,

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2015) The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing. Available at: [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/UNECE\\_Charter\\_EN.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/UNECE_Charter_EN.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2018) 'What does it mean to leave no-one behind? A framework for implementation'. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html>.

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The UNECE also wishes to acknowledge the following members of national and local governments, international banks and organisations, housing providers and civil society who also contributed to this research: Mr. Peter Cachola Schmal, Deutsches Architektur Museum, Germany; Mr. Andrea Colantonio, EIB, Luxembourg; Ms. Beatriz Corredor Sierra, PSOE, Spain; Mr. Luigi Cuna, CEB, France; Mr. Sebastien Garnier, AEDES, Netherlands; Mr. Bahram Ghazi, OHCHR, Switzerland; Mr. Nino Gventsadze, Ministry of Economy, Georgia; Ms. Sabina Kekic, City of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Mr. Samir Kulenovic, CEB, France; Mr. Christophe Lalande, UN-Habitat, Kenya; Ms. Fernanda Lonardoni, UN-Habitat, Kenya; Mr. Jesus Salcedo, UN-Habitat, Kenya; Ms. Jaana Nevalainen, Ministry of Environment, Finland; Mr. Ozgur Oner, GdW Federal Association of German Association and Real Estate Companies, Germany; Mr. Haris Piplas, ETH Zurich, Switzerland; Mr. Andreas Postner, Vorarlberg Wohnraum, Austria; Mr. Christian Schantl, Stadt Wien – Wiener Wohnen, Austria; Mr. Guido Schwarzendahl, Bauverein Halle & Leuna, Germany; and Mr. Marc Uhry, Fondation Abbé Pierre, France.

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## Definitions

There is no universally agreed upon legal definition of “migrant”. The United Nations International Organisation of Migration provides the following definition for migrants:

**Migrant** - An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.<sup>3</sup> States may distinguish between regular and irregular migration status<sup>4</sup>. It should be noted that the term ‘Migrant’ within this publication refers to migrants holding the legal right to stay on another State’s territory, unless otherwise noted.

This report focuses on migrants in positions of vulnerability, for example due to low income levels. This is not necessarily the case for all migrants.

Refugees are defined and protected under international law; the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as modified by the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, provides the following definition:

**Refugee** – Subject to certain exceptions, a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, 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; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> International Organization for Migration. (2011). ‘Key Migration Terms’. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>.

<sup>4</sup> There is no universally agreed way of defining these differences in types of migration

<sup>5</sup> Art. 1(A)(2), 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

## Executive Summary

Adequate housing was recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Adequate housing may include characteristics related to, but not limited to, security of tenure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, cultural adequacy, and availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> Global situations such as urbanisation, migration, climate change, as well as the 2008 global financial crisis, have had a critical impact upon the housing sector's capacity to deliver adequate housing for all. With governments struggling to meet the housing needs of their citizens, mass irregular migration has often been seen as adding further pressure to shrinking public budgets. The case studies presented in this publication were selected based on interviews with experts, literature review and contributions by governments of UNECE member States. In the selection of the case studies, authors attempted to ensure that the case studies present a diversity of housing solutions covering the whole housing continuum<sup>7</sup>, going beyond emergency shelters.

The case studies therefore demonstrate a wide range of good practices for providing affordable and adequate housing for migrants and refugees, which include but are not restricted to the following:

- Revitalizing depopulated decaying urban neighbourhoods by renovating vacant houses and using them as housing for migrants and refugees (Case studies 1 and 2)
- Addressing the depopulation of rural areas through providing housing for migrants and refugees in rural communities (Case studies 3-6)
- Promoting diverse and sustainable communities through facilitating interaction between local communities and migrants and refugees, developing shared public spaces and conducting activities to support integration (Case studies 7-9)
- Developing long-term, sustainable and cost-efficient housing solutions through planning and implementation processes on housing construction and maintenance (Case studies 10-16)
- Building affordable adequate housing through applying innovative architectural design for cheap, but still high-quality, modular prefabricated housing (Case studies 17-22)
- Generating additional resources on housing projects for migrants and refugees through partnerships between governments, NGOs and the private sector (Case studies 22-28).

The case studies also demonstrate that access to housing plays a major role in the process of integration for migrants and refugees as, among other factors, housing location, accessibility, affordability and habitability has a direct impact on inhabitants' ability to seek employment and access education and healthcare.

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<sup>6</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Habitat. (2014) 'The Right to Adequate Housing'. Available at:

[https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21\\_rev\\_1\\_housing\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21_rev_1_housing_en.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> The 'housing continuum' is a concept used by policy makers to consider the broad range of responses available to help a range of households in different tenures to access affordable and appropriate housing. The concept enables policy makers to move away from a one-size-fits-all strategy of providing public housing, towards 'the range of housing options available to different households on a continuum. For more:

<https://www.ahuri.edu.au/policy/ahuri-briefs/understanding-the-housing-continuum>.

The study found that most policies that aim to improve societal integration through housing solutions are often limited to the short/medium-term. However, housing can and should play a positive role in promoting the medium- and long-term integration of migrants and refugees.

The research conducted for this study suggests that increased coordination between national and local governments through coherent housing policies and programmes can play a key role in addressing housing and integration challenges in differing local contexts. The study also demonstrates that while both integration and housing policies are primarily managed at the national level in the UNECE region, arrangements for the social and economic accommodation of regular migrants most frequently take place at the local level, planned and managed by local governments. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of local governments to manage housing projects for migrants and refugees is of utmost importance.

The study underlines that urbanisation and migratory flows have further consolidated the pivotal role of cities on the world stage. Attracted by the labour markets, public services and the social capital cities offer regular migrants and refugees are increasingly drawn towards urban areas, either as a transit hub or as an actual destination.

It should be further noted that as housing systems in UNECE member States are varied and diverse, along with their immigration policies, migrants' and refugees' experiences of reception, integration and access to housing may differ greatly among countries but also within them, depending on the capacity of each city, neighbourhood (or even household) to welcome them. In addition, cultural and historical conditions should also be considered when designing strategies and programmes for housing migrants and refugees.

This research emphasizes the great extent to which the commitment and creativity of governments, cities, housing providers and civil society at large can have an impact in designing and delivering housing solutions. In this context, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and best practices on innovative housing initiatives can aid migrants and refugees' successful social and economic integration in the UNECE region.

In line with this vision, the study advises that strategies should be designed to encourage the active participation of migrants and refugees in policymaking and the implementation and management process. This can take several forms – for example, creation of panels or advisory groups, training and employment of migrants and refugees in local housing services, direct involvement of migrants and refugees in the provision or revitalization of housing and awareness raising of the services they might be entitled to, among others. Participation in the public life of the host country is a form of integration which, as well as migrants and refugees helps those who are not directly involved but benefit from the information shared by those engaged.

Through a range of innovative practices for the provision of housing for migrants and refugees adopted by public, private and non-profit organisations, including home-owner associations and housing cooperatives, this study calls for cooperation. Stakeholders should join forces at the national, regional and local levels, across sectors, housing tenures and disciplines for better integration of



migrants and refugees and to contribute to improved social cohesion across the UNECE region, realize human rights and meet the SDGs.

DRAFT

## Introduction

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, all individuals have the right to an adequate standard of living.<sup>8</sup> The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, a non-legally binding document, which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on 16 April 2015, underlines the importance for the governments to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services”. Adequate housing should take into account the principles and related rationales outlined in Charter: environmental protection, economic effectiveness, social inclusion and participation, and cultural adequacy; including characteristics related to security of tenure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location, cultural adequacy, and availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> Despite the centrality of the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing in multiple international instruments, over a billion people around the world are either homeless or live in conditions which are not consistent with their human rights and dignity.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, a major challenge for sustainable urban development, including for the housing sector, is to understand how to respond to major global events such as mass influx of irregular migrants and economic downturns.

The challenges of providing housing for migrants and refugees are enormous due to their large and increasing number globally. Turkey, for example, hosts the world’s largest number of refugees under the UNHCR’s mandate, with 3.4 million Syrians and 346,800 refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities.<sup>11</sup> In 2015 alone, 1 million people refugees and asylum seekers fleeing regional conflicts, civil wars, countries with autocratic regimes, economic and environmental challenges crossed into Europe through the Mediterranean and Balkans,<sup>12</sup> and a total of 3.22 million people sought asylum from EU-28 countries between 2015 and 2017.<sup>13</sup>

The major movement of migrants and refugees into countries in the UNECE Region put further pressure on the region’s housing sector, requiring countries to identify innovative solutions at different levels of governance from public, private and non-profit organisations to support the provision of adequate housing for all. The financial crisis of 2008 and the following economic recession had a critical negative impact on the housing sector and the ability of governments to address

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<sup>8</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Habitat. (2014) ‘The Right to Adequate Housing’.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2015) The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.

<sup>10</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Habitat. (2009) ‘The Right to Adequate Housing’.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2017) ‘Turkey’. Available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2544?y=2017#year>.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015) ‘Over one million sea arrivals reach Europe in 2015’ Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>.

<sup>13</sup> EUROSTAT. (2018) ‘Asylum applications (non-EU) in the EU-28 Member States, 2006–2017’, Asylum Statistics. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics).

affordable adequate housing needs. By 2015, over 100 million people were cost overburdened, meaning that they spent more than 40 percent of their disposable incomes on housing..

Housing is thus at the forefront of the relevant debate. Ensuring that people have access to a place to live is essential to ensure that children, women, men, older persons and youth alike can live in security, safety and dignity, as well as to ensure, consistent with the Sustainable Development Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that nobody is left behind<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, housing play a major role in the integration process as its location, accessibility and habitability has a direct impact on inhabitants' ability to seek employment and access education and healthcare. The provision of adequate and affordable housing is the primary means through which an integrative process can be supported, along-side opportunities to access employment and education.

When arriving into UNECE countries, however, migrants and refugees often do not qualify for social housing benefits and must turn to more expensive market-based solutions, likely then suffering from cost overburdening in overcrowded and substandard housing. In the context of ongoing migration movement in the UNECE Region, new and pressing challenges have further arisen due to the different profiles of today's migrants and refugees, who are more diverse in terms of their countries of origin, skills, and educational backgrounds compared to previous migration waves.<sup>15</sup>

It should be mentioned, that most newly arrived migrants and refugees settle in cities. Due to the decentralisation process in many countries in the UNECE Region, it is usually local governments who assume social and economic responsibility for integrating regular migrants and refugees in the country; while generally, national governments decide and implement overall migration policies. Cities around the world are facing a persistent challenge to meet housing needs and an ever-growing demand, spurred by natural population growth, rural-to-urban migration and increasingly, the urbanisation of migration movements. It is estimated that in 30 years, nearly two-thirds of the population in UNECE countries will live in urban areas; and by 2030, 3 billion people around the world will require access to adequate and affordable housing. Therefore, local governments are playing an increasingly important role.

## Background to the study

An adequate standard of living, including adequate housing is a human right and should be available to all.<sup>16</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>17</sup> and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities"<sup>18</sup>, the Geneva UN Charter on

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations. 'Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>.

<sup>15</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2015) 'Is this humanitarian migration crisis different? Migration Policy Debate No 7'. Available at: [www.oecd.org/migration/Is-this-refugee-crisis-different.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/migration/Is-this-refugee-crisis-different.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-Habitat. (2009) 'The Right to Adequate Housing'.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations. (2015) 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

<sup>18</sup> 'Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>.

Sustainable Housing<sup>19</sup> and the New Urban Agenda<sup>20</sup> are key frameworks that promote the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing. Importantly, these agendas encourage Governments to implement holistic responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by migration for sustainable urban development.

A key input from the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) in this area is the implementation of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing, endorsed at its seventy-sixth Committee Session in 2015. Under the principles of environmental protection, economic effectiveness, social inclusion, participation and cultural adequacy, the Charter encourages international cooperation at all levels. One of the main messages of the Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing is the support of universal access to safe, inclusive, accessible and affordable housing, especially for groups such as migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons. At its seventy-seventh session, held in 2016, the Committee discussed the issue of housing for migrants and refugees in the context of an existing lack of adequate, affordable housing in the UNECE region, especially in cities.

It further emerged that the housing dimension of regular migrants and refugees' integration has been surprisingly under-investigated compared to other integration strategies. Indeed, research and policies concerned with the integration of migrants and refugees usually focus on issues such as employment, language and citizenship. Improving migration governance at the city level is also at the heart of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project, funded by the European Commission and the Swiss Development Agency and implemented by UN-Habitat, United Cities and Local Governments and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. One of the main outcomes of the MC2CM phase is the lessons learnt from pilot cities of the need to focus on affordable housing, among other services.<sup>21</sup>

Exploring the housing dimension of regular migrant and refugee integration is also of paramount importance due to the character of today's migratory movements. Today's migrants and refugees are faced with a much more restrictive social and economic labour context compared to much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>22</sup> As a result, other forms of social inclusion such as housing provision alongside education, learning local culture and language and employment, should take a leading role in the integration process.

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2015) The Geneva UN Charter on Sustainable Housing.

<sup>20</sup> Habitat III. (2016) 'The New Urban Agenda'. United Nations. Available at: <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> International Centre for Migration Policy Development, United Cities and Local Governments, UN-Habitat. (2016) Mediterranean City-to-City Migration: Dialogue, Knowledge and Action. Available at: [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1\\_2018/MC2CM/Policy\\_Recommendation\\_EN\\_Online.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/MC2CM/Policy_Recommendation_EN_Online.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> International Centre for Migration Policy Development, United Cities and Local Governments, UN-Habitat. (2016) Mediterranean City-to-City Migration: Social cohesion and intercultural/inter-religious dialogue. Available at: [https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/sites/default/files/MC2CM\\_BackgroundPaper\\_P2P\\_Lisbon\\_EN%20%281%29.pdf](https://www.uclg-cisdp.org/sites/default/files/MC2CM_BackgroundPaper_P2P_Lisbon_EN%20%281%29.pdf).

The research and preparation of the “UNECE Housing for Migrants and Refugees in the UNECE region: challenges and practices” study started in 2016 with the organisation of the UNECE, UN-Habitat and OHCHR side event at the European meeting in Prague in 2016 “Addressing housing affordability issues in the UNECE region”. The discussion focused on the responses of different public and private organisations, aiming to identify innovative practices developed at national and local levels which have proven to successfully address challenges relating to the provision of adequate and affordable housing. The Committee then decided to prepare, with the support of partner organizations, a study on how countries are addressing the migration crisis, that was caused by the mass influx of irregular migrants and asylum seekers, through the provision of affordable housing (ECE/HBP/184). The study has been carried out during 2016-2017 and revised throughout 2018 and 2019 with the support of the City of Vienna, the Federal Office for Housing of Switzerland, and UN-Habitat’s Housing Unit.

## The study objectives, methodology and structure

This study aims to provide representatives of local and national governments and stakeholders with examples of good practices for addressing the housing needs of migrants and refugees; and aims to formulate recommendations for improving migrants and refugees' access to adequate and affordable housing.

The study is organised in six sections.

- Part 1 discusses case studies on the upgrading of existing vacant housing stock to house regular migrants and refugees
- Part 2 provides examples on upgrading or refurbishing collective housing to provide adequate housing for newcomers
- Part 3 examines mechanisms for improving access to social and affordable housing for migrants and refugees
- Part 4 highlights the key role of housing cooperatives in providing housing
- Part 5 showcases examples of modular housing specifically designed to house migrants and refugees
- Part 6 discusses various mechanisms that can improve access to adequate and affordable housing for migrants and refugees.

The methodology used to draft this study took the form of an extensive literature review and interviews with representatives of local and central governments, international financial institutions, housing providers and third-sector organizations.

## Housing and its link to migrants and refugees in the UNECE region

Migration is an important source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development within the globalized world, including the UNECE region. When regular, successful and accompanied by societal integration, migration can lead to wide-ranging benefits, both economic and societal, for regular migrants and refugees themselves, and for their host countries.<sup>23</sup> However, migratory movements can often create social, cultural and economic challenges to origin, transition and receiving communities. From a social and economic standpoint, refugees and migrants often place additional strain on host communities, where access to resources such as health, education and other social services and employment opportunities may already be scarce for nationals. These conditions often result in refugee and migrant communities being excluded from many of the opportunities that cities offer. Despite these challenges, effective policy interventions and preventive strategies can promote and offer access to integration services through the provision of adequate housing, health screening and mental health services, education and language courses and employment. Once this achieved this can then enable origin, transition and host cities to capitalise on and benefit from migration in the long-term.

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<sup>23</sup> International Organization for Migration. (2017) 'World Migration Report 2018'. Available at: [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf).

In 2017, it was estimated that there were approximately 258 million migrants around the world, representing 3.4 per cent of the global population. Between 2000 and 2017, the total number increased from 173 to 258 million persons, an increase of 85 million (49 per cent). While the total number of migrants is on the rise, mirroring the increase in the world's population, migrants continue to represent only around 3 per cent of the total world's population per capita, a figure that has remained remarkably stable since WWII.<sup>24</sup>

In 2017, the Asian continent was the destination of the largest number of migrants (80 million), followed by Europe (78 million) and Northern America (58 million). Africa (25 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (10 million) and Oceania (8 million) combined hosted around 43 million, or 17 per cent of the global total. Between 2000 and 2017, the global share of international migrants residing in Asia increased from 29 to 31 per cent, while Europe's share declined from 33 to 30 per cent.<sup>25</sup>

When it comes to forcibly displaced persons, an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world have been forced from their home due to persecution, conflict, or generalized violence.<sup>26</sup> Among them, nearly 25.4 million people are refugees. 85 per cent of the world's displaced persons are in developing countries.

In 2017, the number of asylum applications received by the EU-28 Member States reached 685,000, of which 160,000 were from children. While this number represents a substantial decrease compared to the peak years of 2015 and 2016 - when asylum applications totalled over 2.5 million – irregular migration<sup>27</sup> continues to exert pressure on European borders.

This study places the housing challenges faced by migrants and refugees into the wider context of housing trends and challenges in the UNECE region. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that the right to adequate housing should not be interpreted narrowly. Rather, the Committee has stated that the right to adequate housing should be seen as the right for citizens to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. The Committee clarified its views on the characteristics of the right to adequate housing its general comments No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing and No. 7 (1997) on forced evictions.<sup>28</sup>

According to "The Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit",<sup>29</sup> there are several conditions that should be met before particular forms of shelter can constitute "adequate housing". These elements are just as fundamental as the basic supply and availability of housing. For housing to be adequate, it should, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:

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<sup>24</sup> United Nations. (2017) 'Population Facts'. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts\\_2017-5.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2017-5.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. 2017. International Migration Report.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2017) 'Global Trends. Forced Displacement in 2017'. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>.

<sup>28</sup> OHCHR, UN-Habitat. (2009) 'The Right to Adequate Housing'.

<sup>29</sup> OHCHR. (2002) The Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit.

- Security of tenure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats.
- Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal.
- Affordability: housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises the occupants' enjoyment of other human rights.
- Habitability: housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.
- Accessibility: housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.
- Location: housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas.
- Cultural adequacy: housing is not adequate if it does not respect and consider the expression of cultural identity.

Additionally, the UN promoted the “Housing at the Centre” approach<sup>30</sup>, which positions housing at the centre of national urban policies and of cities. The “Housing at the Centre” approach is based on the UN-Habitat “Global Housing Strategy”<sup>31</sup>, which is grounded on the principles of inclusive cities as the sound foundations for achieving adequate housing for all. Inclusive cities are achieved by mainstreaming human rights in urban development, including housing, in the hopes of producing new and more sustainable housing solutions, especially for groups such as migrants and refugees.

Furthermore, these documents also include the protection against forced evictions, which is a key element of realizing the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing and is closely linked to security of tenure. The Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights defines forced evictions as the “permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection.”<sup>32</sup>

The Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing stresses that the development of sustainable housing in the UNECE region faces multiple challenges, resulting from a complex interplay

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<sup>30</sup> In its resolution HSP/GC/25/L.6, the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat “Takes note of the ‘Housing at the Centre approach’, which positions housing at the centre of national urban policies and of cities, and encourages the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and member States to consider the implementation of the Global Housing Strategy, as appropriate, including through the design of tools and mechanisms to promote inclusive housing finance at the national and local levels to bridge the housing gap and to contribute to the progressive realisation of the right to adequate housing for all.”

<sup>31</sup> UN-Habitat. (2013) ‘Global Housing Strategy’. Available at: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Workshop-Social-Inclusion\\_UN-Habitat.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Workshop-Social-Inclusion_UN-Habitat.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. General comment 7, which goes on to note that “the prohibition on forced evictions does not, however, apply to evictions carried out by force in accordance with the law and in conformity with the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights” (para. 4).



of trends related to globalization, demographic changes, climate change and the economic crisis. Due to the 2008 global financial crisis, these trends culminated in increased attention from governments on the lack of housing affordability and on the decline in access to adequate and healthy housing, which exacerbates social inequality and segregation in the urban space. The Geneva Charter is consistent with this and has informed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development published in 2015 that seeks to position housing at the centre of urban policies<sup>33</sup>, a central focus of the “New Urban Agenda”.<sup>34</sup>

## Main housing challenges in the UNECE region

### Housing affordability

Lack of affordable housing has been widely recognised as one of the most challenging consequences of the global financial crisis. In 2015, the UNECE study on ‘Social Housing Models in the UNECE Region: Models, Trends and Challenges’ highlighted that the aftershocks of the 2008 global financial crisis resulted in an unprecedented housing need. At least 100 million low- and middle-income earners in the UNECE region were estimated to be overburdened by housing cost. Moreover, rough sleeping<sup>35</sup> numbers and homelessness numbers notably increased in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. Lack of housing affordability leads those on lower incomes to seek housing that is cheaper and often of lower quality. This can, in turn, lead to and perpetuate segregation in cities. Declining living conditions due to lack of housing maintenance and energy inefficiency can also cause additional housing-related hardships. Migrants and refugees are also likely to be greatly affected by these issues, requiring pro-active measures.

### Housing tenure – high share of homeownership in the UNECE Region

Prior to the financial crisis, economic growth and almost unanimous support by governments to housing policies incentivising home ownership made this the most dominant tenure within the UNECE region. In the western parts of the region<sup>36</sup>, the increased share of homeownership was achieved by making accessing mortgages relatively easy. On the eastern frontiers<sup>37</sup>, the high rates of home ownership were achieved through the privatization of public housing.<sup>38</sup> In countries with a mature

<sup>33</sup> UN Habitat. (2016) ‘World Cities Report 2016, Housing at the Centre of Urban Policies’. Available at [https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/WCR\\_Housing-at-the-Center-of-Urban-Policies-1.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/WCR_Housing-at-the-Center-of-Urban-Policies-1.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Habitat III. (2016) ‘The New Urban Agenda’.

<sup>35</sup> Homelessness Link defines the “rough sleeping” as “People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as, on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes’). The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, sofa surfers, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protests, squatters or Travellers sites”. Available at <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2018/sep/20/rough-sleeping-counts-and-estimates-all-you-need-to-know>.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Western part’ of the region typically relate to Northern America, Northern, Western and Southern Europe. However, it must be stressed that some successful transition economies as well as successful in the Middle East may share characteristics typical to those in the above listed regions.

<sup>37</sup> Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and countries in Central Asia.

<sup>38</sup> In this context the term ‘public housing’ refers to housing provided in countries with economies in transition during the socialist period.

social housing sector, there was a tendency to decrease the social housing stock through limited construction, selling off to sitting tenants, and demolition<sup>39</sup>. Once the available tenure options are reduced so drastically, not only does the local population lack the options to meet their own housing needs but also tend to become less prepared to accept accommodation of additional housing needs, including those presented by migrants and refugees. In countries with emerging social housing sectors, new state-supported housing initiatives are of the early stages of implementation and are in limited scale. As such, a high share of homeownership leaves few opportunities for members of vulnerable groups to obtain access to more affordable rental or social housing.

## **Housing stock availability**

In a context in which housing shortage and decreased affordability are already a major concern for countries in the UNECE region, accommodating large numbers of migrants and refugees is a major issue for which innovative solutions are needed. an adequate standard of living, including <sup>40</sup> As they are usually not entitled to subsidised housing and usually face discrimination and numerous obstacles in accessing private and public housing, especially low-income mostly irregular migrant workers often live in small private rented rooms or flats, properties arranged or provided by employers, slum dwellings, overcrowded houses of relatives and friends. Employers often oblige migrant domestic workers or factory workers to live at their place of work, frequently contravening national labour laws. Many end up living in overcrowded dormitories, sleeping in shifts and without access to adequate sanitation.

## **Challenges of housing provision for migrants and refugees**

Lack of information about housing alternatives and schemes, bureaucratic procedures, regulations in the housing sphere and tenants' rights often combine to make it difficult to pursue adequate housing even when national and local legislation does not prevent them from doing so. Furthermore, insufficient information and inadequate advice, discrimination in the allocation of dwellings or financial assistance, laws restricting the access of non-citizens to public housing, cumbersome bureaucracy and lack of access to grievance mechanisms restrict access to public housing in the public sphere. Often, language constraints make the task of gaining housing harder or even impossible. All of the above are but an overview of the challenges that migrants and refugees can face when attempting to access adequate housing.

These issues are compounded for migrants in an irregular situation. Renting accommodation to irregular migrants may be a criminal offence, with landlords therefore obliged to report their presence to authorities. Tenants may need to register with the local population office or tax authorities; to complete a lease, tenants may be required to submit documents that, as irregular migrants, they do not possess or cannot obtain (e.g., residence permit, social security number, proof of income, labour

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<sup>39</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2015) Social housing in the UNECE region: models, trends and challenges. United Nations. Available at: [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/Social\\_Housing\\_in\\_UNECE\\_region.pdf](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/Social_Housing_in_UNECE_region.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> OHCHR, UN-Habitat. (2009) The Right to Adequate Housing.

contract).<sup>41</sup> As such, it becomes incredibly difficult for irregular migrants to access adequate housing, an effect which could be lessened through the establishment of firewalls between service providers and immigration authorities.

The segregation within the urban structure of the receiving country is another important dimension of migrant housing condition: stereotyping, xenophobia and suspicion against irregular migrants and refugees and the erection of barriers to keep them away from the local community lead to their exclusion from the urban space. Violence and forced evictions targeted towards irregular migrants and refugees also raise serious concerns in this regard.

Irregular migrants and refugees often find themselves in a disadvantaged situation to access housing compared to the native-born populations. The following are some of the constraints faced by irregular migrants and refugees in accessing adequate housing.

Inadequate planning, combined with influxes of irregular migrants and refugees, contributes directly to long-term social and spatial segregation within urban areas. When faced with no other choice irregular migrants and refugees will ultimately use available land to settle, namely areas that lack proper tenure and ownership. Often, such places are located in areas prone to natural hazards, or on unsuitable land for housing, adjacent to roads, railways, riverbeds, slopes, etc.<sup>42</sup>

Irregular migrants and refugees can be excluded from already limited local services. The population flow towards urban areas can result in added constraints towards the access to land, housing and basic services. Growing demand for these limited services can cause social tension. The United Nations also points to rural-urban migration adding challenges relative to the urban management of infrastructures such as electricity, solid-waste and wastewater management, as well as the provision of potable water, thus posing increased ecological and public health challenges within local administrations. Additionally, irregular migrants and refugees are faced with more difficulties when trying to access subsidies and social benefits. All of the above are fundamental for adequate housing.<sup>43</sup>

Irregular migrants and refugees are often not considered in decision making and not included in participatory processes. Local and national authorities generally lack sufficient financial resources and technical skills to facilitate irregular migrant inclusion in planning processes. Inclusion may be achieved through the cultivation and management of local communities that support equitability and inclusion in order to protect migrants' and refugees' rights, as well as supporting adequate participatory processes specific to target groups. In certain countries where decentralisation is strong, for instance Germany or Austria, integration is above all a local and provincial issue.

Irregular migrants and refugees have more difficulties affording adequate housing. Housing markets are related to social issues, particularly in the context of migration. Several studies have exposed the

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<sup>41</sup> The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2014) The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation. United Nations, Sales No. E.14.XIV.4..Available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-14-1\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-14-1_en.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> UN-Habitat. (2018) 'Access to Adequate Housing: The Pathway to Migrants' Inclusion in Cities'. Fifth Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development. Available at [http://www.migration4development.org/sites/default/files/en\\_un-habitat\\_policy\\_brief.pdf](http://www.migration4development.org/sites/default/files/en_un-habitat_policy_brief.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

fact that different indicators related to housing can show the extent to which cities are successful at managing the integration of migrants and refugees: for instance, property ownership is an indicator of migrants' and refugees' long-term settlement in the country; and rental tenure is an indicator of protection from discrimination on the rental market.

A study commissioned by the EU found that the housing cost overburden rate for non-EU citizens saw a significant increase from 2013 to 2014, when 30 per cent of non-EU citizens of working age belonged to this group, compared to 11 per cent among nationals. The housing cost overburden rate allows policymakers to assess how housing costs affect levels of poverty amongst migrants' and refugees', as well as their quality of life.

Irregular migrants and refugees are often forced to live in overcrowded spaces. Nearly 1 in 4 people in deprived or overcrowded homes in OECD countries are from an immigrant household. It is common to find migrants and refugees living in poor conditions due to a lack of habitable space and sanitation. In the EU, overcrowding is understood as the ratio between household rooms and number of household members. The United Nations understands that a dwelling unit is considered to provide sufficient living area for household members if there are fewer than three persons per habitable room.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the temporary shelters that are provided by cities, namely for refugees and homeless persons, are often overcrowded and do not cater to the specific needs of groups such as women and girls. Overcrowded spaces in shelters or dormitories particularly affect women's and girls' dignity, privacy and/or personal security. For undocumented or irregular migrants, moreover, access to homeless shelters is, in some countries, restricted to nationals or documented migrants. In some cases, rules oblige shelters to report any undocumented migrants using their services, which in practice excludes this group from drawing on their right to gain access to these services.<sup>45</sup>

Irregular migrants and refugees are prone to forced evictions and homelessness. They are often more vulnerable to being unable to access housing or shelter as they are faced with great challenges linked to employment opportunities. Even if they can secure accommodation, having an uncertain income will always put them at risk of being evicted.

For instance, a survey in Spain<sup>46</sup> revealed that when renting an apartment, the response of real estate agents and homeowners differs when the tenant-to-be is a migrant compared to when they are not. This same study, conducted in 2016, showed that 69.8 per cent of people who were told by phone that there was no apartment available were foreign-born applicants. The share of people with a migrant background who received such feedback during in-person visits is even higher: 86.7 per cent. It is common to find housing markets that are not regulated by policies to combat discriminatory practices against migrants and refugees, and that increase risks of payment defaults and therefore produce conflicts.

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<sup>44</sup> UN Statistical Commission website at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-11-01-01.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2014) The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation.

<sup>46</sup> United Cities and Local Governments 2017. Social housing and urban planning: inclusive cities for migrants. Available at [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/mc2cm\\_p2p\\_amman\\_thematic\\_paper\\_en.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/mc2cm_p2p_amman_thematic_paper_en.pdf)

This research recognises and highlights that the housing systems in the UNECE region are varied. Hence, the study covers a range of housing tenures and emerging solutions and analyses the various affordable housing options for migrants and refugees.

## Housing Solutions for Migrants and Refugees— case studies

This chapter presents case studies covering different approaches and best practices to providing housing for migrants and refugees. The case studies are organized thematically in five sections.

Under each thematic section, specific policy recommendations are formulated with references to the case studies.

### Section 1. Utilizing Existing and Vacant Housing Stock

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 1.1. Revitalize decaying neighbourhoods by renovating vacant houses and using them for housing for migrants and refugees

Relevant case studies:

Case Study 1: The Dream Neighbourhood Project – City of Cleveland

Case Study 2: Canopy Housing Project – Leeds, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 1.2 Promote economic revival of depopulated rural communities through attracting migrants and refugees to live in the rural areas.

Relevant case studies:

Case Study 3: Countryside Renewal: Satriano, Italy

Case Study 4: Grandhotel Cosmopolis – Augsburg, Germany

Case Study 5: Hoost – Amsterdam, Netherlands

6: The Housing Opportunities and Marketplace Exchange (H.O.M.E.) (Toronto, Canada)

## **Section 2: Turning Temporary and Emergency Shelter into Lasting Solutions for Migrants and Refugee**

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 2.1. Use existing housing stock and other buildings (camps, hotels, mobile homes, etc.) to house incoming migrants and refugees. Ensuring interaction between local communities, migrants and refugees to promote social cohesion and integration of migrants and refugees in local communities.

Relevant case studies:

Case Study 777: Kilis Öncüpinar Accommodation Facility – Öncüpinar, Turkey

Case Study 88: Logement des Migrants (Adoma, Caisse des Depots) – France

Case Study 99: Shelters and Transit Houses (Ghent) – Belgium

## **Section 3: Improving migrants' and refugees' access to Social Housing**

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 3.1 Improve access to Social Housing for the use of dwellings, migrants and refugees to create inclusive, supportive and solid environment

Relevant case studies:

Case Study 010: Globaler Hof – Vienna, Austria

Case Study 111: Rent Discount for Social Housing Residents – The Netherlands

Case Study 212: Startblok Housing Project– The Netherlands

Case Study 313: Social Housing in a Supportive Environment (SHSE) – Serbia

## **Section 4: The Role of Housing Cooperatives in providing housing to migrants and refugees**

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 4.1 Enlarge the role of Housing Cooperatives to secure accommodation for vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees, to promote longer-term accommodation and integration of the migrants and refugees. Relevant case studies:

Case Study 414: Mika - Karlsruhe, Germany

Case Study 515: 400 Riel - Gatineau, Canada

Case Study 616: Stitching New Home Rotterdam – Rotterdam, the Netherlands

## Section 5: Modular Housing Units for Migrants and Refugees

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 5.1 Promote innovative architectural practices to enrich affordable housing solutions in support of social and spatial cohesion in urban areas. Relevant case studies:

Case study 717. City of Ostfildern

Case study 818. City of Bad Soden

Case study 1919. City of Tübingen

Case study 020. City of Königsbrunn

Case study 121. City of Kriftel

Case study 222. City of Geneva

## Section 6: Improving Mechanisms for Access to Adequate Housing

Best practice/policy recommendation:

- 6.1 Develop new financial mechanisms to support housing provision for migrants and refugees and support partnerships of governments with NGOs and private sector to widen resource base for the affordable housing provision for migrants and refugees. Relevant case studies:

Case Study 323: Conditional Rental Subsidy – Romania

Case Study 424: Rehousing Allowance – Belgium

Case Study 525: HSB (Swedish Cooperative Housing Association) – Sweden

Case Study 626: Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees – Canada

Case Study 727: Provivienda - Spain

Case Study 828: Welcommon – Greece

## Part 1: Utilising Existing and Vacant Housing Stock

The introduction of this study brought to light the relevance and magnitude of the housing crisis affecting the UNECE region as well as the issues faced by migrants and refugees in gaining access to housing. The present section outlines a paradox; this scarcity occurs while more than eleven million dwellings stand empty on the continent. According to The Guardian, which collated data from various organisations and national statistics institutes, in some countries, the number of vacant homes accounts for an important share of the total housing stock. This is for instance the case of Spain, whose last census revealed that 13.65 per cent of housing units across the country are empty. Research shows that having large amounts of vacant properties is detrimental to municipalities in many ways: they affect property and rental values, as well as investment and redevelopment. For instance, vacant

properties represent a loss of tax revenues for local governments, while also a drain on resources due to the cost of maintaining them. For instance, Philadelphia spends over \$20 million yearly on maintaining 40,000 vacant properties and loses at least \$2 million in tax revenues.<sup>47</sup>

Due to these issues, a number of innovative initiatives have emerged in the past years, aiming to make use of vacant dwellings to accommodate migrants or refugees who often struggle to find a housing solution on their own. This section will consider some examples.

### **Case Study 1: The Dream Neighbourhood Project – City of Cleveland, United States**

As the economic and financial crisis hit the United States in 2007/8, housing vacancy rates increased from 9.5 per cent to 11.2 per cent.<sup>48</sup> Cleveland was severely affected by the economic slowdown as the city relies on industrial activity. It is now the seventh American city with the highest stock of vacant properties (11.4 per cent).

The Dream Neighbourhood project aims to revitalize three decaying neighbourhoods in Cleveland city centre by renovating vacant houses and letting them to refugees and immigrant families as rental property. Some other homes are expected to be sold to migrant families. The project focuses on the Stockyard, Clark Fulton and Brooklyn Centre neighbourhoods where 162 properties are vacant. The Thomas Jefferson International Newcomers Academy is also located in the area. Unique of its kind in Cleveland, this municipal school serves as an English Immersion programme for limited English proficiency students who have been in the United States for less than two years. Currently, 25 nationalities are represented, and 22 languages are spoken.

The idea of the project is the outcome of converging interests:

- Refugee Service agencies have to find accommodation for the refugee families who are referred to them by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. Refugees resettled in the United States are indeed dispatched across 190 municipalities and assigned to a non-governmental organisation which assists them from the moment they arrive on American soil. Some of those organisations are faith-based organisations, such as the St. Rocco and St. Boniface churches in Cleveland.
- The City Council deals with the issue of vacant properties while considering refugees as a worthy population to invest in since a study carried out in 2013 for the Refugee Services Collaborative of Greater Cleveland concluded that:

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<sup>47</sup> Penn Institute for Urban Research. (2010) 'Vacant Land Management in Philadelphia: The Costs of the Current System and the Benefits of Reform'. Available at <https://pennur.upenn.edu/uploads/media/vacant-land-full-report.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> Jones, Roderick W, Pridemore, William Alex. (2014). 'The increasing numbers of vacant houses, fuelled by the housing crisis, are associated with higher burglary rates'. LSE Blogs. Available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60332/1/\\_lse.ac.uk\\_storage\\_LIBRARY\\_SECOND~1\\_libfile\\_shared\\_REPOS~1\\_Content\\_LSEUSA~1\\_LSEUSA~2\\_blogs.lse.ac.uk-The\\_increasing\\_numbers\\_of\\_vacant\\_houses\\_fuelled\\_by\\_the\\_housing\\_crisis\\_are\\_associated\\_with\\_higher\\_burg.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60332/1/_lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_SECOND~1_libfile_shared_REPOS~1_Content_LSEUSA~1_LSEUSA~2_blogs.lse.ac.uk-The_increasing_numbers_of_vacant_houses_fuelled_by_the_housing_crisis_are_associated_with_higher_burg.pdf)



- “The total annual economic impact (direct, indirect, and induced) of refugee household spending is estimated to have been \$33.3 million in 2012 which supported 386 jobs in the Cleveland area”.
- Refugee-owned businesses, such as restaurants, retails, and others, had generated \$12 million in 2012 and generated 175 jobs.
- The Detroit-Shoreway Community Development Organisation, a non-for-profit organisation dedicated to neighbourhood renewal, had started rehabilitating some houses in the area envisioned for the Dream Neighbourhood since 2011 and had already formed partnerships with non-profit and for-profit developers. Based on its experience, the Dream Neighbourhood's rehabilitation scheme could be expanded to rehabilitate the rest of the neighbourhood.

The scheme entails the transfer of each property to developers for rehabilitation through a competitive bidding process. Each developer is then expected to rehabilitate the house in 270 days before marketing the unit exclusively to Cleveland's refugee service agencies, in charge of accommodating refugees. A restrictive covenant on the deed prevents the developer from using the property for any other purpose. Some developers, such as the non-profit government-purposed Cuyahoga Land Bank, made the choice to hire refugees to renovate the houses. The latter aim of this action is to teach refugees valuable skills that would allow them to find permanent employment afterwards.

Lastly, the project's choice of geographical area should ensure its success, as 850 manufacturing positions have to be fulfilled, commercial space is available for migrant entrepreneurs, and there is good transportation towards the rest of the city and various community and social support organisations to assist in refugee integration.

#### **Additional sources:**

Cities of Migration. (2016). Dream Neighbourhoods: City Innovation in Refugee Housing. Available at: [http://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/dream-neighbourhoods-city-innovation-in-refugee-housing/](http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/dream-neighbourhoods-city-innovation-in-refugee-housing/)

Cleveland.com. (2015). Dream Neighbourhood project offers parts of Cleveland -- and refugees -- a second chance: editorial Available at: [http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/07/dream\\_neighborhood\\_offers\\_aama.html](http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/07/dream_neighborhood_offers_aama.html)

Brian Cummins' blog. (2015). Dream Neighbourhood initiative presented to City Planning Commission. Available at: <http://brian-cummins.blogspot.fr/2015/07/dream-neighborhood-initiative-presented.html>

U.S. Department of State. The Reception and Placement Program. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/receptionplacement/index.htm>

## Case Study 2: Canopy Housing Project – Leeds, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom

The housing situation in Leeds is critical, especially in terms of what concerns social housing. As 25,000 people are waiting to be allocated a social housing unit (2015)<sup>49</sup>, only 4,500 of such dwellings are let each year. However, 5,500 housing units are vacant in the city. Thus, the City Council has been supporting a variety of innovative initiatives, such as Canopy's, aiming at solving the housing issue by making use of these empty properties.

The goal of Canopy Housing Project is to renovate empty and derelict dwellings to accommodate homeless people, asylum-seekers and refugees. Employees of the association first identify empty dwellings within the Hyde Park and Beeston neighbourhoods in Leeds. They then negotiate with the owner so that the association can get ownership of the dwelling.

The renovation process is then started. For heavy works, such as plumbing and electrical networks, the association pays professional workers. Otherwise, all the remaining refurbishing is carried out by a team of volunteers, among which is the future tenant, who can be a local or a migrant.

New tenants are provided with the basic furniture, kitchen/bathroom essentials and bedding to start a home. Rent is kept low and no deposit nor rent in advance is required. Additionally, the association supports tenants in their application for housing benefit. The tenant can also access the facilities available at Canopy's office, i.e. laundry, computers and workshops.

Financial resources from collected rents is reused to fund renovations. They represent 45 per cent of the association's resources. Canopy is also financially supported by the City Council and housing associations (53 per cent of total resources). The remaining 2 per cent comes from various donations.

### Additional sources:

Canopy Housing Project. Available at: <http://www.canopyhousingproject.org/>

Mlati, F., Tardis, M. (2008) "Panorama des initiatives sur l'accès au logement des réfugiés dans 15 pays européens", Observatoire de l'intégration des réfugiés statutaires. Available at: <http://www.france-terre-asile.org/images/etude-logement-dec2008.pdf>

The Yorkshire Evening Post. (2015). Leeds housing crisis exclusive: 5,500 homes empty as waiting lists soar. Available at: <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/leeds-housing-crisis-exclusive-5-500-homes-empty-as-waiting-lists-soar-1-7535480>

## Case Study 3: Countryside Renewal: Satriano - Italy

The 2008 economic and financial crisis exacerbated the trend of Southern Italian workers migrating to the North of the country or abroad in search for employment. It has been estimated that 116,000 people left the *Mezzogiorno* in 2013 alone. The depopulation of the South has been further accentuated by a negative population balance: the number of births dropped to its 1861 level while

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<sup>49</sup> Leeds City Council. (2019) 'Council data and information'. Available at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/opendata>.

the recorded deaths have increased. Depopulation is thus a major issue for Southern Italy. As underlined by a recent OECD report, many rural areas are now seeking new residents, including migrants, in order to revive their local economies.<sup>50</sup>

Located in Calabria, the village of Satriano has not escaped the tendency. Satriano has seen its population shrunk from 3,800 in the 1950s to 1,000 today. Calabria's shores are a traditional place of arrival for migrants and in recent decades, Satriano's city government perceived migration as an opportunity to revitalize their towns and economies and avoid their complete desertification.

In order to be able to welcome refugees, the villages have benefited from the support of the SPRAR, the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers, a national network created by the Italian Ministry of Home Affairs and funded both by the national government and the European Union.

The SPRAR aims to provide financial support to municipalities developing initiatives to host refugees, as well as to foster connections between those municipalities and a variety of organisations responsible for running integration activities for newcomers. A good example of this type of organisation is the *Mediazione Globale* cooperative in Satriano.

SPRAR-funded projects can be dedicated to specific types of refugees; for instance, individual adults and two-parent families ("ordinary category"), single-parent families, unaccompanied minors, victims of torture and disabled persons ("vulnerable categories").

According to the Asylum Information Database, 430 reception initiatives have started, "out of which 57 reception projects are dedicated to unaccompanied children, while 32 reception projects are destined to persons with mental disorders and disabilities." Overall, SPAR-funded projects were providing a total of 21,449 accommodation places as May 31, 2015.

The Central Service in Rome decides the placement of asylum-seekers in one of the 430 reception projects run by municipalities with the support of the SPRAR. Asylum claimants may also be sent to temporary accommodation centres located in Sicily, Puglia and Calabria, where Satriano is located. However, most places in the SPRAR system are allocated to recognised refugees as a way to start integrating them into the Italian society.

In Satriano, the programme for hosting and integrating refugees is run by the social cooperative *Mediazione Globale* on behalf of the municipality. Predominantly staffed with migrants and refugees who gained Italian citizenship, *Mediazone Globale* supports refugees in their daily lives (learning Italian, buying food, finding accommodation, etc) as well as in their asylum application process.

As being granted asylum can take up to one year, the cooperative helps applicants to secure a job in the meantime. Refugees can secure placements within the municipal services and take up jobs such as gardening, street cleaning and maintenance, or in private companies, with which an agreement is signed; employers hiring refugees benefit from breaks on social charges and the refugee's monthly

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<sup>50</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018) Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees. OECD Publishing. Available at: [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/working-together-for-local-integration-of-migrants-and-refugees\\_9789264085350-en#page5](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/working-together-for-local-integration-of-migrants-and-refugees_9789264085350-en#page5).

salary, amounting to an average of €400. The municipality is able to offer this charge break thanks to the resources granted by the SPRAR, which allocates €35 per day per refugee.

Five refugees have worked with local companies thanks to the aforementioned arrangement with the municipality. Two Malian refugees subsequently secured regular close-ended contracts.

The project has had a physical impact on the town as an historic building, the Palazzo Condò was converted into an accommodation centre for refugees. The building now offers 20 beds and the municipality also aims to open a daytime centre for the elderly population of Satriano in the near future. Through these activities, the municipality aims to ensure the better integration of refugees through contact with the local population in the framework of activities provided in the centre.

The municipality envisions expanding the programme, which currently benefits 18 refugees, by renovating empty houses to either turn them into further shelters for temporary migrants or to rent them out to refugees willing to settle in the town. Twenty refugees are currently living in Satriano, but the municipality is hoping to welcome more.

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## **Case Study 4: Grandhotel Cosmopolis – Augsburg, Germany**

Grandhotel Cosmopolis was conceived to answer three needs: accommodation for migrants and refugees, and tourists and spaces for artists. The Bavarian city of Augsburg, in Southern Germany, is in fact characterized by a migration rate of over 40 per cent, which places great pressure on the housing stock. Further, while Augsburg is traditionally a city of Art, there was a widespread lack of studios for artists. In addition, while the city promoted tourism, there was an evident lack of affordable accommodation for tourists. In this context, several buildings in Augsburg's city centre stood empty.

One of these buildings, a former nursing home owned by Diakoniewerk, a charity organization of the Protestant Church, was turned into accommodation catering to different needs. One floor is occupied by a hostel, three floors house asylum-seekers and the top floor is a hotel. A total of 60 individuals can be hosted, including 9 refugee families waiting for their asylum application to be processed. Additionally, there is a seminar room for events, several artist studios and a kitchen where all residents share meals prepared by volunteers. The building also has a kiosk-café, a restaurant, and an inter-

cultural garden with a playground. These spaces are meant to attract the neighbourhood's residents as well as generate incomes.

Asylum-seekers are involved in the hotel's operation and cultural activities according to their personal abilities. They are additionally supported by the Wilde 13, a group of volunteers which helps them with official administration work, translation and research to facilitate their arrival and integration into the city.

Artists are offered rent-free studios as long as they contribute to the hotel, for instance by organizing (for profit) artistic events. Travellers are invited to pay as much as they can for the accommodation offered. The minimum amount asked is €40 for a single room, €60 for a double room and €20 for a hostel bed.

The hotel has now become an official collective accommodation facility used by the German government to host asylum-seekers.

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## **Case Study 5: Hoost – Amsterdam, Netherlands**

The HOOST project was founded by a group of Dutch citizens who had been involved as volunteers in the Heumensoord emergency shelter for refugees in Amsterdam. Bad living conditions in the shelter had eventually led authorities to close the camp in May 2016. Having witnessed the conditions faced by refugees at Heumensoord, Lian Premius, a former volunteer at the shelter, formed a group of volunteers - the Gastvrij Oost (Hospitable East) - to show that refugee temporary accommodation can be different. The group thus adopted a different approach from other refugee shelters in the Netherlands. For instance, instead of locating their facilities outside of the city, the HOOST project found that effective integration would have been better achieved if refugees were accommodated in the middle of Amsterdam. Through the provision of housing in the heart of the city, refugees could start integrating with the local population upon arrival.

In order to set up their refugee shelter, Gastvrij Oost identified an empty office building belonging to the Ymere housing corporation. The corporation aimed to turn the building into 20 small dwellings for first-time buyers, including recognised refugees. However, such a transformation implied turning the building use from commercial to residential. Therefore, Ymere agreed to lease the property to Amsterdam's Eastern District Council while securing the different permits. In turn, the Council allowed Gastvrij Oost to temporarily make use of the building to house asylum-seekers from February to July 2016, which explains why the HOOST project is now over. A total of 30 refugees were housed in the shelter during the 6 months.

Gastvrij Oost benefited from the financial support of Ymere and of the District Council, which provided the resources needed to turn the building into a shelter. The furniture was donated by Facebook followers of the project and daily expenses were met through crowd-funding: from January to April 2016, €10,000 was raised from 187 inhabitants of Amsterdam East. The allocation of refugees was possible thanks to cooperation between the municipality and the Central Department for Sheltering Refugees. In terms of living space, each family was assigned to one private room in the building. In terms of services, volunteers provided refugees with Dutch language classes, job seeking support and medical visits.

Finally, the collective life and self-management of the refugees was improved as they scheduled tasks such as cleaning, buying groceries and cooking for all residents. Furthermore, refugees were supported by four volunteers who helped them manage the finances and fix technical problems.

From the experience gained during the HOOST project, the network BOOST Ringdijk was launched in July 2016. BOOST aims to share with stakeholders the lessons learnt during the HOOST project and to provide recommendations for municipalities, government agencies and promoters on the set up of small-scale temporary accommodation facilities. It also manages a new project called Let's Make Room, bringing together refugees, craftsmen, designers and developers to explore the possibilities of reusing vacant properties in Amsterdam for the semi-permanent housing of refugees.

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## **6: The Housing Opportunities and Marketplace Exchange (H.O.M.E.) (Toronto, Canada)**

### **An innovative portal for adequate and affordable housing for Syrian Refugees**

Toronto has the highest rental prices in Canada and the fourth-lowest vacancy rates. This makes finding accommodation very difficult, even more so for resettled refugees and refugee claimants who have little financial and social capital. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of permanent resident arrivals to Toronto increased from 42,710 to 59,770 (about 35 per cent). In late 2015, the federal government announced plans to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees across Canada by the end of February 2016, with further arrivals continuing throughout the year. By January 2017, Canada had received 40,081 Syrian refugees, with more than 6,000 destined for Toronto – more than double the average annual rate of the previous 10 years. Toronto recognized the need to create a system to help connect the arriving refugees to housing and other types of assistance needed for their adjustment to life in Canada. To make this happen, the city entered into a contract with Wood Green Community Services, a local non-profit organization already involved in Toronto's housing programmes, to develop a housing registry as part of the city's Refugee Resettlement Programme. Wood Green then reached

out to Deloitte, Salesforce and Vlocity for help in deploying a solution as rapidly as possible to support the arriving refugees.

The Housing Opportunities and Marketplace Exchange (H.O.M.E.) is an online portal that matches Syrian refugees in need with offers of housing, goods and services. Refugees, sponsorship groups, landlords and donors can register with H.O.M.E online and are granted access through a two-step verification process. (The dynamic registration form captures information about the person.) Once they have access to the portal, donors can easily create and publish listings, while refugees and their sponsors can see all the assistance available and connect directly with donors. The project kicked off in early December 2015, with the goal of developing something as quickly as possible (bulk arrivals of refugees began at the end of December).

The H.O.M.E. portal was launched on 31 December, within four weeks of its conception. It represents a collaborative development between municipal, non-profit and private-sector partners. Toronto provided funding to Wood Green Community Services, a non-profit agency, to implement the project, and teams from Deloitte, Salesforce and Vlocity, all private-sector corporations, provided pro-bono services to help develop and deliver the technological solution. This public-private partnership allowed WoodGreen to leverage Toronto's financial investment for maximum output. As of December 2016, the portal had over 750 active users, including donors, sponsors, service agencies and refugees. To date, the portal has successfully engaged 99 landlords offering 423 housing units. By March 2017, 86 units had been rented to Syrian refugees, and 14 refugees had been connected with employers for sustainable employment. In April 2017, in response to increased pressure on Toronto's shelter system, the city negotiated with WoodGreen to continue operating the H.O.M.E. portal for another two years, and to expand its client base, currently restricted to Syrian refugees, to include refugees and refugee claimants in city shelters.

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## Part 2: Turning Temporary and Emergency Shelter into Lasting Solutions for Migrants and Refugees

Currently, governments across the UNECE region have been often using collective centres, camps, hotels, mobile homes, etc. to house migrants, , asylum seekers.

There are several reasons why collective accommodation centres are widely used by governments. Most importantly, container villages or camps enable the rapid generation of first reception centres to house incoming refugees and irregular migrants immediately. Furthermore, many believe that container villages are more cost-effective than permanent housing. This, however, is a misconception; collective accommodation facilities hold significant drawbacks in the long-term.



According to the Robert Bosch Foundation, a German organisation aiming at encouraging refugees' participation and acceptance into society, collective accommodation is distressing for newcomers and represents a strong impediment to their successful integration within the host society. Indeed, collective facilities are often overcrowded and unhygienic places where families live “in a single room”, without the possibility of being “able to cook for themselves, where adults are not allowed to work, and where children are unable to play with any meaningful sense of freedom”. Other testimonies describe the overcrowding and outbreaks of violence which come along with camp/centre life. Collective accommodation facilities therefore present several “physical” (concrete living conditions) and social issues<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, collective accommodation facilities are costly to maintain. According to the OECD, “costs for temporary accommodation, costs in reception centres and administrative costs together made up a third of total costs” of welcoming refugees.<sup>52</sup>

### **Case Study 77: Kilis Öncüpinar Accommodation Facility – Öncüpinar, Turkey**

Turkey adopted an open-door policy towards Syrian refugees in October 2011, which means that any Syrian citizen crossing the Turkish border were granted temporary protection. Located next to the Öncüpinar village in the Kilis province in Turkey, the Kilis Öncüpinar Accommodation Facility (referred to as “Kilis” hereafter) was set up specifically to accommodate refugees. Located on the edge of the area affected by the conflict in Syria, Kilis underwent a dramatic social, economic, cultural and spatial change after receiving more than 120,000 Syrian refugees over the past five years.<sup>53</sup> By the end of this period the number of refugees in Kilis exceeded the number of local population living in Kilis Province.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See: Euractiv. (2015) Study: Shared housing for refugee’s limits integration. Available at: <http://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/study-shared-housing-for-refugees-limits-integration/>.; <http://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/study-shared-housing-for-refugees-limits-integration/>.; Irishtimes. Lives in Limbo: Life inside Ireland’s direct provision system for asylum seekers.

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<sup>52</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2016) ‘ODA reporting of in-donor country refugee costs’. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/RefugeeCostsMethodologicalNote.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Ziya Pakoz, Muhammed. (2016) ‘Turkey’s Kilis: A rare example of refugee integration’. Al Jazeera. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/05/turkey-kilis-rare-refugee-integration-160511102644814.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Ahval News. (2019) ‘Kilis police take Arabic lessons as migrants exceed local population’. Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/refugees/kilis-police-take-arabic-lessons-migrants-exceed-local-population>.



Kilis Öncüpinar is made of 2,053 containers housing a total of 13.570 Syrian refugees. Even though Kilis Öncüpinar is a camp, it is included as a good practice in this study because of the following: (a) Good infrastructure and amenities; (b) Innovative management methods and; (c) Fostering “life normalization”.

*a) Infrastructure and Amenities*

Kilis Öncüpinar is equipped with power lines and water pipes, enabling the whole settlement to benefit from street-lightening and housing containers which offer significant comfort to residents. Each container offers a 21m<sup>2</sup> living area made up of three rooms. One of these is occupied by the bathroom, equipped with its own hot water tank. In addition, the kitchen corner has a stove and a fridge, and most containers have a television equipped with satellite dishes.

Regarding amenities, 56 classrooms in various schools have enabled the education of 4,241 Syrian children and offered vocational classes to adults, both men and women. The camp is also equipped with 1,125m<sup>2</sup> of playground, computer rooms and laundries. Daily food needs are met through Kilis Öncüpinar 's three grocery stores. As for healthcare, the camps have their own clinic, staffed with 5 doctors, translators and 13 healthcare personnel. 77 policemen and 110 private security guards oversee the camp and provide security. The area is also equipped with 104 security cameras.

*b) Innovative management methods*

Kilis is run by the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency or AFAD. In terms of management, the camp is staffed with Turkish government-appointed employees who report to the camp administrator while NGOs are only given a supporting role instead of being responsible for the entire service provision. This management method has enabled innovation in service provision. For example, refugees are provided with a debit card and each family is given approximately \$50 per family member a month. The system has proven particularly effective, especially in terms of food supply. In most camps, the World Food Programme is responsible for catering for refugees, leading to refugees having to queue for hours to get their ration. With the debit card system, refugees are free to shop whenever convenient in one of Kilis's stores. The stores are all run by different private companies so that competition keeps prices reasonable. The debit card system has had several positive consequences: refugee families are able to retain their personal food habits; providing unprepared food supplies instead of three hot meals a day has enabled money savings for government; the local economy is stimulated as products are supplied by stores; and some testimonies suggest it has prevented the appearance of a black market in the camp.

*c) Fostering “life normalization”*

Kilis fosters community life. Each of the camp's sections has an elected leader who is in charge of relations with Kilis' personnel. This allows for refugees to have a say in the camp's daily management. Furthermore, refugees are allowed to open home-businesses within the camp, which enables the recreation of a small local economy.

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## **Case Study 88: Logement des Migrants (Adoma, Caisse des Depots) – France**

Founded as National Construction Company for the Algerian workers in 1956, Sonacotral was created with the aim of building homes for Algerian migrant-workers who lived in slums in the suburbs of France. The buildings were planned to be temporary; it being taken for granted that these workers would return back to their country. Instead for the following sixty years, the mission of the company evolved. Renamed Adoma in 2007, it now manages 167 migrant workers' homes, 369 social residences and 174 reception centres for asylum seekers.

Initially funded by the State and local investors, the European Investment Bank decided in 2016 to lend EUR 50 million euros to Adoma to rehabilitate buildings and help provide housing for asylum seekers and refugees. As the first national operator for the accommodation and support of asylum seekers, Adoma manages 192 reception structures throughout the country, which are responsible for than 16,794 people.

As part of improvement work to over a quarter of the housing stock, energy efficiency measures will be implemented for most dwellings. The addition of amenities such as bathrooms, showers, or kitchenettes will make large rooms in the existing housing stock self-contained. Lastly, preventive measures relating to safety, particularly fire safety, are an important part of the maintenance programme.<sup>55</sup>

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## Case Study 99: Shelters and Transit Houses (Ghent) – Belgium

In 2015 the city of Ghent, like other European cities, was facing a growing number of refugee arrivals. In Belgium, the number of asylum applications doubled within one year. The Federal Government responded to the crisis by providing more accommodation. In Ghent, a cooperation between three reception centres was set up, which allowed information, experiences and good practices to be exchanged.<sup>56</sup> In September 2015 the city of Ghent established a Task Force on Refugees. This is a cooperation, not only between administration (city services and the Public Service for Social Welfare) and policy; but also, citizens, NGO's and civil society are involved in this structure.<sup>57</sup> From the beginning, the city administration, together with the owners of this pontoon, invested in a good information exchange with the neighbourhood; for example, information sessions were organized to address residents' concerns about the new arrivals and give them the opportunity to write down their ideas on how to link the new asylum centre with the neighbourhood and the city.

Through this task force Ghent has set clear roles and responsibilities. Three working groups were created on:

- Shelter and reception
- Integration
- Volunteers and public awareness.

Once asylum-seekers have been granted international protection, they must leave the reception centre within 2 months. This is a very short time to find a house within a very tight housing market. Volunteers (housing buddies), and – in case of urgency – professionals, help them look for appropriate accommodation. For those who do not find a suitable house within the 2 months access to a transit house is offered. 10 of which were made available by the city of Ghent.<sup>58</sup> Transit houses give more time to ensure refugees find appropriate accommodation and that they get the necessary guidance to achieve this. Also, to help recognized refugees in their search for a house, a 'Housing Guide for refugees' was published in several languages. In providing access to rights, including those related to housing, Ghent has tried to work as inclusively as possible. For example, many asylum seekers manage to quickly access volunteer work, thanks to the Refu-interim project.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Euronews. (2017) 'How the city of Ghent copes with increased numbers of refugees'. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2017/03/28/view-refugee-solidarity-the-view-from-ghent>.

<sup>57</sup> Urbact EU. (2015) 'Good Practice Summary'. Available at: [https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/202\\_Ghent\\_GPsummary.pdf](https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/202_Ghent_GPsummary.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Ghent international. (2018) 'Refugee Taskforce'. Available at: <https://stad.gent/en/city-policy-structure/asylum-and-refugees/refugee-taskforce>.

<sup>59</sup> For more about the Refu-interim project see: <https://www.refuinterim.be/>.

## Part 3: Improving migrants and refugees' access to social housing

There is no single definition of social housing across Europe.<sup>60</sup> At two ends of the spectrum, social housing can either be reserved for most vulnerable households (as in England), or it can house a wide range of income-groups. In Denmark, any individual can apply to social housing.<sup>61</sup> However, among social housing beneficiaries, a large share is generally made of single-parent families, older persons and the poor. The following cases provide examples of the use of social housing to ensure that migrants can successfully integrate into their new living environment.

### Case Study 010: Globaler Hof – Vienna, Austria

The stock of social housing is very significant in Vienna as 60 per cent of population lives in subsidized apartments. More than 220,000 apartments are owned by the Viennese government which spends €600 million a year on housing. 25 per cent of those funds are municipal, the rest is financed by the federal government. Another 136,000 limited profit housing units (out of about 650,000 in Austria) are owned and managed by one of the about 180 limited profit housing associations (LPHAs).

Thanks to this financial commitment, 80 per cent of new housing units in Vienna are subsidised (via a subsidy on bricks and mortar).

Builders compete through a competitive bidding process. A jury composed of representatives of the city's architects, builders and specialists in housing law chooses designs based on economy, quality and ecological impact. This competition encourages creativity in social housing design.

The strong role played by the municipal government both as a financing institution and a regulator has led to the creation of a number of mixed income, but also multicultural social housing developments. Indeed, this social housing policy has been an integral part of Vienna's policy for achieving social equality objectives and reducing segregation.

One example of this in Vienna is the Globaler Hof ("global courtyard"). This example was chosen in this chapter because it was set up 16 years ago, thus enabling the observation of how the limited profit housing development evolved in the long term. The successful example of Globaler Hof has inspired several other projects of a similar kind in Vienna.

Globaler Hof was created under the lead of Sozialbau AD, one of the largest LPHAs in Austria. It is located in Vienna's 23rd district, in the Wiesen Nord neighbourhood, the location was chosen specifically because the 23rd district originally had only a small percentage of migrants. The project offers 141 dwellings, spread across four housing blocks which accommodate about 300 people from 18 countries. 60 per cent of its residents are migrants – promoting the notion of diversity and multiculturalism.

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<sup>60</sup> UNECE. (2015) Social housing in the UNECE region: models, trends and challenges..

<sup>61</sup> Scanlon, Kathleen, Fernández Arrigoitia, Melissa and Whitehead, Christine M. E. (2015) 'Social housing in Europe'. European Policy Analysis (17). pp. 1-12. Available at: [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62938/1/Fernandez\\_Social%20housing%20in%20Europe\\_2015.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62938/1/Fernandez_Social%20housing%20in%20Europe_2015.pdf).

A structural precondition for the successful integration of migrants in the premises of Globaler Hof was the adoption of “good planning” practices. For instance, the design of the several spacious communal facilities, together with wide corridors, facilitate exchange between residents and improve the overall sense of neighbourliness. Communal rooms include laundries, children’s play rooms but also rooms for residents’ parties. Open spaces are also often used as meeting areas. A further element of success of the Globaler Hof project lies in the presence of a caretaker (concierge) who lives in the building. Nowadays, the role that concierges used to have has been passed to service companies. Addressing residents’ concerns through mediation and mutual understanding throughout the years has enabled residents to resolve issues.<sup>62</sup>

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### **Case Study 111: Rent Discount for Social Housing Residents – The Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, three-quarters of the rental housing market are regulated social housing units. The latter are rented out by housing corporations, non-profit commercial organisations which make use of their profits for the provision of quality affordable housing. As housing corporations are financially autonomous, they are able to implement independent projects. In June 2016, the Trudo Housing Corporation launched a scheme aimed at encouraging diversity within neighbourhoods, specifically targeted at providing housing for refugees. As part of a five-year, €430 million investment programme for the construction of 1756 social housing sites, the housing corporation offered tenants a €100 rent discount if they helped refugees integrate into Dutch society. Currently, Trudo Housing Corporation is housing 85 refugees.

Volunteer social housing residents are expected to spend 10 hours a week helping newly arrived refugees navigate Dutch bureaucracy and familiarise them with Dutch rules and customs. Trudo Housing Corporation expects that the initiative will help refugees settle more easily in their new

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<sup>62</sup> Ludl, Herbert. (2016) Integration in Housing: Models for Social Cohesion, Sozialbau AG.

neighbourhood and ease their contacts with the relevant administration that they will have to contact for employment, education and welfare services.

The Housing Corporation considers the €100 discount a sufficient incentive in an area where the average rent is €435.

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### **Case Study 212: Startblok Housing Project– The Netherlands**

*Startblok* is a modular social housing project for young refugees and for youngsters living in the Netherlands. In order to qualify for housing, residents must be between 18 and 28 years old. The project consists of 565 units for rent: 463 studios and 102 rooms in multi-person apartments, to be leased for five years each. *Startblok* was developed in Riekerhaven, a former sportsgrounds, located in Amsterdam New West.

Monthly rent for a studio is €510 but tenants can get a monthly allowance of €177 approximately. For a room in a shared apartment, rent ranges from €387 to €461 monthly. No allowance is provided in the latter case. The stakeholders involved in the project are:

- The municipality of Amsterdam, which is responsible for providing social housing to refugees and provided the land for the development of the project.
- The housing corporation *De Key*, which builds and owns about 37,000 rental housing units in Amsterdam, Diemen and Zandvoort. *De Key* was in charge of the construction of *Startblok*.
- *Socius*, a housing provider for Dutch youngsters interested in developing projects with a social impact won the bid for developing, setting up and executing the self-management of *Startblok*. *Socius* is also in charge of the recruitment and selection of future young tenants living in the Netherlands.
- The Central Department for Sheltering Refugees, which has overall responsibility for refugees in the Netherlands. The Department selects refugees who can live in *Startblok* facilities.
- *Vluchtelingenwerk*, an NGO which offers personal support, information and counselling to refugees and asylum-seekers in the Netherlands and to the *Startblok* residents.

#### **Self-management**

Tenants are encouraged to help manage their living environment by participating in social management and general management. "Social management" refers to creating a cohesive community and a liveable environment; it further entails coordinating social initiatives, activities and

events. General management refers to daily tasks such as taking care of social media, participating in the selection of future tenants and maintenance works.

The self-management team is coordinated and supported by *Socius*. In total, about 10 per cent of tenants are involved in management activities, for which they receive a small wage.

All tenants, even those who are not formally part of the management team can suggest activities such as sports, cooking, games, film showings or musical events and can organise them with the help of the management team.

### ***Solidarity***

The underlying idea of the *Startblok* project is that tenants help each other have a good start into society. To achieve this, solidarity is enhanced in various ways.

Firstly, the 'buddy' project couples a foreigner to a Dutch youngster with similar interests. Buddies are matched before moving to *Startblok* so that they can start getting to know each other prior to moving into the premises. They are expected to exchange skills, knowledge and support each other. Secondly, 102 tenants live in shared apartments, sharing their kitchen, bathroom and living room with one to three other persons. Attention is paid to always have refugees living with Dutch youngsters to foster communication and sharing. Thirdly, all tenants are organised in "living groups", meaning that they will be offered to participate in activities together. Each living group has two self-appointed managers and is provided with a common space to carry out social activities.

### **Additional sources:**

Startblok. Available at: <http://www.startblok.amsterdam/en/>

Socius. Available at: <http://www.socius-wonen.nl/index.html>

## **Case Study 313: Social Housing in a Supportive Environment (SHSE) - Serbia**

Serbia has a very limited number of social housing units for two reasons. Firstly, the socialist public housing stock has been privatised. Secondly, the new social housing policy is in its early stages of design and implementation. The lack of public housing and the closure of collective centres has resulted in refugees having to look for accommodation on the private rental market. In the early 2000s, many were found to be living in very poor conditions, leading the Serbian government to consider inadequate housing as an impediment to successful integration into society. As a consequence, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy launched the SHSE programme in 2002 with the support of UNHCR and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The SHSE programme aims to house the most vulnerable refugee families. It has two interrelated components:

### ***The construction of social housing units owned by local authorities***

Special attention is paid to the quality of design, the location and access to services and infrastructure. In order to provide the highest possible standards, all buildings are newly constructed rather than refurbished. The average cost per unit is US\$553 per m<sup>2</sup>.

Newly constructed social housing units are part of two-storey buildings, which are similar to other local buildings in terms of quality and aesthetics. Buildings usually include six to eight apartments per block and are integrated in the urban tissue, among other residential buildings. The blocks' aesthetics and location aim to avoid stigmatisation and discrimination.

Community spaces are central to design as they enable contact between residents. The communal rooms, laundries, terraces and outdoor space of the units are barrier-free and both accessible for social housing and neighbourhood residents.

Programme stakeholders are:

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Serbia, providing guidance to the project development;
- Donor organisations, which provide most of the financing. Together with the Serbian national government, donor organisations bring 70 per cent of financial resources. When the project started, the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development was the main donor, a role which the European Union has now taken over.
- Municipalities are expected to provide the land for construction, which corresponds approximately to the remaining 30 per cent of the programme's cost. They are also responsible for the maintenance of social housing buildings. Municipalities participating in the programme are selected according to the number and vulnerability of refugees and IDPs they receive, as well as their ability to provide land and infrastructure.

### ***The creation of a supportive environment for social housing residents***

Fostered by the Centre for Social Work and host families, the SHSE programme has been envisaged as catering to residents' needs.

Host families are selected by the local Centre for Social Work and trained in communication, conflict management skills and support for mentally and physically ill persons. Host families can also be refugees or IDPs with children, who have the capacity to work. There is one host family per residential building. The host family lives alongside the other families and is tasked with providing them with the necessary support they require in their daily lives. In this way, the host family acts as a point of contact with external bodies and can help all other refugees integrate in the neighbourhood. Additionally, the host family is responsible for maintaining common areas and helping other residents with their own maintenance. Each municipality compensates the host family for their services. Compensation ranges from rent-free living to a proper salary with attached pension and health insurance.

Host families do not pay rent, but only their utility bills. Some municipalities also offer some form of additional support for most vulnerable households.

Every year, municipal authorities hold a meeting to determine which residents have achieved sufficient autonomy. Families deemed independent enough are supposed to secure their own



dwelling in the private market. However, the goal of the project is not to lead beneficiaries towards self-reliance but to offer protection to a particularly vulnerable population.

### **Achievements**

By January 2016, 1,229 social housing units had been built in 43 municipalities across Serbia under the programme, housing a total of 3,301 people.

Additionally, a 2009 study jointly conducted by the NGO Housing Centre and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy highlighted the impact achieved by the project:

- 81 per cent of beneficiaries eventually obtained Serbian citizenship. However, at least one family members was ethnically Serb in most of these cases.
- 100 per cent of the children of beneficiary families were attending school, which starkly contrasts with the rates for refugee children living in collective centres, for whom the drop-out rate is of 67 per cent for elementary school, climbing to 70 per cent for secondary education. Indeed, even though education is free of charge in Serbia, many refugee children in collective centres have dropped out of school to help their parents earn money for basic necessities. Providing them with tenure security and social support has thus had an impact on education.
- 32 per cent of beneficiaries secured employment while being accommodated in SHSE and 50 per cent of these were achieved due to the help of the Centre for Social Work. It should be noted that the absence of language barrier was certainly crucial to achieve these results.

SHSE was one of the finalists of the World Habitat Awards in 2009 and 2014.

### **Additional sources:**

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2015) "Home Sweet Home: Housing Practices and Tools Which Support Durable Solutions for Urban IDPs". Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150325-global-home-sweet-home/20150325-global-home-sweet-home-en-full-report.pdf>

Housing Centre. (2014). Social housing in supportive environment. Available at: [https://issuu.com/housingcenter/docs/wha\\_2014\\_2015\\_booklet?e=13250810/9031465](https://issuu.com/housingcenter/docs/wha_2014_2015_booklet?e=13250810/9031465)

World Habitat. (2009). Building and Social Housing Foundation. Available at : <https://www.bshf.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/social-housing-in-supportive-environments-shse/>

UNHCR. (2016). Housing solutions for twenty-six displaced families in Kragujevac thanks to a donation from the European Union. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.rs/en/dokumenti/saopstenja-za-medije/stambena-resenja-dvadeset-sest-raseljenih.html>

## Part 4: The Role of Housing Cooperatives in providing housing to migrants and refugees

Housing cooperatives (Coops) are a typology of private companies formed by individuals with the aim of facilitating access to housing for their members. Residents are the collective managers of the company and collectively establish rules and decisions relating to their living environment. Housing cooperatives' primary aim is to provide quality and affordable housing. However, some carry out additional purposes such as the promotion of ecological practices or the provision of housing to specific groups such as the older persons, single mothers or migrants and refugees.

### Case Study 14414: Mika - Karlsruhe, Germany

In Germany, housing cooperatives have been in existence since the 19th century and are a widely spread form of housing for the national population. The country currently reports around 1,800 housing cooperatives across its territory, offering a total of 2.1 million rental housing units to nationals or foreigners.

The *Mika* cooperative was founded with the idea of offering 30 per cent of its 86 apartments to migrant families. *Mika* offers long term rental contracts and residents are able to remain for several generations.

The project was born thanks to financial support from both the German government and the GLS Bank, which provided loans for the cooperative to gather the €7,670,000 which was necessary to buy, rebuild and renovate the buildings of a former military barracks for the creation of housing.

The apartment buildings, offering between one and seven rooms each, were designed by the members of the cooperative. The buildings lay around an opened interior courtyard which provides space for community events. Mika's website makes mention of its use as a playground, garden and a meeting space. Furthermore, mutual support between residents is fostered through mutual baby-sitting and car sharing for instance.

All these common activities and services foster peaceful coexistence between residents of different cultural backgrounds. This is further facilitated through the mediation and exchange forum, set up in 2003, which allows residents from different social and ethnic backgrounds to interact and get to know each other. For instance, non-violence seminars are organized to teach residents how to manage conflicts.

Additionally, affordability is core to the cooperative as it was decided that rent would be set at € 5.27/m<sup>2</sup> on January 2007 and increased of €0.31 every two years. Since its creation the cooperative has received numerous awards<sup>63</sup>.

#### Additional sources:

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<sup>63</sup> A full list is available at: [http://www.mika-eg.de/stand\\_preise.html](http://www.mika-eg.de/stand_preise.html) (German).

Mika. Gemeinschaftsorientiertes Wohnen. Available at: [http://www.mika-eg.de/wohn\\_gemeinsam.html](http://www.mika-eg.de/wohn_gemeinsam.html)

Housing Co-op International. Co-operatives housing Germany. Available at: <http://www.housinginternational.coop/co-ops/germany>

## Case Study 515: 400 Riel - Gatineau, Canada

In Canada, housing cooperatives have been providing housing to migrants since the mid-1980s. Most of these coops were developed by ethnic community groups to create a link between housing and other programs aiming to integrate newcomers in the country. Examples are the Chilean Housing Coop in Vancouver and the Tamil Cooperative in Toronto. The latter was awarded the Cooperative Housing Foundation of Canada's Award for Co-operative Achievement on June 2015, recognising its dedication to “supporting newcomers adjusting to their new homes and the larger community”.

Created in 1984, the *400 Riel* coop consists of 34 individual houses. In 2015, members decided to allocate one of the empty houses for a refugee family. The house has four bedrooms, which appears valuable considering that large refugee families often struggle to find accommodation which matches their family composition given their few resources.

The refugee family (currently composed of eight members) is offered the house at a low rent (\$250 a month) for a year. The idea is to allow the family to have a secured accommodation for one year, which is supposed to allow refugees to focus on skills building and finding employment.

Despite the fact that the coop is only housing one refugee family at a time, the concept and financing mechanisms behind the 400 Riel initiative remain interesting. While the support provided by the Canadian government stops one year after their arrival, refugees settling in Quebec are eligible for housing allowances only one year after settling into a housing cooperative. As a result, there is a gap of one year in financial support for refugees.

To deal with this issue, members of the coop started crowd-funding through the platform *mécènESS*.<sup>64</sup> In addition, some members of the coop willingly decided they would fund the difference between the affordable rent and real rent from their own pocket, unless a partnership is formed with the Housing Society of Quebec to provide the family with some form of housing allowance to fund the amount of the rent.

### Additional sources:

Co-operative news. (2016). Canada's Co-operators commit to helping refugees. Available at: <http://www.thenews.coop/101954/news/co-operatives/canadas-co-operators-commit-helping-refugees/>

## Case Study 616: Stitching New Home Rotterdam – Rotterdam, The Netherlands

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<sup>64</sup> SeeSee: <https://meceness.ca/projects/refugies-bien-loges/>.

Stitching New Home Rotterdam is a housing programme managed by the De Verre Bergen Foundation. Founded in 2011, this foundation is actively involved in many social projects promoting migrants and refugees' integration into Dutch society.

The New Home Rotterdam initiative (SNTR) aims to increase the supply of housing for refugees by means of purchasing private homes that have been for sale on average more than six months. The idea behind this approach is that this way houses aren't taken away from local people who may be interested in moving to those areas. The cost for one apartment is on average 100,000€ and refugees are asked to pay rent for their property. This fee goes to the foundation, which uses the money to pay for language courses and guidance on education and work opportunities for the refugees.

Beneficiaries have the chance to participate in a 16-week program to learn Dutch, reaching a level at which participants can work or pursue further education. The foundation also offers programs for refugees to get familiar with their new home: the city, district, healthcare and education systems, as well as assistance in finding employment.

**Additional sources:**

Alliance magazine. (2016). Migration and refugee crisis: Is venture philanthropy reactive enough. Available at: <http://www.alliancemagazine.org/blog/migration-refugee-crisis-venture-philanthropy-reactive-enough/>

Stichting Nieuw Thuis Rotterdam. Huisvestiging. Available at: [www.sntr.nl/programma/huisvesting/](http://www.sntr.nl/programma/huisvesting/)

De Verre Bergen. Een kansrijke toekomst voor Syrische statushouders in Rotterdam. Available at: [www.deverrebergen.nl/plannen-voor-rotterdam/stichting-nieuw-thuis-rotterdam/](http://www.deverrebergen.nl/plannen-voor-rotterdam/stichting-nieuw-thuis-rotterdam/)

## Part 5: Modular Housing Units for Migrants and Refugees

One of the main issues that hinder the delivery of housing in the UNECE region, and affordable housing in particular,<sup>65</sup> relates to the several challenges faced by the construction industry: high construction costs, slow construction pace, and scarce or expensive land, which prevent the fast provision of affordable housing and lead to a significant housing shortage in the UNECE region.<sup>66</sup> In many cases, housing is constructed in the same ways it was half a century ago. Thus, selected studies claim that the use of industrial approaches, i.e. prefabrication or modular methods could offer a potential solution to the challenges of the construction industry. Industrial approaches to construction refer to any kind of off-site production followed by on-site assembling.

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<sup>65</sup> UNECE. (2015). Social Housing in the UNECE region: Models, Trends and Challenges.

<sup>66</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. (2014) A blueprint for addressing the global affordable housing challenge. McKinsey & Company 2014. Available at [https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Urbanization/Tackling%20the%20world%20affordable%20housing%20challenge/MGI\\_Affordable\\_housing\\_Executive%20summary\\_October%202014.ashx](https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Urbanization/Tackling%20the%20world%20affordable%20housing%20challenge/MGI_Affordable_housing_Executive%20summary_October%202014.ashx)

This section provides several examples of prefabricated accommodation for refugees, mostly in Germany. In recent years Germany has seen a surge in the use of these building methods to construct hundreds of thousands of prefabricated dwellings under government contracts.

However, cases where prefabrication methods have been used to accommodate migrants and refugees for a longer term illustrate that modular methods should not only be seen as an emergency solution but can also provide good quality and lasting dwellings.

#### Case study 7.17. City of Ostfildern

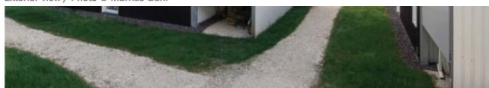
Link: <http://www.u3ba.de/projekte/sozialwohnungsbau-ostfildern>

Year of completion	Composition	Residents
February 2015	39 residents in 3 buildings One-bedroom apartments	Formerly homeless people and refugees
Method used: Timber frame		
Construction cost: €29,400/dwelling or €1,400/m²		
Living space per person: 21m²		Life span: 40 years

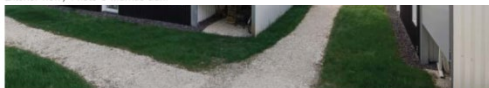
#### Pictures



Exterior view / Photo © Markus Guhl



Exterior view / Photo © Markus Guhl



Exterior view / Photo © Markus Guhl



#### Case study 18. City of Bad Soden

Link: <http://www.rigollarchitekten.de/index.php/projekt/wohnanlage.html>

Year of completion	Composition	Residents
May 2015	40 two-bedroom self-contained units	Families of asylum-seekers

<b>Method used:</b> Timber frame	
<b>Construction cost:</b> €47,500/dwelling or €1,750/m <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Living space per person:</b> 9,71m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Life span:</b> not mentioned
<b>Pictures</b> <div>  <p>Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll</p>  <p>Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll</p>  <p>Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll</p> </div> <div>  </div>	

Case study 19. City of Tübingen		
Link: <a href="http://www.haeferle-architekten.de/referenzen.html#collapseOne">http://www.haeferle-architekten.de/referenzen.html#collapseOne</a>		
Year of completion	Composition	Residents
April 2015	Two-bedroom self-contained apartments	96 asylum-seekers
Method used: Room modules in steel		
Construction cost: €1762/m²		
Living space per person: 14,50 m²		Life span: 5/10 years
Pictures		





Playground / Photo: © Heiner Holme



Playground / Photo: © Heiner Holme







Playground / Photo: © Heiner Holme



### Case study 0.20. City of Königsbrunn

Link: <http://www.variahome.de/home/>

Year of completion	Composition	Residents
July 2015	20 two-bedroom self-contained apartments	Asylum-seekers

<b>Method used:</b> Prefabricated wooden room modules	
<b>Construction cost:</b> €1,700/m <sup>2</sup>	
<b>Living space per person:</b> 7.6m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Life span:</b> Not mentioned
<b>Pictures:</b> <div>  <p>Königsbrunn: residential building and interior courtyard / Photo: © VARIAHOME</p>  <p>Königsbrunn: residential building and interior courtyard / Photo: © VARIAHOME</p>  <p>Königsbrunn: residential building and interior courtyard / Photo: © VARIAHOME</p> </div> 	

Case study 21. City of Kriftel		
Link: <a href="http://www.rigollarchitekten.de/index.php/projekt/Wohnanlage-Kriftel.html">http://www.rigollarchitekten.de/index.php/projekt/Wohnanlage-Kriftel.html</a>		
Year of completion	Composition	Residents
August 2014	22 two- and three-bedroom self-contained apartments	40 asylum-seekers
Method used: Container, steel frame		
Construction cost: €48,545/dwelling or €1,443/m <sup>2</sup>		
Living space per person: 9,79m <sup>2</sup>		
		Life span: 5 years



## Pictures:



Kriftel: Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll



Kriftel: Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll



Kriftel: Back side / Photo: © Olaf Rigoll



## Case study 2.22. City of Geneva

Link: <http://www.acau.ch/projets/amig-rigot>

Year of completion	Composition	Residents
February 2019	Not mentioned	370 migrants, mostly families
Method used: Prefabricated, wood		
Construction cost: €26,000,000		
Living space per person: not mentioned		Life span: minimum 10 years

## Pictures





The selected prefabricated housing projects show how such construction methods can be used both to house migrants and refugees while their application is processed (cases of Bad Soben, Tübingen, Königsbrunn and Kriftel) or as a lasting housing solution (case of Ostfildern and Geneva).

These housing projects were selected as best practices for providing housing for migrants and refugees because of the quality of life they offer to newcomers. Indeed, contrary to most reception facilities where refugees must share their living space, and which do not pay much attention to design, the prefabricated housing buildings presented above offer each family some privacy and the possibility to have a family life which is as normal as possible. For instance, families are able to cook their own food and children enjoy space to play.

The *Königsbrunn* complex was designed as a “social project” aiming to start the integration process of asylum-seekers into German society while their application is processed. Thus, offices for volunteers and social workers were integrated into the complex. The other projects lack this social dimension even though they are dedicated to housing the same population.

These housing projects had the main advantage to have been built quickly (taking less than 9 months from design to set up). However, the costs of construction are similar to classical building methods. Ordering those dwellings from German firms presents the advantage of boosting the prefabricated construction sector (11.5 per cent of growth in 2015) but buying them from third countries might be a way to reduce costs.

For instance, various Turkish companies, such as *Villa Prefabrik*, have developed expertise in producing prefabricated dwellings following the Marmara Earthquake in 1999. They appear to be able to produce a prefabricated dwelling for \$1,300, including shipping costs to Europe. Currently, *Villa Prefabrik* receives orders from Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

Local authorities are planning to use these complexes to house refugees for between 5 and 40 years (see the “Lifespan” boxes). Depending on the length of the refugee crisis, those lifespans might be

extended. However, the dwellings could then be reconverted for other purposes like housing students, the elderly, homeless people etc. It could thus be seen as a long-term investment for municipalities.

The case of *Ostfildern* shows that, when building prefabricated housing complexes, authorities could consider including both locals and refugees in need of accommodation. Thus, if prefabricated housing is intended to accommodate refugees in the long term, ensuring social mix could allow the integration of refugees into society.

## Part 6: Improving Mechanisms for Access to Adequate Housing

Once granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, asylum seekers are required to leave the temporary accommodation which they were provided with during the application process. They are usually expected to do so in a short time frame: two months in Belgium, 28 days in the United Kingdom, 15 days in Slovenia, and 14 days in Bulgaria. In Western European countries such as United Kingdom, France or Germany, refugees are not given particular priority. In some other countries, mostly Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria and Slovenia, refugees are expected to find their own accommodation in the private housing market.

### Case Study 23323: Conditional Rental Subsidy – Romania

In Romania, refugees are required to leave their accommodation centre soon after being granted asylum, except those who decide to participate in the integration program or are vulnerable persons. But as few as 49 per cent of those can sustain an independent life. As a consequence, refugees face a significant risk of homelessness. A conditional in-cash housing support centre is aimed at support refugees.<sup>67</sup> While staying at the centre, refugees have to follow an integration programme including cultural orientation, language courses, social counselling and receive -three months of financial assistance amounting to 480 lei (approx. 100euros)/month/person until they get a non-reimbursable monthly grant amounting to 540 lei (approx..112,5euros)/month/person. If the reception centres have not available places, there is the possibility for the beneficiaries of international protection who participate in the integration program to rent a private house and the General Immigration Inspectorate will reimburse the monthly expenses.

After this one-year period, a rental subsidy may be provided for one year maximum. It covers 50 per cent of the rent and is granted only to refugees who have completed the integration programme and who were denied access to social housing. This happen frequently as the social housing stock is small: according to Housing Europe, the stock of social housing represents 2.3 per cent of the national housing stock.

Starting with 2016, there are projects, financed by the AMIF, aiming to identify houses and cover rental expenses for the beneficiaries of international protection who participate in the integration program or are vulnerable persons.

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<sup>67</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013) “Refugee Integration and the Use of Indicators: Evidence from Central Europe”. Available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/532164584.html>.

## Case Study 24424: Rehousing Allowance – Belgium

When arriving to Belgium, asylum seekers are housed in reception centres. They might be run by FEDASIL, the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, by a partner organisation, such as the Red Cross or Caritas, or be part of a local reception initiative implemented in a municipality.

When granted official protection, refugees are given two months to find accommodation. Additionally, the social assistance that the refugee can receive is conditioned to the residence on a municipality's territory. However, refugees face many barriers to securing accommodation on the private rental market, which puts them at risk of homelessness. Among these is a lack of resources, which is what the rehousing allowance aims to address.

The rehousing allowance applies to a variety of vulnerable people, among them recognised refugees, who might benefit from it when leaving the reception centre. It consists of:

- The move allowance, which assists people in moving in and out, consists of €808.03, plus 10 per cent for each additional household member, (not exceeding 3 additional persons). Thus, the maximum allowance is of €1050.44. It is allocated only once per household.
- The rent allowance of €156.56 per month, plus 10 per cent for each additional household member (not exceeding 5 additional persons). The maximum amount per month is therefore €234.83. It is allocated for five years, renewable once, in which case it would be decreased of 50 per cent.

### Additional sources:

City of Brussels. Allocation de relogement - sans abri. Available at: <http://logement.brussels/primes-et-aides/allocation-de-relogement-sans-abri>

Regional Habitat Observatory. Observatoire regional du logement. Available at: <http://www.slr.b.irisnet.be/publications/observatoire-regional-du-logement>

## Case Study 25525: HSB (Swedish Cooperative Housing Association) – Sweden

The HSB - Swedish Cooperative Housing Association- consists of 33 regional cooperative associations who in turn have 3,903 cooperative local housing companies as members. HSB housing stock amounts to 317,000 units with 27,000 rental dwellings. Mostly located in urban areas, the co-operatives have approximately 20 to 100 apartments each, with an average size of 80 units.

Tenants must be members of the co-operative; membership of which is approved by the Board. Members pay a monthly fee that covers the interest and amortization expenses of the cooperative's loans, as well as the operating expenses and scheduled future maintenance. The size of the monthly fee is decided by the size of the units the member occupies.

There is no financial assistance from the government. Depending on the project, members/tenant-owners finance between 75 – 80 per cent of the development cost and the rest of the funding is raised

by the cooperatives through loans from banks and other private financial institutions. Tenant-owners can normally get a loan from the banks equivalent to 85 per cent of the down payment required.

Both the HSB and Riksborgen have set up saving mechanisms whereby individuals can save to buy their future cooperative housing shares. Individuals who use this mechanism receive priority on new developments.

**Additional sources:**

Housing International. Co-operative housing Sweden. Available at:  
<http://www.housinginternational.coop/co-ops/sweden>

Power House Europe. HSB - The Swedish Cooperative Housing Association. Available at:  
[http://www.powerhouseeurope.eu/national\\_platforms/sweden/hsb\\_the\\_swedish\\_cooperative\\_housing\\_association/overview/](http://www.powerhouseeurope.eu/national_platforms/sweden/hsb_the_swedish_cooperative_housing_association/overview/)

HSB – Housing Cooperative Sweden. Stockholm. Available at: <https://www.hsb.se/stockholm/>

## **Case Study 26626: Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees – Canada**

The Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) is a national network gathering Canada's 191 community foundations. The foundations are non-profit organisations which finance community-impact initiatives in a variety of fields from shelter and education to arts and recreation. On December 10, 2015, CFC announced the creation of a Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees.

The CFC launched this fund to fundraise from the private sector. The fund has managed to gather significant resources. In particular, the company Manulife donated \$6,000,000. The CFC distributes the resources to the various community foundations according to local needs and the number of refugees welcomed. Those foundations then direct the funds to charitable organisations. These financial resources are meant to be used to fund accommodation, job training and skills development for refugees. Calgary was the first city to receive funds from CFC (about \$600,000) which have since been used to supplement the monthly housing allowances received given to the city's 700 government-assisted refugees.

**Additional sources:**

Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship. Data on Refugees. Available at:  
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Community Foundations of Canada. (2015). Manulife and Community Foundations of Canada establish Welcome Fund for Syrian Refugees. Available at:  
<http://communityfoundations.ca/manulife-and-community-foundations-of-canada-establish-welcome-fund-for-syrian-refugees/>

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## **Case Study 727: Provivienda - Spain**



Provivienda is active in several Spanish cities with the aim to facilitate “access to privately-rented housing for people with limited financial means”. Its activities include:

- The provision of updated information and advice to find accommodation on the rental market
- The provision of mortgages
- The provision of multi-risk insurance guarantees through insurance companies or directly acting as a guarantor
- The management of a fund, mainly through public resources, to compensate landlords in case of tenants' inability to pay rent;
- The creation of partnerships with landlords either through individuals voluntarily agreeing to set the rent 20 per cent below market rate, or through Provivienda funding a landlord's property refurbishing after which the latter reserves the flat for Provivienda's beneficiaries over a contractually agreed time period. When a tenant is found, the lease is guaranteed for a minimum of five years.

Provivienda's guarantees normally apply for a year only. They can be extended to five years in exceptional cases. Provivienda has housed 87,000 people since its creation. However, no information is provided on the share of refugees among these beneficiaries.

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## **Case Study 828: Welcommon – Greece**

The Wind of Renewal (WoR) was founded in 2014. The cooperative is working to advance a number of social and economic objectives, including the integration of refugees into host communities and the promotion of sustainable and green social enterprises. To advance these goals, the WoR has been collaborating with local governments, EU institutions, cooperative movements and other civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as universities and researchers, on a wide range of projects and activities.

In September 2016, the WoR launched “Welcommon”, an innovative community center for hosting and promoting integration of refugees. It is implemented by the social enterprise Wind of Renewal (“Anemos Ananeosis”) in cooperation with the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (EATA), in the framework of the relocation program of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Welcommon’s refugee housing facility is located in Exarhia, Athens, in a former

clinic rented for 9 years. Its central location and easy accessibility by public transport contributes to preventing the marginalization of the refugees and facilitates the participation of local people in its activities.

Welcommon accommodates up to 200 people with separate rooms designated for families. Beneficiaries are identified by the UNHCR within the framework of its relocation program, with priority given to vulnerable groups including pregnant women, families with children, and the elderly, among others. Currently the majority of the 160 guests are Syrian children, who are usually accompanied by only one parent.

All guests undergo a medical check, and all children are vaccinated so that they can enter the formal education system. In cooperation with the community of Syrians, already living in Greece, they are in the process of setting up a network of Arabic-speaking volunteer doctors of various specializations.

The community centre covers the costs of settlement and all the basic needs of the refugees beside housing facilities. The project also organizes training for refugees and facilitates their active participation in, and cooperation with the local population. It aims to provide adequate infrastructure and quality services, while applying good practices that ensure the dignity of the refugees.

**Additional sources:**

ILO News. (2016). Cooperative housing for refugees in Greece. Available at:  
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## Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis that has been carried in this study has shown **that housing is one of the key vectors for the integration of regular migrants and refugees** alongside the provision of access to rights such as employment, education, health activities. This study demonstrates that employment alone does not represent the main avenue of integration in contemporary mixed migratory flows. For this reason, providing access to affordable and adequate housing is of paramount importance in the UNECE region.

The 28 case studies presented in this publication demonstrate a wide range of good practices of providing affordable and adequate housing for migrants and refugees, which include but are not restricted to the following:

- Revitalizing depopulated decaying urban neighbourhoods by renovating vacant houses and using them as housing for migrants and refugees (Case studies 1 and 2)
- Addressing the depopulation of rural areas through providing housing for migrants and refugees in rural communities (Case studies 3-7)
- Promoting diverse and sustainable communities through facilitating interaction between local communities and migrants and refugees, developing shared public spaces and conducting activities to support integration (Case studies 8-10)
- Developing long-term, sustainable and cost-efficient housing solutions through involving migrants and refugees in planning and implementation processes on housing construction and maintenance (Case studies 11-17)
- Building affordable adequate housing through applying innovative architectural design for cheap, but still high-quality, modular prefabricated housing (Case studies 18-23)
- Generating additional resources on housing projects for migrants and refugees through partnerships between governments, NGOs and the private sector (Case Studies 24-29)

The following conclusions and recommendations could be drawn based on the study:

1. While both housing and immigration policy are generally set at the national level in the UNECE region, the effects of both are **primarily visible at the regional and local level, and require local action, at municipal level. As shown in case studies 10, 11 and 13, local authorities of cities Ghent, Vienna and Amsterdam played a significant role for the successful integration of migrants and refugees.** Cities often have key solutions to the challenges, such as the informal sector and the overall growth of substandard housing, and the provision of basic services for all, which are presented by migratory patterns. Integration in cities is an important element that can shape their economic, social, and cultural vibrancy. Effective migration policies have the power to contribute to flows of money, public revenue, knowledge and ideas between cities of origin and destination, as well as to enhance social cohesion and livelihoods among both the host and migrant communities.

**Policy recommendation:** Efforts to provide adequate and affordable accommodation for newcomers in cities require national governments **to delegate more powers and resources to local governments**, who should develop projects with the meaningful participation of all stakeholders and beneficiaries.

2. Competences over housing and integration are divided between different tiers of government, both vertically and horizontally. However, as most of the presented case studies demonstrated,



integration of the efforts of different sectors and disciplines, as well as the close cooperation of different authorities is required. If the issue is addressed through a sectoral approach, solutions are unlikely to generate impactful results.

**Policy recommendation:** For positive results, an integrated approach to the planning and implementation of housing projects and other integration activities (jobs, education, services) for regular migrants and refugees, with a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities between different organisations while ensuring collaboration between different tiers of government and disciplines, is of key importance.

3. The case studies from different countries presented in this study demonstrate that those **housing projects developed with active involvement of future tenants**, are much more cost-effective and sustainable economically, socially and environmentally in the long run.

**Policy recommendation:** Strategies should be designed to include the active participation of migrants and refugees in decision-making for the planning and construction of housing for migrants and refugees, as well as in the implementation processes for construction and maintenance. This can take several forms as shown in case studies 6 and 7 – for example, panels or advisory groups, training and employment of migrants and refugees in local housing services, or, direct involvement of migrants and refugees in the provision or revitalization of housing. Beyond common integration programmes, such as participation in the public life of the host country, is also a form of integration that helps those involved but also other migrants who benefit from the information shared by those engaged.

4. The mapping of practices for housing for migrants and refugees carried out for this study also revealed that the **success of the housing projects depends to a considerable extent on the creativity of cities, housing associations, NGOs and other civil society groups**. Consequently, experiences of reception, integration and access to housing may differ greatly between countries, but also within them – depending on the capacity (and willingness) of each city, neighbourhood (or even households) to absorb newcomers. Regarding the observed diversity, innovative solutions for housing exist in a variety of tenures and levels of implementation (e.g. national, regional, local, etc.) there is also a variety of potential providers for the housing. Case studies in Belgium, France and Turkey (case studies 8-10) showed effective examples of local practices of involving municipalities, housing associations and other NGOs, resulting in sustainable housing solutions.

**Policy recommendation:** It is important to promote the involvement of cities, urban planners, housing associations and other NGOs and stakeholders to ensure long-term sustainable housing solutions which consider local cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The housing systems in UNECE member States are characterized by their great diversity. The mapping of innovative practices for this study case studies 11-17 from Austria, Canada, Germany, Serbia and The Netherlands, showed that this variety and richness is also present in housing solutions for migrants and refugees. **Housing solutions can address the housing continuum beyond emergency shelters to cover transitional housing, social housing, affordable renting, affordable home ownership as well as private rent and home ownership**. In localities where a wide variety of affordable housing options are available along with comprehensive long-term

integration strategies, the ‘housing continuum’ approach – the provision of a broad range of types of tenure: ensuring the fulfilment of all housing needs, as well as leaving room for progression - enables migrants and refugees to improve their living conditions, supports their social mobility and supports the long-term integration process. As demonstrated in case studies 18-23, prefabricated and ecological methods can address the long-term housing issues for vulnerable groups in society, rather than merely acting as an emergency solution. The challenge for local and national governments alike, is to use the examples presented and implement them at the scale needed for each context. There is a continuing need for housing policy to support tenure-balanced housing provision, as well as a wide range of affordable housing options, to enable the social mobility of the most vulnerable groups including the migrants and refugees, without prioritizing over home ownership as a single model.

**Policy recommendation:** it is recommended to support social mobility of all including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs through the housing continuum approach – ensuring the migrants and refugees are provided not just with temporary housing solutions but also access to affordable and social housing they can use in long term. The role of homeowner associations and housing cooperatives is crucial in this respect.

5. A comprehensive examination of the cutting-edge literature in human geography, psychology and sociology suggests that integration is an increasingly dynamic and multi-level process. This process, among other issues, rests **on the interaction between the host community and the newcomers**. Calls for **migrants and refugees and service providers to collaborate in the design and set-up of necessary services and learn together are on the increase**. In the context of housing and integration, the study found that the following two points are of crucial importance:

- *Engagement of beneficiaries in housing policy and project design*

The engagement and participation of beneficiaries in housing policy and project design is of key importance to secure relevant information on experiences and needs at both national and city levels.

- *Engagement of the host communities in the process of new migrant integration*

Integration is a multi-dimensional process<sup>68</sup> which by its very nature requires interaction between the newcomers and the host community. The research shows that such interaction may be challenging in normal circumstances.<sup>69</sup> However, scarcity and austerity may add an additional level of complexity. The housing crisis and its ramifications revealed an increased and unmet housing need across the ECE region which requires structural changes that are still lacking. In this context, it is important to balance the housing needs of the local population with that of migrants and refugees. Preparation and engagement of host communities (including accessing capacities for absorption) is of vital importance to ensure integration is possible in specific host localities.

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<sup>68</sup> Psinos, M. and Rosenfeld, O. (2017) ‘Developing the understanding of migrant and refugee integration in the EU: implications for housing policies’. Paper presented at The Migration Conference, Harokopio University, Athens, 23–26 August.

<sup>69</sup> Ponzio, I. (2010) ‘Immigrant integration policies and housing policies: the hidden links’. Paper presented at the Forum of International and European Research on Immigration (FIERI), Turin, Italy.

**Policy recommendation:** promote interaction between the host community and the newcomers, facilitate cooperation to collaborate in the design and set-up of necessary services related to housing and life of migrants and refugees. Additionally, all housing related strategies should be accompanied by an evidence-based communication strategy which informs locals and migrants and refugees alike of the benefits to all citizens of the approach.

6. This study has illustrated that initiatives and programmes providing **access to medium and long-term housing solutions** immediately following migrants' and refugees' arrival in the host country is a critical element in their long-term integration prospects. In this context, the provision of affordable and adequate housing has a direct impact on migrants and refugees' ability to seek employment, education and health among other social services that cities offer. Case studies 24-29 showed that generating additional resources and creating new financial means for migrants and refugees jointly with NGOs and the private sector can have a significant impact on providing access to medium and long-term housing solutions.

**Policy recommendation:** housing programmes for migrants and refugees should be designed with a view to the medium- or long-term, instead of considering only immediate housing needs.

7. The need to adjust national policies for the provision of adequate and affordable housing as a response to the economic, financial and migration crises has been discussed in different forums by governments, not least during annual sessions of the intergovernmental UNECE Committee of Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, which links high-level officials responsible for housing and land management in 56 countries in the UNECE region. There is increased interest in re-balancing tenures and searching for new and innovative solutions. The mapping and analysis in this study of innovative solutions for the housing and integration of migrants and refugees in the early years following their arrival illustrates the creativity and commitment of cities, housing providers, NGOs and civil society in general.

**Policy recommendation:** International organizations should support this enthusiasm and energy and **help efforts to improve access to medium- and long-term housing solutions for migrants and refugees. International organizations are seen as the hubs of knowledge exchange. They should establish long-term commitments to the housing data collection, best practice mapping and exchange, as well as capacity building.**