



A City Says Yes!

Reflections on the experiences of the
Save Me campaign to promote refugee
resettlement in Germany

PRO ASYL
DER EINZELFALL ZÄHLT.

ICMC
International Catholic
Migration Commission

What is ICMC?

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) serves and protects uprooted people – refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants – regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality. Since its creation in 1951, ICMC has identified and accompanied over one million refugees for resettlement. Additionally, ICMC provides expert resettlement personnel to UNHCR field operations through the ICMC-UNHCR Resettlement Deployment Scheme. Through its Turkey and Lebanon offices, the ICMC Refugee Support Centre (RSC) processes refugees for resettlement to the United States. The ICMC Europe office in Brussels works to promote resettlement in Europe, develop the European Resettlement Network (www.resettlement.eu) with its partners IOM and UNHCR, and build European resettlement capacity and expertise.

What is PRO ASYL?

PRO ASYL is an independent human rights organisation based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. In 1986, regional refugee councils, churches, unions as well as welfare and human rights organisations founded the Federal Working Group of PRO ASYL with the aim to defend the rights of refugees. Today, the association of friends of PRO ASYL has around 16,000 members. PRO ASYL advocates a fair European Asylum system and the protection of refugees' dignity in Germany and Europe through political advocacy, legal expertise and public campaigning. The association conducts international projects, investigates and documents basic shortcomings (of European reception and asylum systems), and offers legal advice and financial support in exemplary cases.

What is SHARE?

SHARE is an 18-month programme led by ICMC Europe to build a European resettlement network of municipalities, cities and regions. The SHARE network creates sustainable relationships, disseminates best practices, builds capacity, creates partnerships and strengthens commitments to refugee protection. SHARE project activities offer structured dialogue, exchange of practices and networking between cities, regional actors and NGO partners and between experienced resettlement countries and countries planning or considering resettlement.

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Foreword

A City Says Yes!

Learning from the Save Me campaign in Germany

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and PRO ASYL are delighted to present to you 'A City Says Yes' – *Reflections on the experiences of the Save Me campaign* to promote refugee resettlement in Germany'. This publication looks at the 4 years since the 'Save Me – eine Stadt sagt ja' i.e. 'A City Says Yes' campaign was launched, taking stock of its achievements and reflecting on the elements that have made the campaign a success. This work is a product of the collaboration between PRO ASYL and ICMC in the SHARE programme: building a resettlement network of European municipalities, cities, regions and their civil society partners. With the SHARE network, ICMC works with a growing number of European cities, including the cities of Sheffield, Munich and Aachen, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and our non-governmental (NGOs) partners throughout Europe, to provide a platform for the exchange of successful experiences, approaches and practices that will strengthen local refugee reception and integration programmes and bring about more and better resettlement in Europe. We are sharing this publication with you as a contribution to that network and a renewed invitation to other partners and communities that may find it of interest.

Whilst refugee resettlement has grown steadily in Europe, with regular programmes now in 12 EU Member States, the total number of resettlement places Europe offers for refugees in need of protection is only around 5,500. This low share of the approximately 80,000 resettlement places that are available each year worldwide, is also far too little considering the protection needs and rapidly rising numbers of refugees currently fleeing Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. The UN refugee agency estimates that 800,000 people globally will require resettlement within the next 5 years, and Europe can – and should – do more. Humanitarian and temporary admissions are of course very welcome initiatives, but more durable solutions, providing full legal status as refugees, under resettlement programmes, are urgently needed.

Germany is a recent resettlement country. Despite the country's long experience of receiving refugees via organised programmes since the 1950s – including refugees from Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq

– the German government was for a long period not interested in having a regular UN resettlement programme. After much discussion and debate, the decision to do so was finally taken in 2011, and Germany will now receive 300 resettled refugees a year for the 3 years 2012–14.

In September 2012, a group of 195 men, women and children from Darfur (Sudan), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq and Somalia arrived in Germany, the first group to be resettled under the new programme. They were amongst the many who had fled the civil war in Libya, and had spent over a year in the UN-operated Shousha camp on the Tunisia-Libya border. Unable to return home or settle permanently in Tunisia, their only hope was that the UN refugee agency would find a country to accept them within a resettlement programme.

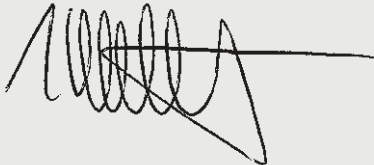
One can argue that receiving 300 resettled refugees a year is a very small number for a country of the size and standing of Germany. One can also take issue with the government's decision not to grant those who are resettled the legal status of 'refugee', which has many important implications for their legal rights in Germany and their future integration. However, the government decision to commit to an annual resettlement programme was an important success for civil society that 4 years earlier had joined forces in a nationwide campaign for resettlement in Germany, '*Save Me – A City Says Yes*'. Originally begun in Munich and now with branches in over 50 German cities including Berlin, Bonn and Dresden, *Save Me* is promoted and supported by a coalition including PRO ASYL, Amnesty International, churches, welfare organisations and others.

By building support for refugee resettlement and protection amongst a broad cross-section of citizens and organisations at a time when the concept of solidarity is under increasing pressure, the *Save Me* campaign proves the veracity of the maxim 'think global, act local'. The campaign's message stretched far beyond the usual refugee advocates, reaching out to a wide range of supporters of varied political, ethnic and religious affiliations, age groups and professions.

In 2013, there are over 7,000 individuals who have pledged their support to resettlement on the *Save Me* website, offering to act as 'Paten/Patinnen' – or mentors – to help refugees find their way around their new town, improve their language, find housing, complete forms and paperwork, and help children with their homework.

Save Me has heralded the emergence of a new – and in the context of asylum, unprecedented – type of cooperation between civil society and the German political authorities. These new partnerships will, if sustained, advance a culture of welcome in Germany that will benefit all refugees and migrants who make their home there. The value of *Save Me* should not, therefore, be underestimated, and we hope the campaign's success in bringing together communities and individuals for a common and positive purpose can be further duplicated.

This publication illustrates how '*Save Me – A City Says Yes*' has contributed toward refugee protection and solidarity efforts throughout Germany. We hope it inspires many new actors and activists, communities and cities beyond Germany's borders to make the case for refugee resettlement programmes across Europe. Each country and community will need to build its own programme, find specific solutions and develop its own formula, but there is much to be learned from the experiences of other cities and actors. Indeed, *Save Me* has already inspired a coalition of European NGOs and international organisations to launch the Europe-wide '*Resettlement Saves Lives*' campaign, advocating for Europe to provide significantly more places for resettled refugees each year. We invite you to visit www.resettlement.eu, join the campaign and follow the example of the many individuals and organisations who have already pledged their support and action, saying YES to resettlement!



Günter Burkhardt



Johan Ketelers

Günter Burkhardt, Secretary General PRO ASYL, Germany
Johan Ketelers, Secretary General ICMC

What is refugee resettlement?

What is resettlement?

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines resettlement as ‘the selection and transfer of refugees from a state in which they have sought protection to a third country that admits them – as refugees – with a permanent residence status.’^[1] Refugee resettlement has the following functions and objectives and is:

- A protection tool for individual refugees including those whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge.
- A solidarity instrument expressing international solidarity with the third countries that host the majority of the world’s refugees.

- A durable solution for refugees alongside voluntary repatriation and local integration in the country of asylum.

Only a small percentage of all refugees (1%) are actually resettled each year and UNHCR prioritises which cases are proposed for resettlement, focusing on the most in need and the most vulnerable refugees.

Being a durable solution, resettlement must ensure that integration in the new country by offering refugees permanent residence status and eventual access to citizenship. The process of resettlement is complex, gradual and full of challenges. Resettlement should therefore not be initiated until adequate resources and coordinated programmes and services are in place to support the integration needs of resettled refugees. These include initial reception and orientation, interpretation, income support, housing, healthcare, language tuition, education and vocational training and services to meet the specific needs, employment support and social support.

What resettlement is not

The establishment of national and/or European resettlement programmes complement existing European and/or national systems for dealing with the protection claims of asylum seekers that arrive spontaneously. Resettlement is not a potential substitute for states’ obligations to consider applications for asylum on their territory, nor does it diminish the continuing need for states to strengthen their national asylum systems.

In the EU context, resettlement should also not be confused with relocation. Resettlement is a humanitarian instrument concerned with ‘solidarity’ with third countries outside the EU, whereas relocation is concerned with intra-EU Member State solidarity. Until now, relocation has been used to transfer only a limited number of recognized refugees from Malta to other EU countries.

¹ UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, July 2011

Introducing the 'Save Me – A City Says Yes' campaign



There are too many refugees,' humans say. 'There are too few humans,' say the refugees. I'm taking part because I'm human."

**Petra Krüger, 51, (below)
Social worker, Bottrop**



Credit: Matthias Weinzierl

What is *Save Me*?

The '*Save Me – A City Says Yes*' is a German grassroots campaign, begun in early 2008 in Munich by the Bavarian and Munich Refugee Councils, Refugio Munich and Kammerspiele München. *Save Me* advocates for German participation in the United Nations resettlement programme, seeks the implementation of an annual resettlement quota for Germany and lobbies for the improved integration of resettled refugees into German society. *Save Me* mobilises local support for and involvement in refugee resettlement in regions, cities and towns throughout Germany. *Save Me* recruits local people as supporters and mentors who pledge their time to support resettled refugees after they arrive, and lobbies municipal and city councils to declare their support for resettlement and for establishing a local resettlement programme.

Using the slogan, '*Save Me – A City Says Yes*' local initiatives campaign for local and regional authorities to say 'Yes!' to yearly resettlement of refugees in their cities. In most of the cities where *Save Me* campaigns are undertaken, city council resolutions expressing support for resettlement were adopted. Through support from citizens and political statements from cities, *Save Me* has demonstrated to the federal government how German society was open to the idea of admitting more refugees.

In summary, the primary goals of *Save Me* include:

- More refugees resettled to Germany
- Strengthen the rights of resettled refugees
- Develop a new culture of welcome for refugees

An open grassroots alliance

After 4 years, *Save Me* has grown into an alliance comprising over 50 communities, 7,000 volunteers, 60 national and regional partners including PRO ASYL, Amnesty International, charitable institutions, churches, unions, human rights and refugee organisations, and many other local organisations. The alliance is also supported by UNHCR.

Altogether local *Save Me* initiatives, the *Save Me* network and the national support from PRO ASYL and others produce the diversity and strength of the campaign. PRO ASYL – a national non-governmental organisation working for the protection of the rights of refugees – created the campaign website, offers technical help, distributes leaflets and other campaign materials, keeps local groups informed about political developments, and organises national meetings at which *Save Me* groups can discuss their demands and activities.

Save Me has an open concept, meaning that local groups decide on their own way of doing things. They are not bound by membership and do not have any special obligations. What happens on the ground depends on local decisions, and of course on whether there are refugees in the city or if any are expected to arrive in the future.

The *Save Me* campaign is not dependent on government funding and relies heavily on volunteers. PRO ASYL has invested funds to ensure national coordination, outreach and communication to groups through the central website.^[2] And exceptionally, the city of Munich granted the *Save Me* campaign, via the Munich Refugee Council, a part-time manager to assist the reception of refugees upon their arrival in Munich, and organise volunteers to support them and refer them to relevant services.

Save Me...

- sends strong signals to the federal government in support of a resettlement programme.
- is a chance to invest the subject of asylum with positive and “active” connotations.
- ultimately promotes a welcoming culture and opportunities for all refugees.

² www.save-me-kampagne.de

Advocating for an annual resettlement programme in Germany

Unlike other European countries, Germany hesitated for a long time before engaging in an annual resettlement programme. With the ad-hoc resettlement of 2,501 Iraqi refugees in 2009, Germany took the first steps toward developing a resettlement programme. In 2011, after much discussion and debate, Germany decided to engage in an annual resettlement programme, receiving 300 resettled refugees every year for the 3 years 2012–2014. Resettled refugees are distributed amongst the 16 federal states (Bundesländer), according to the numerical distribution key (the Königsteiner Schlüssel) for asylum seekers. The key is based on factors such as GDP and population. When receiving the Iraqi refugees in 2009, the Federal Government applied the asylum distribution key also for resettlement.

The national refugee, human rights and welfare organisations involved in the *Save Me* campaign followed the Iraqi operation closely and critically. The alliance strongly criticised the Königsteiner Schlüssel system of distribution for not taking account of the services that are available in local contexts, and sometimes isolating refugees from those they travelled with and/or friends and relatives they may have in a specific German town or city. Analysing the Iraqi programme led *Save Me* groups to further develop their demands, and continue to lobby the German government to adopt an annual resettlement programme in accordance with the UNHCR framework for resettlement.

Save Me's demands

- Resettle those in need of protection
- Issue Refugee Convention travel documents
- Remove obstacles to family reunion
- Make integration courses immediately available
- Facilitate access to the labour market
- Free choice of place of residence
- Provide adequate housing
- Ensure support for local governments

Resettlement is but one pillar of refugee protection, and the work of *Save Me* in advocating for resettled refugees was also able to highlight issues affecting those in or exiting Germany's asylum procedure. The *Save Me* campaign pointed to many important gaps in the German resettlement and asylum systems that were affecting refugees' wellbeing and human dignity, thus advocating for all refugees in Germany.

Save Me activists from different cities demonstrate in Berlin with 5,000 lifebuoys



The reality of resettlement – A refugee perspective

Introducing Abdulkareem, 47, Iraq



Abdulkareem used to live in Baghdad with his wife and their four children (currently aged 16, 11, 7 and 4). His eldest daughter has been severely mentally and physically disabled since birth. His family lived a prosperous and comfortable life until the war broke out. They were forced to flee to Syria in 2007, and in late 2009 the family was resettled to Germany under the ad-hoc programme to resettle 2,500 Iraqi refugees.

Abdulkareem, what was your situation like in Syria?

After having fled Iraq to Syria our situation was difficult and insecure: we did not know what would come next, how long we would be able to stay and what the future would hold. We did not receive any social support either from the official side or the NGOs except for a monthly food package, given to us by UNHCR. The situation for my disabled daughter in particular was very difficult. She could not get physical therapy, and, of course, there were no schools or medical centres giving support.

Can you describe how things were when you arrived in Germany? Was it like you expected it to be?

When we came to Germany, we expected a first-class developed country where everything would be organised perfectly and would run like clockwork. The reality of our arrival to Hannover airport was a shock. From there we were transferred to Munich by coach which took 14 hours. For my daughter this was far too long. She could not take her specialised wheelchair from Syria; instead we were given a wheelchair at the airport in Hannover that was not designed for disabled persons but only fit to transport old people for short distances. We were constantly afraid that our daughter would fall out of the chair. This gave us the impression that resettlement was not a well-prepared and organised programme.

We soon were provided with a basic language course. We first needed to stay in a camp and it was difficult to find an apartment. My youngest child had to wait for a kindergarten place for two years. The laws and regulations are complicated and were not explained to us refugees. And, of course, clearly not enough preparation had been made to treat my daughter in an appropriate way.

The authorities did not take care of us: there was no office in charge of us which we could turn to for help, and no visits by state officials to the camp. What helped us to deal with all our difficulties at the beginning was the support by NGOs, namely Caritas and Save Me, and the volunteers working with them. I'm really grateful for that.

You were sent to Munich where it is difficult to find an affordable and suitable housing, especially for your disabled daughter. Did you think about moving?

Yes, I wanted to go to Mainz where I have relatives and where we probably could have found a suitable flat. My relatives could have helped me with many things such as translating letters and understanding German society, its laws and customs. But because in Germany resettled refugees do not receive full refugee status, we were not allowed to move to Mainz.

Did your situation improve by resettling to Germany?

Yes, definitely. Now, after three years, we live in our own apartment, the children go to school, and my disabled daughter attends a special school. We receive excellent medical care and are learning the language in order to integrate into society. By now we understand many of the German laws and customs, we know the city and its culture, its sports facilities and entertainment venues. And the most important thing: we now feel secure, our feet are firmly on the ground and we don't live in fear of the future or of breaches of our human rights. We know that every step we take adds to building our new life in Germany.

What still proves difficult is improving our German and as a result finding a job, which is the backbone of any prosperous life. I want to find a job as an engineer, as I once was. Overall, we feel we really have a home now. We want to be part of this society that has taken us in and sheltered us during hard times, and gave us many things our own homeland had not given us.

Save Me demands to the German government, the federal states and local authorities

The challenges that resettled refugees like Abdulkareem have faced point to the need to develop a resettlement programme that ensures adequate legal rights, and post-arrival measures and coordination mechanisms are in place when people arrive, so as to facilitate refugees starting their new lives as soon as possible.

The *Save Me* campaign has formulated a number of demands directed toward the German government, states and local authorities in the context of an annual resettlement programme in Germany delivered in cooperation with UNHCR, listed below:

1

Resettle those in need of protection

UNHCR chooses which refugees in the world will be prioritised for resettlement, selecting those refugees that are the most vulnerable or have the most urgent protection needs. The German federal government makes use of some additional criteria to select refugees it will accept for resettlement in Germany – such as their “integrateability” into German society.

This includes selecting those refugees that have language and professional skills or particular ethnic, religious persuasions and/or political affiliations. The *Save Me* campaign points to how the use of such integration potential criteria moves resettlement beyond the realm of individual protection, and demands that the government follows UNHCR priorities.

2

Provide resettled refugees with full refugee status, residence permit and Geneva Passport

In the absence of a legal framework for resettlement, the German government applies a legal provision from the early 1990s used to permit the entry into Germany of Jews from the former Soviet Union. Resettled refugees are not granted Convention refugee status, but instead receive humanitarian status. This means that resettled refugees are not afforded many of the legal benefits attached to refugee status – such as the automatic right to family reunification and the right to move to a location of their choosing within Germany. They receive only a temporary residence permit and cannot apply for permanent residency until they have spent a period of 7 years living in

Germany. Since UNHCR determines that resettled refugees are Convention refugees during the resettlement selection process that takes place outside of Germany, *Save Me* demands that resettled refugees are granted full refugee status in Germany, are issued with the corresponding refugee travel document (so called GFK or Geneva passports) and a permanent residence permit immediately on arrival in Germany.

3

Remove obstacles to family reunion

When family members of refugees stay behind in countries of origin or asylum, this always causes distress for resettled refugees. The German residency law hampers family reunion – for example by requiring financial guarantees and language tests prior to the family member’s arrival – making family reunification almost impossible to achieve. *Save Me* demands the elimination of the excessive restrictions so that family reunion is attainable for resettled refugees.

4 Make integration courses immediately available

As recognized refugees and migrants in Germany, resettled refugees are entitled to access German language learning and cultural orientation programmes on arrival. However, demand for courses outstrips supply, and in reality resettled refugees often encounter long waiting times before they can begin courses. To enable resettled refugees to begin the integration process without delay, *Save Me* demands that resettled refugees are able to access language and orientation courses as soon as possible after arriving in their new municipality.

5 Facilitate access to the labour market

Refugees are entitled to unlimited access to the labour market and should receive assistance to find employment. At present, employment agencies are not sufficiently informed and engaged to offer adequate help to resettled refugees in finding employment. *Save Me* demands that resettled refugees receive the support and assistance they need in order to find employment and to make the best use of their skills and experience.

6 Freedom to choose where to live

Unlike other refugees in Germany, those who are resettled are not permitted to choose freely their place of residence within Germany. To continue receiving financial and accommodation support, resettled refugees currently must remain in the municipality to which they are initially allocated. They are in theory permitted to apply to move to a different location, but in practice these applications are almost always refused. This arrangement is administratively unnecessary, and also prevents resettled refugees from improving conditions for their own integration by making use of the support and resources available from family and social networks in other locations in Germany. *Save Me* demands that these restrictions are lifted.

7 Provide adequate housing

Refugees can only begin the integration process when they have a decent place to live. In practice, the majority of German local authorities have not actively engaged in the provision of housing for resettled refugees. Many resettled refugees are first placed in poor quality and overcrowded

accommodation -so-called 'Lager' or 'camps' which is wholly unacceptable. *Save Me* demands that local government engage more actively in the provision of adequate housing for resettled refugees.

8 Accountability and financial support from local government

Cities and municipalities should – as far as possible – provide suitable conditions for social integration. When resettled refugees arrive they must be properly received, shown their way and referred to relevant services that can properly address their needs. While *Save Me* cities and states are particularly receptive to these ideas in theory, in practice financial support made available for resettlement is insufficient. *Save Me* is ready to engage in supporting refugees, but cannot absolve the state and the municipalities of their responsibilities in this regard.

A look back at Germany's past experience with resettlement

Resettlement is not new to Germany; although Germany did not participate in a formal refugee resettlement programme until recently, several ad-hoc resettlement efforts have taken place over the past decades – beginning with the admission of **13,000 Hungarian refugees** in the 1950s.

In the space of several years from the late 1970s onwards, Germany admitted a total of approximately **26,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian boat people**. These relief efforts were accompanied by a wave of public compassion and charity. By the mid-1980s, those who arrived had gained permanent residence status as so-called “quota refugees” and were able to integrate quickly and successfully.

Since 1991 more than **200,000 Eastern European Jews** have been allowed to enter Germany under a special agreement. The agreement aimed both to alleviate the difficult situation of the Jewish population in the disintegrated Soviet Union and to preserve the viability of Jewish communities in Germany. For a long time, Jewish refugees were subject to the same regulations as those entitled to asylum – later, the conditions for immigration were tightened.

When the bloodiest war in Europe since 1945 was raging in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991, Bosnian refugees could obtain a visa in cases where private third parties would pay their accommodation and living costs. More than **300,000 Bosnian refugees** came to Germany with a temporary status. Despite their de facto integration, they were not granted permanent residence permits. Immediately after the Dayton Agreement in 1995, Germany pressured the majority of those concerned to leave the country. Of the few who stayed in Germany, many remained in very poor social conditions for years.



Vietnamese refugee children playing in the snow

Courtesy of UNHCR, L.Astrom, 1985

The **20,000 people** who fled the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 did not fare better. Their residence permits were not renewed after one year and they were forced to return.

From 2008, **2,500 Iraqi refugees** were allowed to enter the country from Syria and Jordan. Many were members of religious minorities including Christians, Mandaean and Yazidi. Following a joint decision by the federal states (Bundesländer), the resettled refugees were admitted permanently as part of an ad-hoc resettlement exercise. They were the first group of resettled refugees that would benefit from local support from the *Save Me* mentors.

Despite these efforts, the German government refused for a long time to commit to an annual UN resettlement programme that would receive refugees with special protection needs. Such refugees have often stayed for many years in protracted refugee situations, and include vulnerable groups such as women, children and adolescents at risk, those with special medical needs, survivors of torture and violence and persecuted minorities. Looking back at German history, it is clear that Germany has always had the capability and the means for generous and lasting admission of refugees. This is why *Save Me* continues to campaign for a permanent resettlement programme for Germany, and a significant annual quota that reflects Germany's size and economic affluence.



Bosnian refugees arrive in Karlsruhe in 1992

Courtesy of Flüchtlingsrat Karlsruhe, 1992

The first Iraqi refugees arrive in Hannover in 2009



Courtesy of K. Löffelbein, 2009

The development of *Save Me*: Events and milestones

2008

The grassroots campaign

'Save Me – A City Says Yes' is founded in Munich in early 2008, coinciding with Munich's 850th anniversary.

A wide range of citizens demand the admission of refugees to Munich and publicly pledge personal support. The aim is to obtain a council resolution by the city of Munich, pledging support to resettle 850 refugees through the UNHCR resettlement programme.

One day after the 850th volunteer registered, the Green Party submits a supporting resolution to Munich City Council, which is approved unanimously. Linked to the resolution, the City of Munich pledges to provide housing and social assistance for the refugees once they arrive. *Save Me* forms an alliance with various national organisations, including Amnesty International, and works on the common goal of demanding higher

numbers of resettlement places and an annual resettlement programme. However, in federal Germany the responsibility for the admission of refugees lies with the federal government and the states, and it will therefore take still some time before Munich welcomes any resettled refugees. It becomes clear that *Save Me's* work has just begun.

The rationale of the campaign is this: If many cities say "Yes!" to the admission of refugees under a resettlement programme, national and state policies will eventually have to address the issue as well.

Responding to multiple demands, Germany wants to engage in a response to the Iraqi refugee crisis and calls for a Europe-wide response. **In November 2008, the European Council Conclusions call for EU Member States to resettle Iraqis.** Germany formally

responds and commits to resettle 2,500 Iraqis (2,000 from Syria and 500 from Jordan) in 2009. Priority will be given to persecuted minorities (mostly Christians), vulnerable cases with specific medical needs (including traumatised victims of persecution) and female-headed households who have family in Germany. Additionally, integration capacity is considered, taking in individual refugees' level of education, work experience, language skills and/or family ties. Together with other NGOs, including Amnesty International, PRO ASYL notes the decision as a first step, and continues to demand a higher number of resettled refugees and an annual resettlement programme.

2009



PRO ASYL and the Bavarian Refugee Council launch the *Save Me* campaign at national level. In co-operation with UNHCR, PRO ASYL campaigns with 50 national agencies for the introduction of a resettlement programme in Germany. Others involved include Amnesty International, charitable organisations, churches, trade unions, and human rights and refugee organisations. Together, they jointly publish their demands for a resettlement programme in a special brochure.

The Bavarian founders of the *Save Me* campaign introduce their ideas to many cities by giving a series of lectures.

PRO ASYL launches the *Save Me* website for *Save Me* groups, and provides technical support, information and campaign materials.

Between March 2009 and April 2010, and after many months of debate, a total of 2,501 Iraqi refugees who had been in Syria and Jordan arrive in Germany as part of an ad-hoc resettlement plan. They travel to the central reception centre in Friedland. They receive a separate legal status and a temporary residence permit with the option of renewal after three years.

The Iraqi refugees are distributed over the 16 federal states according to the distribution key that also applies to asylum seekers. Only a few cities – such as Munich and Aachen – welcome refugees locally and provide practical support. *Save Me* follows the admissions on a political level and analyses the weaknesses and deficiencies in the resettlement admission process.



Iraqi refugees are welcomed in Hannover in 2009

The campaign's successful contribution to this ad-hoc resettlement plan was instrumental in the establishment of the new German programme to receive 300 resettled refugees per year from 2012.

By the end of 2009, over 40 *Save Me* initiatives have been launched in Germany, drawing membership from churches, Amnesty International groups, refugee initiatives and members of the public. 5,000 supporters have shown solidarity online by providing their names, photographs and a personal statement. The new *Save Me* groups have obtained 18 city council resolutions by the year's end.

2010

In cities such as Munich and Aachen, **mentoring work with the Iraqi refugees is in progress.** In addition, *Save Me* continues as a political programme, and through numerous events and activities *Save Me* groups in Germany continue to campaign for an annual resettlement programme. Film screenings, discussions, sports events and other activities are organised. Supporters are recruited at stands set up at local festivals and in local centres.

2011

In December 2011, a **political breakthrough is achieved** – the federal government and the states decide to sign up to an annual resettlement programme to resettle 300 refugees annually over the course of three years (2012–2014 – 900 refugees in total).

By the end of 2011, there are over 50 *Save Me* groups, and the number of supporters continues to rise. 46 city council resolutions have been obtained.

2012

Having fled the war in Libya, a group of **96 refugees are resettled from Shousha camp in Tunisia and arrive in Germany.**

They are the first resettled under the new annual resettlement programme. For most volunteers it is the first time they actually see resettled refugees in their city and they now face their first real practical test. Local and regional authorities are also on a learning curve – there is no doubt that these new arrivals will stay and will need integration support services as soon as possible. With this in mind, the authorities increase their efforts to respond to their needs and give them a positive welcome.

PRO ASYL and the cities of Aachen and Munich engage together as partners in the ICMC-led “Cities that Care, Cities that SHARE – the SHARE Project,” building a European resettlement network of municipalities, cities and regions.



Helping refugees who fled from Libya to Tunisia start new lives in Germany

In May 2012, *Save Me* takes part in the EU Resettlement Skills Share Day in Brussels.

The Resettlement Saves Lives Campaign is launched calling for the resettlement of 20,000 refugees each year in Europe by the year 2020. The campaign is inspired by the *Save Me* campaign and receives support from EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström.



***Save Me* inspires a campaign for Europe**

Courtesy of The European Resettlement Network



***Save Me* Aachen celebrate receiving their award**

In July 2012, the work of the North Rhine-Westphalia region's *Save Me* campaign is recognised in the national, government-sponsored award competition "Active for Democracy and Tolerance".

The award is received by Sabine Kaldorf from the Bonn *Save Me* campaign and Ingeborg Heck-Böckler from Amnesty International in Aachen, on behalf of all the city campaigns in North Rhine-Westphalia.

In September 2012, Schwäbisch Hall in Baden-Württemberg becomes the 50th German city to pledge to admit resettled refugees.

2013+

Not all *Save Me* groups have received resettled refugees in their cities. New cities such as Darmstadt have joined the *Save Me* campaign. The government announces that during 2013 quota refugees will be received from Turkey.

The war in Syria is ongoing and the refugee crisis expands throughout the Middle East region. PRO ASYL, Amnesty International and *Save Me* call for a comprehensive response to the refugee crisis, including increased family reunification possibilities, solidarity with countries at the borders of Europe, and a significant number of resettlement places for Syrians with urgent protection needs. The German government announces that it will be taking in 5,000 refugees from Syria. However, in April 2013 it is still unclear under what arrangement and status these refugees would be received in Germany.

4 years after its creation, the *Save Me* campaign is still urgent, relevant and alive! PRO ASYL is campaigning for a significant resettlement programme with a number that corresponds to the size and economic capacity of Germany.

Save Me continues to be an important political campaign working for greater resettlement numbers, the protection of the legal rights of refugees, a welcoming culture in Germany and adequate integration support measures.



The PRO ASYL campaign calls for the protection of refugees fleeing Syria

Beyond the usual suspects – A view from CCME

By Torsten Moritz, Executive Secretary, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)



Looking back on almost 5 years of the *Save Me* campaign, it looks like its success was certain from the start. The diverse, colourful and decentralised network which characterises *Save Me* now seems like a given, and the impact which *Save Me* has had almost natural.

However, in 2008, few would have predicted that such a small and unusual campaign initially limited to the city of Munich's 850th anniversary celebrations would have had such a major impact. The general climate did not seem too encouraging – advocating for refugees and their rights had not been particularly successful in Germany during the previous two decades, and the community of those advocating for refugee rights was becoming restricted to a decreasing number of 'usual suspects'.

One of the major successes of *Save Me* was that it managed to reach out to many new actors, going beyond the 'usual suspects'. By enabling supporters to engage (pledge) in one very specific activity or commitment related to refugee resettlement without necessarily having to commit to a whole set of demands, *Save Me* prompted support from many who would not normally

have become involved in refugee issues. Supporters had the possibility to individually formulate why they were supportive and to tailor-make what they would do – 'I join, because... by doing...'

Supporters were made visible via central and local websites, so giving the campaign many faces and spreading the message beyond the 'usual suspects'. Whilst refugee-supporting organisations, churches and political groups played a role in starting and sustaining *Save Me*, what made a real impression in the public perception were the thousands of unattached individuals introduced by name, age and profession who supported the campaign. They showed how it was not only the caricature of the left-leaning social worker, but also the housewife, the nurse and the engineer – people 'like you and me' who supported refugees coming to Germany. Also it was of great importance that supporters were not only making demands to policy makers, but expressed that they were willing to be personally involved and were prepared to make a practical contribution towards making resettlement a reality.

The campaign also involved unusual ‘VIP’ supporters – theatre actors, a local ice-hockey team and others. Public Save Me activities often had a very creative element, such as when *Save Me* Munich visualised their message with an armada of plastic lifeboats spread on the city’s central Marienplatz. The approach of building broad support in many locations made it easier for city councils to offer political support for the campaign. In many cities, all political parties, left, right and centre, supported the initiative, preventing it from being perceived as the “pet” of one specific political group.

An additional factor, probably only indirectly related to the *Save Me* campaign, was the support from unexpected political sources for Germany to begin resettling refugees. Members of Parliament from the centre-right Christian Democrat party, which had traditionally argued for a very restrictive asylum policy, were instrumental in prompting Germany’s engagement in the joint EU resettlement of Iraqi refugees in 2009. Their involvement was in some locations supported by (parts of) *Save Me*, in most other cases the Iraqi diaspora or party members had played an important role.

Whilst their engagement was initially limited to supporting resettlement for Iraqi Christians, it opened a discussion which until then had not occurred amongst the political centre and centre-right in Germany. The support of centre-right politicians for refugee resettlement was in many ways decisive in the eventual decision of the federal government to resettle 2,500 Iraqi refugees.

Save Me’s broad appeal has, at least partly, prompted a shift in the public perception of refugees in Germany. It was a Christian Democrat regional integration minister who first called for a ‘culture of welcome’ (Willkommenskultur) for the arriving Iraqi refugees and acknowledged the important contribution of local support initiatives for the reception. Another first could be observed: due to the geographic distribution of the 2,500 Iraqi refugees, most cities with *Save Me* campaigns only received a handful of refugees. Given the massive involvement of *Save Me* activists, local authorities now said that they would have been able to welcome more refugees in their city – something so far unheard of. In a country in which the political mainstream had for decades mainly associated refugees with ‘abuse’ of the

German welfare system and tried to limit the arrival of refugees wherever possible, this is a major achievement and one worth celebrating!

Key to success of *Save Me*: Strong and diverse partnerships and alliances – Securing support of city councils

The *Save Me* campaign has been particularly successful in building awareness of and support for refugee resettlement programmes, both amongst the general public and the political authorities in the municipalities and cities where *Save Me* groups have been established. The strong and diverse partnerships and alliances created by and engaged in *Save Me* at national, regional and local levels have played a central role in this success. This has been an important factor contributing to the success of the campaign. By positioning *Save Me* within an overall framework for a more humane German asylum policy, the campaign promotes more tolerance towards and solidarity with refugees and other newcomers in general.

Since 2008, the *Save Me* campaign has worked with over 50 national and regional organisations and countless local groups and bodies, including refugee councils, welfare organisations, political parties, community centres, church congregations, cultural institutions and artists. The open local concept of *Save Me* allows each city campaign to tailor their alliances and partnerships to their particular context, stimulating creative and unique partnerships and enabling each group to work toward their specific local objectives.

For example, the *Save Me* group of Berlin, representing the capital of Germany, primarily works to promote public and political support for refugee resettlement at both the national and local levels, developing and distributing information, holding public events and ensuring local visibility of *Save Me*. The group works closely with a professional advice centre that provides direct assistance for refugees living in the city. Their mutual activities thus complement each other, promoting both local awareness of refugee resettlement and support and legal assistance for refugees and asylum seekers in Berlin.

In order to reach as wide a cross section of the general public as possible, many *Save Me* groups have reached beyond more ‘traditional’ campaign partners to secure public support from a diverse – and often surprising – range of actors and institutions, many of whom have never been associated with refugee protection before. For example, *Save Me* Kassel received support from the Kassel Huskies, an ice hockey team in the German premier league and *Save Me* Düsseldorf secured the symbolic support of “Die Toten Hosen”, a punk band from the city famous throughout Germany. The public support of these famous groups, being clearly visible on the *Save Me* website, has inspired many other citizens to join the campaign.

Some *Save Me* groups have been working in particularly polarised local political contexts. In Dresden, for example, where the political far-right is active and influential, the local *Save Me* campaign was initially branded as ‘leftist’ and ‘sectarian’ by its political opponents. *Save Me* Dresden was able to obtain the united support of local political factions: the Greens, the Socialist Party and the Left as well as that of the churches and a

number of prominent citizens. The broad alliance that was created managed to obtain a majority for the motion 'Accept refugees- Dresden supports the *Save Me* Campaign – A City Says Yes', overruling the Christian Democrat majority in the council.

For many *Save Me* groups, local partners included the municipal and city authorities responsible for working with newcomers in their cities. In those cities that eventually received resettled refugees, building such relationships ahead of the start of a resettlement programme meant that the city authorities included *Save Me* as an active and operational partner in resettlement arrival planning, reception and integration processes and structures. In Dresden, for example, lobbying and forging of alliances with the Dresden's Commissioners for Foreigners and Integration, meant that when 10 Iraqi refugees arrived in the city in October 2012, *Save Me* Dresden was asked to coordinate the mentoring programme. The initial investment in establishing local relationships thus secured *Save Me* an active role in improving the resettlement and integration experiences of the refugees received by the city.



Raising awareness about *Save Me* in Aachen

51 City Councils Say Yes!

Strong and diverse alliances and partnerships have proven particularly effective in achieving the core *Save Me* aim of securing the support of municipal and city councils. As of 2013, 51 city councils have passed resolutions in which they stated their support for a national refugee resettlement programme and their willingness to receive resettled refugees in their towns and cities, as shown on the next page.

The most prominent of the motions for a council decision was that in which the city of Munich pledged to celebrate the 850th anniversary of the city by receiving resettled refugees. The council resolutions that were adopted generally followed a template text provided by *Save Me*, and several councils specified in their resolution texts the number of refugees that they would be willing to receive in their town or city.

A typical example is the following resolution of the city of Schwäbisch Hall in the region of Baden-Württemberg.

Passed by unanimous decision on 26th of September 2012:

1. "The city of Schwäbisch Hall welcomes the *Save Me* campaign by PRO ASYL, Amnesty International and other organisations, and supports the initiative's endeavour to implement and expand in Germany the programme "Resettlement" which was established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)."
2. "Therefore the city of Schwäbisch Hall calls upon the federal government to significantly increase the admission limit agreed at the interior ministers' conference in December 2011 (300 persons annually for the next three years) and to make available the means necessary for a successful integration process. To this end the city of Schwäbisch Hall pledges to admit 35 refugees and calls upon the country to act accordingly to bring about an increase of the admission capacity."

The 51 council resolutions, in many cases adopted by a coalition of political parties from the left, centre and sometimes also the right, represented a significant political achievement and are a great success of the *Save Me* campaign.

They highlighted to the federal government that municipalities and cities were partners in the *Save Me* campaign, supportive of Germany engaging in a resettlement programme, and willing and able to contribute to its success by themselves receiving resettled refugees.

Of particular interest is how a few cities even mentioned a specific number of refugees they would be willing to receive. For example, Schwäbisch Hall expressed its willingness to receive 35 refugees within the annual quota of 300.

Although the success of *Save Me* in Germany can mainly be attributed to the work of local campaigns, *Save Me* has had an impact on some city administrations that did not benefit from the presence of a local campaign. For example, the city of Stuttgart in Baden-Württemberg, a state where 12 council decisions were adopted, passed a resolution saying 'Yes' to resettlement without the presence of a local *Save Me* group. The resolutions reinforced the message that the political will and support for refugee resettlement was spreading to cities throughout Germany.

German Federal States (Bundesländer)

Cities that have passed city council resolutions in support of resettlement

Baden-Württemberg [12]

Freiburg (2011)
Heidelberg (2009)
Karlsruhe (2010)
Kirchzarten (2012)
Lörrach (2010)
Mannheim (2011)
Reutlingen (2009)
Schwäbisch Hall (2012)
Stuttgart (2011)
Tübingen (2009)
Ulm (2009)
Waiblingen (2011)

Bavaria [3]

Lauf (2011)
Munich (2008)
Nuremberg (2010)

Berlin [1]

Berlin (2010)

Brandenburg

Bremen [1]

Bremen (2011)

Hamburg

Hesse [7]

Frankfurt am Main (2011)
Gießen (2010)
Hanau (2009)
Hochheim/Main (2010)
Hofheim/Taunus (2010)
Kassel (2010)
Marburg (2010)

Mecklenburg-Western

Pomerania [4]

Greifswald (2009)
Neubrandenburg (2009)
Rostock (2009)
Schwerin (2009)

Lower Saxony [3]

Braunschweig (2012)
Goslar (2011)
Hannover (2009)

North Rhine-Westphalia [9]

Aachen (2008)
Bochum (2011)
Bonn (2009)
Düsseldorf (2009)
Cologne (2010)
Herzogenrath (2011)
Leverkusen (2011)
Lünen (2012)
Vlotho (2011)

Rhineland-Palatinate [3]

Bad Kreuznach Kreis
District (2010)
Bad Kreuznach Stadt
City (2010)
Mainz (2009)

Saarland

Saxony [2]

Dresden (2011)
Leipzig (2010)

Saxony-Anhalt

Schleswig-Holstein [4]

Glinde (2009)
Kiel (2009)
Lübeck (2010)
North Frisia (2010)

Thuringia [2]


Erfurt (2009)
Jena (2012)

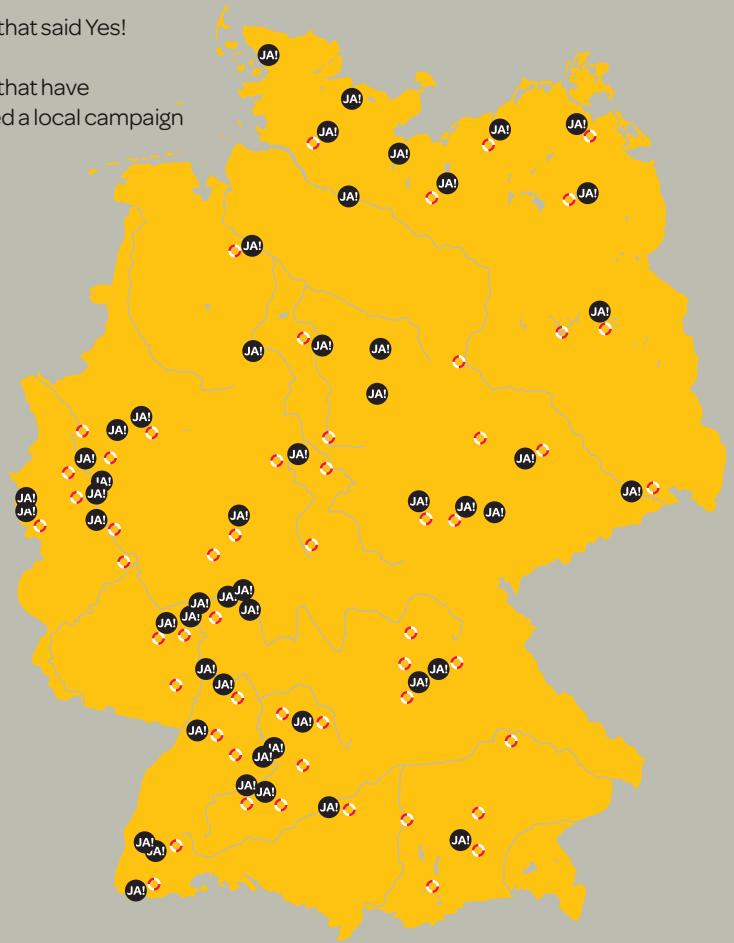
Cities that have created a local campaign

Aachen
 Arnstadt
 Augsburg
 Bad Kreuznach
 Berlin
 Bonn
 Bremen
 Chemnitz
 Cologne
 Darmstadt
 Dinslaken
 Dresden
 Düsseldorf
 Forchheim
 Frankfurt am Main
 Freiburg
 Freising
 Fulda
 Gießen
 Greifswald
 Hagen
 Halle
 Hamburg
 Hannover
 Heidelberg
 Heilbronn
 Hofheim
 Jena

Kassel
 Krefeld
 Lauf
 Leipzig
 Leverkusen
 Lörrach
 Magdeburg
 Mainz
 Mannheim
 Marburg
 Mülheim
 Munich
 Murnau
 Neubrandenburg
 Neuwied
 Nuremberg – Fürth
 – Erlangen
 Pfalz
 Regensburg
 Reutlingen
 Rostock
 Schleswig Holstein/Kiel
 Schwabach
 Schwäbisch-Hall
 Schwerin
 Tübingen
 Ulm
 Waiblingen
 Werder
 Werrerr-Meißner Kreis
 District

JA! Cities that said Yes!

 Cities that have created a local campaign



Resettlement succeeds in close co-operation – A view from a Save Me partner city

Interview with Hilde Scheidt,
Deputy Mayor of Aachen



Aachen city council passed a resolution to admit Iraqi refugees to the city as early as 2009, and in 2012 Aachen was one of the first cities to admit resettlement refugees. Why is it that Aachen has such a positive attitude towards refugees?

Aachen is situated close to the borders with Holland and Belgium, and this location and the long history of this border region have shaped the people in this European region. To cross a border is part of everyday life, and the fate of refugees has always played a central role here. During the terrible times of the Third Reich, courageous individuals in our city saved many lives by helping people flee the Nazi regime. These memories are alive and evident in many projects at the borders. And so the inhabitants of this region, with its eventful history, are especially called upon to be attentive and tolerant.

The council resolution for the admission of resettlement refugees was unanimous and led to a great increase in local cooperation and willingness to help. It was important to the city council of Aachen that we gave this clear signal for the admission of refugees through our resolution.

In your view, how successful was the admission of Iraqi refugees in Aachen and how are things currently progressing with the resettled refugees?

Currently about 45 resettled refugees from Iraq and Somalia live in Aachen. The resettlement programme here was organised by the NGOs together with the churches and the social services. From the outset, even during the preparatory phase, there was close cooperation between paid staff of the partner organisations and Save Me volunteers.

Many preceding conversations and planning meetings between all those involved meant that the admission process for the refugees was organised to make the refugees feel welcome in Aachen from day one, and could get quickly used to their new surroundings. We planned language courses, nursery and school places for the children and established close contact with the mentors of the Save Me campaign. Many meetings have been and are still being organised to discuss everyday matters with the refugees, the volunteers and the full-time employees, and there are regular meetings with the mentors to exchange ideas. In my view, resettlement can only be successful with close cooperation such as this.

What is your message for other cities that are ready to accept refugees? What is the responsibility of the municipality, and what should be the respective roles of the municipality and the volunteers?

A municipality that wishes to receive resettled refugees has to provide manpower and financial resources over a long period of time. The administration needs the political will of the council to pass the necessary resolutions and allocate the necessary budget, and NGOs and volunteers have to be heard as equal partners in all decisions. This creates the best atmosphere for the people who are in need of our help.

Like many other towns and cities, Aachen has debts and is on a tight budget. How much does the admission of refugees cost, and what is your assessment of this expenditure?

Yes, Aachen is in debt, like many other cities, but social obligations – which includes the admission of refugees – are important and should not be subject to cuts. In Aachen we employ dedicated staff to provide social support in the houses where refugees live, and we also have specific contact persons within our social welfare department.

There is also a dedicated budget for furnishing the houses, additional support through – for example – advice centres, integration support, translators, language courses for asylum applicants, and the coordination of resettlement.

The positive return on such an investment can be seen time and again – these are highly skilled people with many abilities, they learn to speak the language within a very short time, are quickly integrated and want to stand on their own two feet. We maintain that what a community clearly signals through open, transparent and a clearly deliberate admission of refugees is this – “here are desperate people who need our help; they are welcome here and as new citizens are part of our city.”

Recently, in the context of ICMC’s European SHARE Project, you personally visited the UK cities of Sheffield and Hull to study the resettlement programme there. What information and suggestions did you bring back from the UK?

The trip to Sheffield and Hull was a very important experience. We were able to see the different projects that happen in resettlement there, and to exchange ideas with

the local authorities and NGOs working on the programmes in each city. In conversations with the refugees there it was particularly impressive to sense the strength and courage in their decision on resettlement. It also became very clear that a new beginning is often very difficult and requires a lot of patience and perseverance from all involved parties. Anyone who has seen the documentary “Moving to Mars” that was made partly in Sheffield will understand the refugees’ situation. This film is definitely worth seeing! There were many interesting conversations that left lasting impressions and encounters with many wonderful people. For myself and Aachen I brought home the conviction that in resettlement, we have to cooperate more closely at the European level. The municipalities should have an even louder voice in this, and this is why exchanging and gaining new experiences is still vitally important. We all profit for the sake of the people who need our protection and help.

TOP TIPS!

Strong and diverse partnerships and alliances – Securing support of city councils

1

Be inclusive and look beyond the 'usual suspects'.

Look across the political spectrum and outside of your usual allies. Encourage support from local organisations, groups and associations that do not normally engage with refugee issues. Be creative!

2

Develop refugee advocates. Support refugees to become spokespersons and advocates for resettlement – they know best why resettlement is needed and can explain why both a warm welcome and effective assistance are so important.

3

Think about the politics! Seek support from across the political spectrum, and anticipate how those opposed to your campaign goals might portray your cause.

4

Identify where you'll be useful, and develop partnerships that complement your activities. Don't duplicate what already exists in your town or city, and work with partners that can enhance your understanding and add value to what you do. For example, if you will concentrate on campaigning for improved integration structures, seek out those who work directly with refugees and can provide the information for your campaign.

5

Provide tools and materials that promote easier partnerships. Templates that you prepare for others to use – for example council resolutions, partnership declarations, manifestos and statements – will encourage partners to get involved in your campaign and offer you support.

6

Be visible! Target local partners who are visible themselves and can pass your message on – sports teams, bands, cultural organisations and institutions and others...

7

Try to build positive relationships with the authorities responsible for supporting refugees. Create opportunities to influence, maintain oversight of and – if you'd like – be directly involved in the local processes and structures affecting refugees.

8

Communicate and celebrate your successes! Advocating for resettlement needs patience and perseverance. Results are often only seen in the long term. To keep yourself motivated and engaged, communicate and celebrate the successes you achieve.

Key to success of *Save Me*: Local and active websites

The central and local *Save Me* websites have played a particularly important role in facilitating the *Save Me* network, partnerships, alliances, supporters and mentors. The successful outreach of the campaign through the websites to 'key player' organisations and to the general public has contributed to its expansion into a large number of cities, municipalities and districts.

Through its general campaign website ^[3], PRO ASYL provides a national framework for the campaign and offers a platform for all the local campaigns that are displayed on the site. In addition, the national site offers a number of tools, articles, information on refugee situations and protection and other materials of use for all the *Save Me* groups.

³ www.save-me-kampagne.de



These include standard petitions and a template Council Resolution and other pertinent materials that can be downloaded and ordered. The central website is provided at no cost to local *Save Me* groups. As of early 2013, 57 local campaigns had registered with the campaign and have their own website.

New local *Save Me* initiatives can register with the campaign website via an easy-to-use application form. By having its own representation on the site, each local group gains additional public visibility and inputs whilst also having the freedom to manage their campaign independently according to their local context. Each local group is responsible for updating its own page, and PRO ASYL offers technical support where necessary.



I'm taking part because I would like to bring about the chance for a life without fear and hunger for at least a few people each year.

**Tanja Kluth, 33,
City Councillor, Karlsruhe**



The local and open concept of *Save Me* thus contributes to fostering creativity within the local campaigns. Within the 'A City Says Yes!' concept, different groups choose different ways to communicate and the logo is not branded uniformly. Some groups have chosen to tailor the *Save Me* logo to their city, strengthening local ownership of the campaign's identity in their respective towns and cities.

News from all campaigns is published on the local pages as well as the general *Save Me* front page, making it easy to see at a glance where things are happening.

Wide-reaching support leads to a strong public presence for *Save Me*, and each local *Save Me* thus campaigns for support from the local community and to recruit mentors. Individual citizens, mentors and supporters can pledge their support for resettlement on the local or national webpages, and promote their pledge using photographs and personal statements. In Germany, more than 7,000 people have publicly supported resettlement for their cities and many have given practical assistance to refugees upon their arrival.

Both national and local *Save Me* websites are an important advocacy tool for the campaign in that they illustrate – with a few clicks – the extensive support for refugee resettlement present in a wide cross-section of the German public. This has value in terms of delivering a message to politicians who may be wary of adverse reactions to refugee issues amongst the local electorate. The pledges show citizens not normally engaged or interested in refugee issues that 'people like them' can be committed to receiving refugees in their cities.

Local *Save Me* campaigns have made use of web tools and platforms, including the websites, to develop their campaign in a way that suits their local context. Some groups decided to use free social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter, in parallel with their campaign website in order to reach out to a greater number of people and to keep individuals updated on activities and events. This can be extremely effective when seeking support from a general public that makes regular use of these platforms and can share information they receive with others in their own networks.

It is, however, important to consider that in order to be effective, websites and other social media platforms require regular updates. Writing articles, taking and uploading photos and connecting with other users requires significant time inputs and long-term commitment, which may not exist in some local contexts. Additionally, websites or social media that are not regularly updated can detract from the effectiveness of a campaign by giving the impression of inactivity or inefficiency.

Whilst PRO ASYL provide some level of basic support to local websites, the ongoing development of web content and using a webpage effectively requires technical ability and confidence that may not always exist in local groups. 'Buying-in' technical expertise is expensive, and self-financed local groups will often be unable to meet these costs. Additionally, the cost of maintaining individual domains for each local group can be prohibitive. For a campaign necessarily limited in terms of funds and which needs to prioritise its activities for the best possible output, this impact must be considered when developing web strategies.



The future of the 57 websites that are now active is uncertain, and will probably depend on the extent to which *Save Me* remains engaged in resettlement in the future. PRO ASYL has provided the funds to maintain the domains of all the groups and may now reconsider investing to this extent in the future. It is certain that, after 4 years, a number of the sites continue to be quite active and are regularly updated, whilst others have ceased to operate since the year the campaign first began.

TOP TIPS!

Local and active websites

1

Don't feel obliged to have a website. If you don't think your group would benefit from having a website or social internet platform – maybe your target public responds better to other forms of communication, or you don't have sufficient resources to keep a website updated – that's OK! Decide what communication and outreach methods work best for you and your local context, and make use of those instead.

2

Try to recruit volunteers with the right knowledge!

Whether you are using free platforms or have developed your own site, it will always be helpful to have a few skilled volunteers who can help maintain and develop these.

3

Make use of free and easy-to-use blog and social media platforms. There are many free platforms and applications that will take the pain out of developing a web presence for your campaign!

4

Advertise your website or social platform in communication material.

Your web presence will be of little use if no-one knows it exists! Always ensure you communicate your campaign's website, blog or page in your campaign materials. This way your supporters will know exactly how to find you on the world wide web!

5

Make your platform interactive! Set up a platform that allows your supporters to interact with you and with one another, get involved in the campaign and make a visible pledge of their assistance for newly arriving refugees.

6

Establish a central website. To establish a national presence, local campaigns can benefit from coordination via a central website. A central website can communicate overall targets and actions and provide a platform for local groups to share experiences and knowledge. Agree on a national focal point to coordinate the site – this responsibility can rotate regularly between groups.

Key to success of *Save Me*: Building a strong network of supporters and mentors

During the past 4 years, over 7,000 individuals have registered via the *Save Me* website. Many of these expressed their general support for the campaign, but a significant proportion also offered their practical help to refugees once they arrived. The success of *Save Me* can in large part be attributed to the wide variety of individuals who support the campaign. In addition to individuals from the most active organisations supporting refugees, such as Amnesty International, churches, welfare organisations and many others, *Save Me* supporters are drawn from amongst ordinary people such as professionals, students and retired persons.



Courtesy of Save Me Aachen

Previously resettled refugees turned mentors show newly arrived around Aachen

The support offered to *Save Me* through individual statements posted on the campaign websites has had a major impact for lobbying cities to pass city council resolutions and encouraging favourable media coverage. Supporters and mentors have registered as *Patentpatinnen* (godfathers/mothers), *Botschafter* (ambassadors) or *Unterstützer* (supporters), depending on the local context. Their statements of support have made cities feel more confident about citizens' support for refugees coming to their city, and also helped to counter arguments that supporting resettled refugees would be too costly and complex for receiving cities to undertake.

Since the campaign began, many hundreds of individuals in Germany have expressed their willingness to act as mentors supporting refugees after their arrival. During the early stages of the campaign in Munich, for example, around 200 mentors agreed to assist newly arrived resettled refugees to find accommodation, places on German language courses, school places for children and employment opportunities. Other mentors simply visited the city reception centres once a week in order to socialise, have a cup of tea, ask how things were going and answer any questions that might have arisen.

However, when *Save Me* began there were still no resettled refugees coming to Germany. Now that resettlement has started, the number of refugees being resettled is still only very modest at 300 per year. The number of available mentors therefore far exceeds the number of resettled refugees, and only a small percentage of those who have pledged their support are currently actively working with resettled refugees as mentors. Additionally, not all cities who have said 'Yes' to resettlement have also received resettled refugees.

This has been a disappointment for some of the groups, for example in Karlsruhe or Fulda, who were very much hoping to have the opportunity to support refugees directly. *Save Me Gießen*, however, found another way to put their enthusiastic and motivated mentors to good use. When it became clear in 2008 that none of the Iraqi refugees arriving under the ad-hoc resettlement programme would come to Gießen, they instead turned their attention to refugees already resident in the city and formed a group that now provides voluntary guardianship for unaccompanied young refugees living there.

When resettled refugees arrived in cities like Munich and Aachen, *Save Me* supporters and mentors were there to offer support. How the support they pledged would work in practice was, however, not always well-defined ahead of time. In principle mentors were not required to commit to anything more than giving a warm welcome to the refugees ahead of their arrival. However, many eventually wanted to go further than purely offering welcome, and so have since fulfilled a wide range of roles assisting refugees in their everyday lives.

They have helped with finding accommodation, assisting children with their homework and solving any problems or crises that might arise. They translate letters sent by the administration and assist refugees to respond to them, often with crucially important results – for example, averting an impending cut in child benefit by collecting and submitting the necessary documents in good time. Mentors have also provided help to apply for funds to pay for professional coaching and – with parental approval – talked to teachers to identify problems arising for resettled children in their education.

Refugee families who have been assigned mentors are guided and helped considerably in their new lives. These refugees learn German much more easily and integrate faster compared to those who do not receive this help. Additionally, mentored refugees feel welcomed and so more encouraged and supported to take their place in society. A functioning mentoring system can be used as a strong argument against politicians who voice scepticism about extending the resettlement programme or resettling refugee groups with specific needs.

Following the ad-hoc resettlement of Iraqi refugees from 2009, many *Save Me* groups now involve previously resettled refugees as mentors for new resettlement arrivals. In addition to potentially sharing a language and a cultural and/or religious background, mentors who have experienced resettlement understand very well the concerns and needs of new arrivals and are able to offer advice and information that will be useful.

““”

As part of my mentoring, I accompanied a blind Iraqi woman to her German course. As she had very limited English and had only just started to learn German, communication between us was very limited. It was all the more gratifying when after a while she was able to recognise me straight away when I picked her up or called her, or when we started to practice the German jokes she had learned.

Sarah, 24 (Save Me Munich)



Mentors in Munich help Iraqi refugee children with their homework

They are also able to gain some experience of volunteering in the German context, expanding their social and professional networks, gaining skills for employment and supporting their further integration.

One important aspect of the mentoring process is to ensure that mentors are guided and given the appropriate level of support. In the case of *Save Me Munich*, it became evident that this was especially important during the phase when refugees were moving from the so-called 'Lager' or 'camps' into rented flats. In those cases where refugees and mentors had got to know one another prior to their move, the transition was swift and easy.

In the cases where such contacts between refugees and volunteers were not yet established, the *Save Me* office started to offer support. *Save Me Munich* supported the mentor and refugee to meet for the first time, and to agree at this meeting on a specific activity that they would undertake together. Activities consisted of, for example, assistance with schoolwork, helping to find an apprenticeship or teaching children German through play. The new mentors that received such support from *Save Me Munich* then had a clear picture of what was needed when they first offered their time. The first 850 supporters that initially signed up to the campaign did not receive any such guidance, and far less of them subsequently committed to such a high level of involvement. *Save Me Munich* currently has over 1,000 mentors and supporters, the largest number in Germany. *Save Me Munich's* publicity work, undertaken via their local website, has produced a steady influx of willing helpers wishing to volunteer their free time to assist resettled refugees and support the local campaign.

The success of mentoring also relies on fluid coordination between the city authorities and mentors, with clear contact persons and clarity of competences. The importance of this type of cooperation was evident in Gießen, where the federal government included the city in the resettlement of refugees from Shousha, Tunisia, in 2012. As a result of the short lead-in time between the decision to resettle refugees to their city and the refugees' anticipated arrival date, *Save Me* volunteers in Gießen found themselves transformed into mentors almost overnight. This was challenging for everyone involved – apartments, beds and furniture had to be organised at very short notice, and the volunteers soon realised that the formalities and competences of the various German authorities are for newcomers frequently very complex and difficult to understand. Accompanying the refugees during the first days therefore turned out to be very time-consuming, and the authorities and city/district officials often found themselves needing to improvise in this new area.



Refugees and supporters celebrating at Save Me Munich's Summer Festival

“”

For nearly half a year now, I have been helping refugee children with their homework. These children prove to me that it is possible – even when times are tough – to not forget how to laugh.

Patricia, 16 (Save Me Munich)

However, thanks to the campaigning and preparatory work of *Save Me Gießen*, several local politicians – including the mayor and the head of the district authority, the head of division and members of the city council – were supportive of resettlement and had themselves agreed to become mentors to refugees. This concrete involvement of political actors helped to cut through the red tape and smooth the cooperation between volunteers and city authorities, and create a willingness to find unconventional solutions for the newly arrived refugees.

Mentors are an important source of information for the advocacy work of the *Save Me* campaign. From their experiences in assisting resettled refugees, they can identify and raise issues that need to be addressed by local authorities, mainstream services and organisations. It is therefore very important to ensure regular communication with mentors so as to enable this type of information to be collected.

An excellent example of the importance of mentors as an information source for advocacy is the work of the *Save Me* campaign on residence permits. In 2010 and 2011, many *Save Me* mentors and resettled refugees in Munich reported problems with the extension of refugees' temporary residence permits. Where refugees did not have a valid Iraqi passport, they were required to visit the Iraqi consulate in Frankfurt to obtain one. The trip to Frankfurt proved to be very problematic for many refugees in terms of cost and organisation, and did not produce the required results since the consulate, in the end, could not issue new passports. By documenting all these cases, *Save Me* was able to put together a strong enough argument to convince the foreigners' registration office in Munich to issue substitute passports.

Mentors can only have a positive role where their work can add value to existing, adequate support structures. The fine line – between filling an existing gap and helping refugees on the one hand, and taking on too much responsibility on the other – has to be negotiated by each and every local campaign.

In some German cities, eager and engaged *Save Me* mentors took on prominent roles in the initial stages of the integration of resettled refugees, a responsibility that should in fact have been taken on by the local mainstream services and authorities. In Munich, for example, it was the sole responsibility of the local *Save Me* group to find individual housing for refugees. The fundamental importance of securing housing, a particularly difficult task in Munich, put a lot of pressure on mentors. The city administration also relied on *Save Me* Munich to provide 'bridging' financial assistance to refugees until they received social benefits, again a task that should have been taken on by mainstream services and which put a great deal of pressure on the limited resources of the city's *Save Me* group.

“”

Each week, I meet up with the Iraqi refugee who I mentor. It is best when I take other people along with me since he wants more contact with Germans and to have more German friends.

Mitchell, 21 (Save Me Munich)



Mentors and refugees enjoying a monthly international cooking evening in Aachen

Courtesy of Save Me Aachen

What do refugees say about the support they have received from Save Me?

Introducing Marina and Hassan



“”

At first it was hard to come to grips with the language; fortunately my English is quite good. We were given financial, medical and language support and were helped by many Save Me volunteers. The biggest problems were finding a job and the fact that it took two years to find a flat we could afford.

My family and I are very grateful for everything: for the support, for Germany becoming our second home, for the freedom, our new life in peace, without panic and without fear of persecution. I hope that Germany will admit more refugees and give them the same support that I was given. There are millions more refugees that need help.

Marina, 28, Iraq

“”

After fleeing from Iraq I lived in Jordan for five years; at first by myself, then my parents and siblings joined me. The situation in Jordan was difficult. We did not have permission to stay or to work, and there was no state support. In 2009 I was selected for resettlement to Germany. In Jordan – like in the rest of the Middle East – there is a lack of stability and security, and so I took this opportunity to begin a new life. Unfortunately I had to leave my family behind who are still waiting for resettlement.

There are many opportunities in Germany, but it is also difficult. In Iraq I had studied mechanical engineering, but so far I have not been able to find work in Germany. I have started volunteering for Save Me, as I think they do fantastic work; when I first arrived, their volunteers helped me to find a flat, with translation of documents, and other things. Now I would like to support the new refugees and make their start in easier. I also hope to pass on my own experiences and to be able to make suggestions for the improvement of the resettlement system in Germany.

Hassan, 25, Iraq

TOP TIPS!

Building a strong network of supporters and mentors

- 1**
Guide and support volunteer mentors and resettled refugees. Develop mechanisms and structures that enable both mentors and refugees to select the activities that are of most use to them, understand their mutual roles and expectations, and develop positive and sustainable relationships. Appoint contact persons for mentors so they can discuss any questions or problems.
- 2**
Use casework by mentors as a source for advocacy. Experiences gained through casework can provide useful information on the situation and challenges of refugees. This can in turn help develop advocacy and campaigning priorities, and strengthen arguments for political authorities and service providers to implement changes that further promote refugee rights.
- 3**
Involve previously resettled refugees as supporters and mentors. Their direct experience of resettlement, and their language skills and cultural awareness can all be assets to your programme, and mentoring can provide them with valuable experience and contacts for the future.
- 4**
Too many mentors, not enough refugees? Find creative ways to motivate and involve mentors whilst campaigning to receive refugees is ongoing.
- 5**
Know your limits, and be clear about your role. Always keep in mind that volunteers are additional to – and not a replacement for – the public authorities in your town or city. Do not let your eagerness to help result in public authorities renegeing on their responsibilities to provide services to refugees!
- 6**
Coordinate and cooperate with public authorities. Develop positive and constructive relationships with public authorities ahead of refugees' arrival. Clarify your respective roles in an eventual resettlement programme, defining who does what and how you will share information and solve problems.
- 7**
Use your council resolution! Where your town or city has passed a council resolution in favour of resettlement, ensure that this political statement is matched by ongoing cooperation, openness and adequate financial and human resource investment in local structures for resettlement.

Mentors' experiences in Aachen

Introducing Ali and Tobias

Ali Ghailan and Tobias Wagner registered to become mentors with the *Save Me* Campaign in Aachen. On the *Save Me* website they indicated that they would like to help resettled refugees find their way around the city once they arrive.

On a chilly Sunday afternoon in February 2013, Ali and Tobias headed to the small houses of 4 young Somali men who had fled the civil war in Libya and stayed in Shousha camp in Tunisia. They are among the 200 refugees selected from the camp by the German government. The city of Aachen looked forward to receiving some of these refugees in their city, and the city's social workers had carefully planned the arrival of these young men.

Save Me Aachen members Ingeborg Heck-Böckler (Amnesty International Aachen) and Gert Mertens (Katholikenrat Aachen Stadt) assisted the young men in their first steps towards integration. They received a small grant from the Diocese of Aachen in order to assist them in their efforts.

To help make refugees more mobile in the city, they jointly decided that it will be useful to purchase some bikes for the group. Since riding a bike in Aachen can be a hazardous exercise, the *Save Me* members provided some lessons on safe riding in the city.

There are some good programmes in Aachen aimed at introducing refugees to German society. For example, monthly open café evenings (Patenstammtisch) are held where refugees can come and meet with the mentors who answer questions and direct newcomers to services or resolve other issues. The *Save Me* group also organises monthly international cooking evenings, where all participants exchange their culinary secrets and culture. The refugees have been missing home cooking for a very long time and getting together to cook brings back old memories and nostalgia. "I hope that my fish has turned out well and that my mother would be proud of me if she could taste it," says one of them.

Tobias (left) and Ali



Ali Ghailan was among the group of Iraqi refugees who were resettled to Aachen and assisted by *Save Me* when he first arrived in 2009. He and his brother, along with many women and mothers, have since become mentors to assist the new groups. They all have a lot of practical advice to offer the newcomers. “We know exactly what we lacked when we arrived, and what type of questions we had. We received guidance and help, and now it is our turn to give back and do the same for the new refugees that arrive here in Aachen,” says Ali.

It also becomes clear that the *Save Me* campaign seeks to promote understanding of and solidarity with refugees and other groups in need. International Women’s Day, World Refugee Day, religious holidays and school visits all benefit from the joint efforts to promote awareness about refugees in German society.

“And who can advocate for higher resettlement numbers in Germany better than refugees themselves! What courage and persistence they have shown in making a new life in our town and what quick progress in learning German! This is the best proof for many people here in our city,” says Ingeborg – “that refugees are people like you and me and like all of us they have a right to a future and to be secure – and they all want to feel welcome and cared for.”

Tobias Wagner summarises his experience as a mentor as follows: “After several years campaigning for refugees, it was logical that I support resettlement. Seeing the success of our political campaign at the local level that has gradually moved to the national level and to the regional level – has been extremely motivating. But of course we can still do better! On a personal level, it is very enriching and stimulating to see the refugees arrive with so much enthusiasm to engage and make new friends. In contrast to the political work that we do, our mentoring activity has added a human and interpersonal dimension.”

Key to success of *Save Me*: Raising awareness through events and activities

Public awareness of resettlement is relatively low in many European countries. This was also the case in Germany when the *Save Me* campaign was first established in 2008. To achieve its core aims of securing political support for resettlement and engaging individuals as volunteers and mentors, it was therefore crucial for *Save Me* to find creative and effective ways of promoting public interest in resettlement and boosting its political profile.

Since 2008, *Save Me* groups have organised countless awareness raising events in over 50 cities across Germany. They have reached out to a wide range of citizens of varied ages, political affiliation, and social backgrounds.

The *Save Me* lifebuoys were prominent in many events and activities and so became a very effective symbol for resettlement – saving refugees in need of protection, expressing both solidarity with those in urgent need and hope for a new future.

The grassroots and open nature of *Save Me* meant that local groups were free to develop campaign approaches and strategies that suited and were adapted to their local environments. An event that works well in a big city such as Berlin is often not feasible in a smaller city. In Gießen in the federal state of Hesse, a comparatively small city of 77,000 people, the local *Save Me* group was launched in 2009. Those involved quickly realised that the best way to increase public awareness of resettlement was ‘knocking on doors’ and directly introducing the *Save Me* campaign to the city’s public. *Save Me* Gießen thus successfully positioned resettlement as a political issue, targeting changed media perceptions and leading to a discussion of refugee resettlement as a potentially positive course of action.

Collectively, *Save Me* groups were responsible for a whole range of events and activities that helped to garner political and public support for refugee resettlement, including panel discussions, film screenings, educational programmes in schools, readings, discussion and information events, photo exhibitions, stands, slide shows, performances, church services, boat races, bike tours and others. Many of the activities were specifically designed to bring together resettled refugees and local volunteers, helping refugees to settle in their new cities and enabling volunteers to learn about the culture and background of their new fellow citizens. Whilst based very much on individual exchanges, initiatives of this kind ultimately help to raise public awareness of and support for refugee resettlement.

Many *Save Me* groups made use of established local events and activities to promote refugee resettlement. In 2010, for example, *Save Me* Leipzig took part in the city’s ‘Bath Tub Race’, a traditional event held every year in the city. To draw attention to the campaign, they created a raft made of lifebuoys featuring the *Save Me* logo.

Save Me taking part in Leipzig's yearly Bath Tub Race



Courtesy of Kunkel, 2010

When *Save Me* Dresden was established in December 2009, the group made a deliberate decision to hold their founding day celebration on Human Rights Day, thus connecting *Save Me* to an established local occasion and promoting resettlement as a human rights activity. *Save Me* Dresden also participated in many events including the 'Intercultural Days', where the group was funded by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Saxony to stage a children's event, and at a local 'Market of Cultures'. Existing, well established local events often attract media coverage, and the Saxony newspaper *Sächsische Zeitung* and Dresden's university magazine, for example, ran several high profile stories on *Save Me*.

Save Me Munich chose to link their creation with the city's 850th anniversary celebrated in 2008, encouraging the public to take pride in the capacity of their city to welcome those in need of protection. In 2009, a coalition of *Save Me* groups coordinated by PRO ASYL came together in Berlin on the occasion of World Refugee Day to present 5,000 *Save Me* lifebuoys at Berlin's Central Station (see the cover).



Save Me Munich campaigning for refugee resettlement

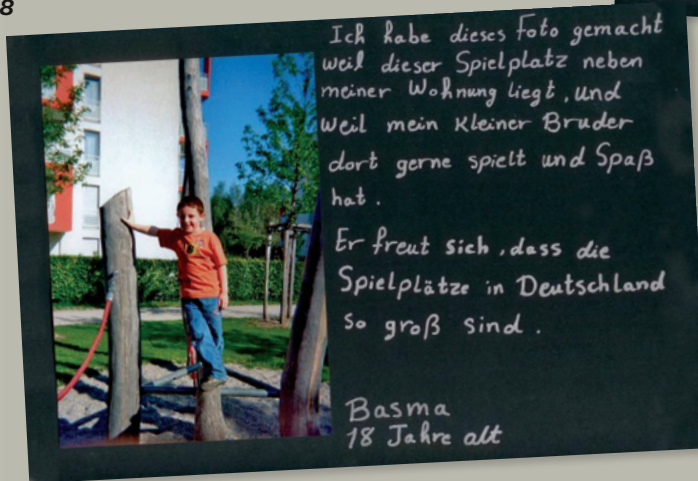
Courtesy of Save Me Munich

For the travelling exhibition “Save me – Face me – Welcome me”, Iraqi children and teenagers in Munich were given disposable cameras and asked to photograph what was important to them about Germany.

“”

I took this photo because this playground is right next to our flat, and because my little brother likes to play and have fun there. He's really pleased that playgrounds in Germany are so big.

Basma, 18



Marios
12 Jahre

Das sind meine Schwester und ich.
Ich bin hier im Garten. Ich wohne hier seit 1 Jahre. Meine Familie und ich haben viel Spaß in Deutschland. Marios 12 Jahre

“”

This is my sister and me. I'm in the garden. I've lived here for a year. My family and I have lots of fun in Germany.

Marios, 12, is one of 127 Iraqis who have found a new home in Munich



Save Me Dresden raising awareness with the help of St. Nicholas

TOP TIPS!

Raising awareness through events and activities

1

Use existing events and celebrations to raise awareness.

Exploit the platform that well-established and visible local events can provide for your campaign.

2

Know your local context! Understand the priorities and concerns of your fellow local citizens and politicians, and the types of messages and communication that will be effective.

3

Engage the local media. Provide material and information that enables the easy creation of stories, and participate in local events and activities that traditionally attract media interest.

4

Find creative ways to communicate your message.

Print posters and leaflets, have your logo printed on lifebuoys or balloons, produce 500 of them and release them in the train station... anything is possible!

5

Share your ideas and formats of events. Explore whether one concept can be organised in more than one city, such as a travelling exhibit.

What is the future for *Save Me* in Europe?

There can be no doubt that *Save Me* has been an innovative and creative initiative. It has achieved particular success in mobilising citizens in support of resettlement in a challenging asylum context in Germany. A new – albeit quite small – resettlement programme for Germany has now begun, although some difficulties are still to be overcome, not least those related to the legal status of resettled refugees. The future presents new challenges for growing German resettlement, developing good quality reception and integration programmes and maintaining public support for resettlement. *Save Me* has gone some way to creating a positive environment in which to take this work forward and, in this new phase of German resettlement, it is now up to the many cities and towns that said ‘Yes!’ to make good on their pledges of support to receive refugees.

The question at the heart of this publication is ‘What is the future for *Save Me* in Europe?’

There is a broad agreement across a range of actors that Europe can and must do more in terms of the number of resettlement places it offers.

Resettlement is a voluntary activity and any commitment depends on willingness from national governments. Whilst numbers are of course an important aspect of any discussion on resettlement, in Europe different actors have multiple ideas and approaches for advocating for expanded European resettlement – about the size of national resettlement programmes, the number of places that Europe should collectively provide, and if all European countries should participate in resettlement at all.

Too often, the willingness of countries to engage in resettlement is made contingent on the numbers of asylum seekers coming to a particular country at any given moment. This prohibits the development of standalone, sustainable resettlement commitments in terms of number of persons, and strategies to develop individual housing independent of the asylum system.

The new European financial framework for 2014-20 are expected to offer expanded incentives to grow Member States’ resettlement activities. A key challenge for Europe will on the other hand be to ensure that European resettlement offers both protection for those with emergency and urgent resettlement needs, and at the same time long-term, durable solution for the many thousands of refugees living in protracted situations around the world. Alongside more development-focused assistance and strategies, resettlement will continue to be an important method for expressing solidarity with countries of first asylum, ensuring protection of individuals and opening up protection space for refugee populations.

The *Save Me* approach has great value for a Europe in which a common agreement on resettlement numbers does not yet exist. In a time of prolonged financial crisis and difficult choices in Europe, the *Save Me* model can create public support and political will to offer protection to those most in need. Its grassroots, local nature creates the welcoming and engaged local communities in which resettled refugees can be both well received and supported to achieve their potential. It builds local support for refugee protection, directly engages citizens in refugee assistance, and establishes the positive and cooperative relationships between local actors – churches, unions, NGOs, political authorities, students, activists, the media and others – that will benefit the successful integration of all refugees and newcomers in European towns and cities. By demonstrating public and political support for refugee protection and resettlement, the *Save Me* model gives voice to local perspectives at national level, promoting local people, cities and towns as advocates for refugee protection in Europe.

The success of *Save Me* has already inspired a coalition of NGOs and international organisations to launch ‘Resettlement Saves Lives’, a European campaign advocating for 20,000 resettlement places to be offered every year by Europe by the year 2020. The campaign simultaneously advocates for high quality reception and integration programmes for resettled refugees in Europe. Individuals and organisations across Europe can pledge their support for resettlement at the campaign website⁴, and the campaign coalition builds on this support to lobby and advocate at the European level. As European resettlement grows and many more resettled refugees arrive, the campaign will build on the success of *Save Me* to not only ‘save’ lives, but to support the construction of new, sustainable lives for resettled refugees, their family members, children and future generations in European towns and cities.



The future of European resettlement depends on a broad coalition of governments, regions, cities and citizens saying ‘Yes!’ to refugee protection and offering refugees safety, security and new lives in their countries and communities. The *Save Me* campaign has offered a way in which each city can play its part in this coalition effort, joining with others to make a substantial and positive European contribution.

We hope that this publication and the work of *Save Me* will inspire you to join this European effort and play your own part in making European resettlement grow and prosper.

⁴ www.resettlement.eu/resettlement-saves-lives



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