

 **SHARING SPONSORSHIP EXPERIENCES**

There are a number of reasons why your community sponsorship group might want to share your community sponsorship experiences. This could be to support with the fundraising, to create a greater awareness of what is happening for refugees around the world or to give updates on your groups progress.

However, to leverage the benefits of sharing community sponsorship experiences and avoid negative or unintended consequences, you might find these considerations helpful:

* **Privacy and self-determination**
	+ Private or personal information or photos of the family or individual should not be shared or put on social media. If the people who have been sponsored would like to share their story or engage in media the CSG can offer support if needed.
* **Safety**
	+ Consider that the connectedness of ethnic, cultural, faith or other communities in resettlement communities around the world could lead to information spreading quickly. Regardless of an absence of overt discrimination or harm, refugees may not feel completely safe. How or whether their stories are shared could positively or negatively affect their wellbeing.
* **Harmful Narratives**
	+ Consider whether or not your messages reinforce a simplistic and harmful story about refugees as helpless victims who are unable to make their own decisions once in the resettlement community. Think about how you can share experiences without encouraging generalisations about any individual or community.
* **Education**
	+ Learn more about what it means to be a refugee and the situation of countries that people have been forced to leave. Try to break down myths and support the wider community to grow their understanding that someone’s identity is not determined by holding the legal status of being a refugee.
* **Permanence of information in the media**
	+ Since information in the media – including on social media – is difficult to remove, it is therefore important to understand that revoking consent once information has been publicly shared may not be possible.

**Strategies for Sharing Community Sponsorship Experiences**

While it may seem challenging to meaningfully incorporate the considerations for sharing community sponsorship stories, doing it well can be powerful and transformative for refugees and welcoming communities – just like community sponsorship itself. Whether your group engages in larger events or is looking to carefully navigate day-to-day conversations with people who are particularly curious these considerations and strategies might be useful:

* Consider whether setting group guidelines for handling traditional or social media would be useful.
	+ Would it be sufficient for the group to verbally agree, or would it be helpful to sign a written commitment to adhere to collectively developed guidelines?
* If the family or individual fully understands the scope of their consent and explicitly want to engage, ensure that you explore what their limits are. A few options for levels of engagement could include:
	+ Choosing to be the only one to tell their story.
	+ Being filmed/photographed entirely or only having hands filmed while recording their voices.
	+ Determining whether they want to use their real names or aliases.
	+ Sharing about their experiences after arrival only or focusing only on the sponsors.
* Avoid portraying sponsors as superheroes or saviours; ensure it is clear that the family or individual are equal and active participants in their own adaptation and involvement in the new community.

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