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# Guide on successful community and family-based integration of refugees

WP 3 Deliverable 3.6

Andrea Elena Biolo, Giorgio Baracco - Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus

With the support of

Carolina Quaranta - Second Tree

Anjali Claes - Réfugiés Bienvenue

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## Introduction

This guide has been produced within the RaCIP project, as part of Working Package 3, by the Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus. The present document is based on the previous outputs produced within the same Working Package by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus, as WP leader, and Réfugiés Bienvenue and Second Tree. The aforementioned previous documents are the following:

- desk research on the past experiences of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue in Italy and France;
- Interviews realized in Italy, France and Greece to refugees and hosting and supporting families;

The Guide is also logically connected with the deliverable realized within the WP 2 Private Sponsorship and community-based integration: The PAR example and other good practices. While the former aims at providing first hand evidence of the experiences of the organizations involved thanks to the interviews to beneficiaries and other actors involved, the latter provide a solid theoretical and conceptual foundation about private sponsorship as well as providing an exhaustive collection of PS good practices developed and implemented across Europe (collected and gathered by each project's partners). On top

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of that, the Guide will serve as a starting point for developing training curricula, specific output of the Working Package 4).

The present guide is structured as follows:

- Introduction: The Racip project, the goal of this document, the private sponsorship (missing) consensus, the relationship between family integration process and private sponsorship scheme, keywords
- The organizations involved: mission, experience and practices
- Data Analysis: First evidence from the interviews conducted in Greece, Italy and France
- Lesson Learned and conclusion

### What We Talk About When We Talk About Private Sponsorship?

Despite its diffusion and its relevance, there is no general consensus on the definition of Private Sponsorship. As stated by a study promoted by the European Commission itself: "The concept of private sponsorship is not clearly and easily defined. Opinions about what private sponsorship is have proliferated quickly. The study identified a wide range of definitions of refugee sponsorship and an equally varied array of

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practices that have developed under the umbrella of 'private sponsorship', leaving the concept largely undefined.<sup>1</sup>"

Nevertheless the different private sponsorship practices share one common characteristic: "they involve a transfer of responsibility from government agencies to private actors for some elements of the identification, pre-departure, reception, or integration process of beneficiaries"<sup>2</sup>

While such transfer of responsibility is self-evident it must be clarified that is not absolute: governments remain responsible for instance for reviewing the qualifications of sponsors and needs of beneficiaries, and they continue to be the service and support provider of last resort, caring for beneficiaries if the sponsorship relationship breaks down. Having said that, it is well accepted that within the PS private actors (mainly CSO as well as other players) not only play a much greater role in selecting, assisting and supporting refugees and asylum seekers but they also assume full responsibility for the material and immaterial well being of the beneficiaries. The private sponsorship schemes have been gaining attention and interest in Europe since 2013 due on the one hand to the increased flux of refugees from either Central Africa or Middle East and on the other hand to perceived better results in terms

<sup>1</sup> Study on the feasibility and added value of sponsorship schemes as a possible pathway to safe channels for admission to the EU, including resettlement - MPI & ICF

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem

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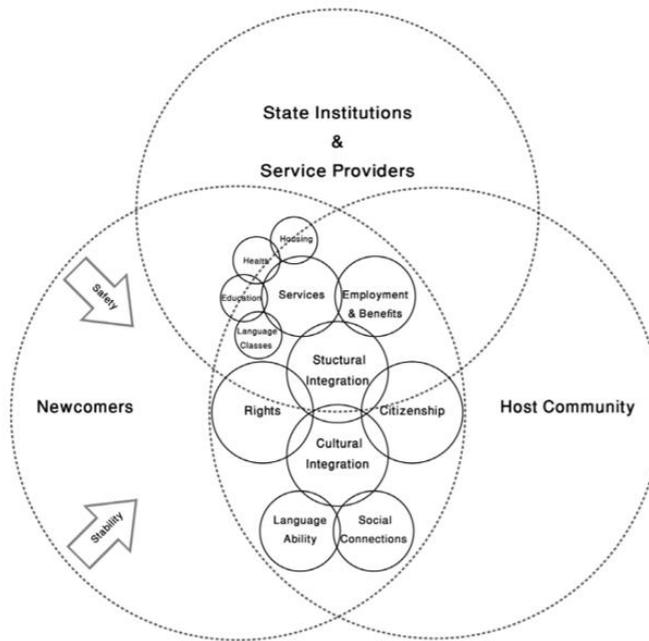


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of integration and inclusion obtained by such practices. As far as refugees integration process studies have shown how PS practices strengthen host communities, build powerful bonds between sponsors and newcomers and foster positive attitudes towards refugees. A UK study <sup>3</sup> comparing community sponsorship and government led resettlement, show the interaction between host community and newcomers across a large set of integration dimensions in sponsorship schemes (figure 1)



<sup>3</sup> Alraie, Collins, and Rigon (2018)

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Despite missing a genuine consensus on the definition of Private Sponsorship, authors and practitioners tend to agree that the several experiences realized in Europe over the last few years can be referred to 4 main categories:

- Family reunification
- Human Corridors
- Community based sponsorship
- Ad-hoc schemes for specific religious groups

Within this framework, domestic housing and mentoring can be included in the Community based sponsorship as this is generally described as schemes aimed at matching persons in need of international protection or already with title of protection with local and community organisations for arrival support & integration <sup>4</sup> (therefore dealing with people already in the host countries that might or might not have spent some time within the reception system). As community sponsorship emphasize the active involvement of civil society, the role of active citizens, individuals, families, informal group, in ensuring the full integration of the beneficiaries as well as the full compliance with International obligations, it is clear that both domestic housing and mentoring fit the above definition providing a clear example of how

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<sup>4</sup> (Barbosa & others, 2021).

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citizens can stand by refugees assisting them and providing additional resources

### Keywords

Hosting Families: families that provide private accommodation for refugees/asylum seekers

Supporting Families: families that support refugees/asylum seekers without providing accommodation but assisting them in their quest of autonomy

Mentors: a grown-up figure that support refugees and/or asylum seekers by providing help/guidance

Domestic Housing: the practice of hosting refugees and/or asylum seekers (as well as other vulnerable targets)

### Organization involved

As previously mentioned the present guide is based on the experience and the tasks performed within the project by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus, Réfugiés Bienvenue and Second Tree. It is therefore important to provide some additional information on the aforementioned

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organizations, their mission, their methodologies, their target groups as well as some background information that would help contextualize the activities carried out.

**Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus:** the association was founded in 2015 during the so-called “Refugees Crisis” as part of the growing international Refugees welcome network (currently active in 18 countries in Europe and across the world). The mission of the association is to promote a cultural change within the host society towards migration, refugees and asylum seekers in order to make our communities more inclusive and tolerant. Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus pursues its mission through the involvement of civil society by matching hosting families with refugees and other holders of protection looking for accomodation and by providing young refugees (mainly former Unaccompanied Minors that recently turned 18 years old) with a grown up figure that would ease and support his/her transition to adulthood (mentoring). Over the last few years the association has developed a sound methodology and work model based on the role of local groups of volunteers that, after an intense training, select refugees and hosting families and support the former in the integration process as well as implement awareness and communication activities within their communities (Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus works just with beneficiaries that hold a regular title of protection that already left the

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reception system) . In the below chart we summarize the main numbers of the association:

Paid Staff 2021	Volunteers	Numbers of Matching realized	Target Group	Typical profile of hosts/mentors	Codified Methodology
20	280	300 domestic housing  70 mentoring	Full recognize refugee  Subsidiary Protection  Special Protection  Former UAMS	middle Aged couple and woman	Guideline on domestic housing  Guideline on mentoring for former UAMS

**Réfugiés Bienvenue:** Réfugiés Bienvenue was founded as well in 2015 and is a member of the International Refugees Welcome network. As a result it shares the same values of the other RW chapters and pursues the same goal of fighting prejudices and racism and making our societies more welcoming and inclusive through the involvement of civil

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society. As opposed to Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus the activities carried out by Refugees Bienvenue are mainly concentrated on the Ile de France region and it is currently collaborating with the Government within the national reception system

Paid Staff 2021	Volunteers	Numbers of Matching realized	Target Group	Typical profile of hosts/mentors	Codified Methodology
3	30	300 domestic housing  70 mentoring	Full recognize refugees and asylum seekers	middle Aged couple	

**Second Tree:** Second Tree is a community-led, volunteer-run, grassroots NGO that supports, teaches and learns with refugees across Northern Greece. The mission of the organization is to “empower individuals with the skills needed to engage in their new community by providing them

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with access to information, services, and opportunities that strengthen their capacities and ensure that their rights are realised"- The main area of work of the organization are as follows:

- Language Learning
- Integration
- Youth Well Being

As far as language learning is concerned the NGO provides English and Greek classes to refugees and asylum seekers (aged 15+) hosted in the camps offering different courses according to the different language proficiency of the students. As language plays a crucial role in the integration process, the NGO bases its learning specially-designed teaching on resources developed by the University of Ioannina (with regards to the Greek class) while English classes rely on Cambridge Empower syllabus, tailored to the needs of the students. With regards to the other above mentioned areas, despite the different target groups, they are both based on the involvement of civil society and the peer to peer approach . With regards to the current work, the data and the information gathered are mainly based on the Twinning Project developed and supported by UNHCR and Intersos.

Paid Staff 2021	Volunteers	Numbers of Matching	Target Group	Typical profile of	Codified Methodology

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		realized		hosts/mentor s	
5	16	88	Asylum seekers and refugee s	Middle aged men and women; students	Inspired and based on Helping - GARs and Twinning projects between immigrant families and quebecois families: Volunteer work, mutual aid, or intervention ?

Based on the aforementioned information, it is overly clear that the organizations involved, though sharing a common vision and mission, operate on different conditions and premises. The main differences can be summarized as follows:

Target groups: while Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus deals only with persons with a title of protection (that therefor have already spent a



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considerable amount of time in the host country), Réfugiés Bienvenue and Second Trees address as well the need of asylum seekers providing first help to families and displaced persons by working directly in the camps (only for Second Tree). Also Second Trees works on a regular basis with minors which is not the case for Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue.

Territorial dimension: as stated Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus operates at national level through groups of volunteers spread across Italy, while both Réfugiés Bienvenue and Second Tree focus in a well defined area (Northern Greece for the latter, Ile de France for the former).

Methodology: by belonging to the Refugees Welcome International network, Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue base their value proposition on shared set of values as well as common visual identity and similar tools (for instance the digital platform) and methodologies, while Second Trees developed its working model mainly on the needs, goals and the challenges, of its relevant stakeholders.

Another point worth mentioning concerns the beneficiaries themselves of the organizations: while most of the beneficiaries of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue were persons that needed/wanted to fully integrate in the host country, most of the beneficiaries of Second Tree considered Greece as their first step in their journey to Europe (as a matter of fact roughly 80% of the persons interviewed were no longer living in Greece at the time of the

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interviews). As a result the solidarity practices put in place such as mentoring in their Twinning Families project, played a different role and had different impact on the beneficiaries themselves as those were in different stages of their inclusion/integration journey.

### Data analysis

#### Interviews in Italy, France and Greece to refugees and hosting or supporting families

The interviews have been conducted during the months of april and may 2021 in Italy, France and Greece. In total there have been 45 interviews addressed to refugees and 45 interviews to family members that had experience with the associations Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus, Réfugiés Bienvenue France and Second Tree. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were arranged on zoom or on google meet.

In regard with the selection of respondents, criteria were initially defined to have a sample that reflected as closely as possible the characteristics of the different experiences across the nations. Refugees have been selected as much as possible based on age, gender, nationality and where the experience took place. While, hosting/supporting family members have been chosen according to the following criteria: gender, where the experience took place,

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different kinds of support provided (hosting families or supporting families) and family composition. In both cases it was preferred to interview people that had already finished or were ending the experience.

The interview consisted of an assisted questionnaire lasting a maximum of 2 hours. The answers were mostly quantifiable (rating 1-5) and there were some qualitative open questions whose analysis have been clustered separately. Refugees' survey was composed of 36 questions, whilst the survey addressed to hosting/mentoring families was of 27 questions.

In the refugees' survey the topics dealt were: profile (age, nationality, gender, family composition), qualifications (studies, accomplishments), current situation (work, study, accomodation), project (goal, challenges) and wellbeing. While in the families' survey the topics were: profile (age, family composition, economic status, studies), previous activism experiences, motivation to engage with Refugees Welcome/Réfugiés Bienvenue/Second Tree, past experiences with/knowledge of refugees, challenges, fears and satisfaction.

**REFUGEES' SURVEY: profiles, qualifications, work and housing situations, supporting experience, wellbeing.**

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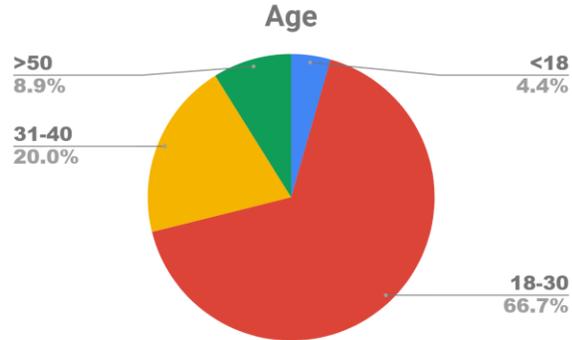
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Most of the refugees interviewed were less than thirty years old (66,7%).

The 20% were aged between 31 and 40 and the over 50 were only the 8,9% (four respondents). Lastly, only two respondents were underage (the 4,4% of the total).



In Italy the refugees interviewed were all almost under thirty: 93% of the respondents. Second Tree has interviewed the two respondents underage and an eighteen refugee; they have also collected three interviews from refugees over 50 years old: the 75% of the oldest refugees interviewed.

The refugees interviewed were male for 64,4% and female for 35,6%. Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Second Tree have interviewed many more male than female: men were respectively 80% and 73% of their respondents. Whereas the female respondents of Réfugiés Bienvenue were the 60% of their interviewees that represents the 53,3% of the all respondents.

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The 45 refugees interviewed were from 19 countries in Asia and Africa. First of all, Syrians were the 17,8% of the respondents (8 persons) and secondly Afghans were the 15,6% of the total (7 persons). The other countries of origin follow each other as we can see in the tables.

Syria	8
Afghanistan	7
Bangladesh	3
Ivory Coast	3
Guinea	3
Mali	3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2
Iraq	2
Senegal	2

Italy	15
France	15
Germany	7
Greece	3
Sweden	1
Finland	1
Belgium	1
Bosnia	1
Switzerland	1

Somalia	2
The Gambia	2
Armenia	1
Cameroon	1
Egypt	1
Iran	1
Nigeria	1
Sudan	1
Turkey	1
Uganda	1

Furthermore, we want to underline that all Syrian respondents were interviewed by Second Tree and also four of the seven afghans were interviewed by them. Basically, most of the refugee respondents of Second Tree came from the Middle East (from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq) and only two were from Africa: Cameroon and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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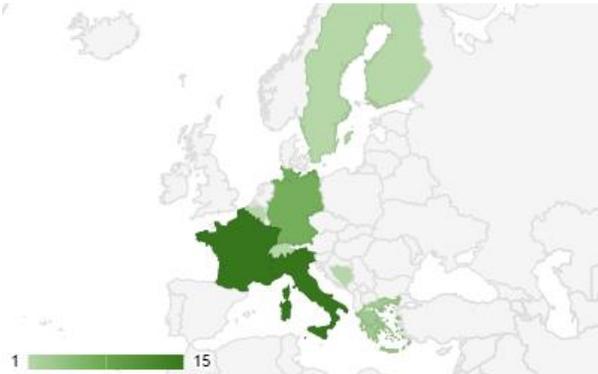


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At the time of the interview, the respondents lived in several countries, almost all Europeans. The 15 respondents from Italy were interviewed by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and also all the 15 from France were interviewed by Réfugiés Bienvenue.



Differently it has been for the interviewees by Second Tree: most of them were from various European countries. As we can see in the chart, only three refugees were residents in Greece and most of the others were in Germany. This is a significant fact regarding the integration path of refugees in the host country.

Almost half of the refugees involved were single in the host country (49% of the total); while, the 27% were parents with children. There were also smaller numbers of the interviewees that declared to be couples (9%) and single parents (9%). At last, some refugees declared that their family in the host country was composed of housemates (4%) and a person asserted to stay with his brother.

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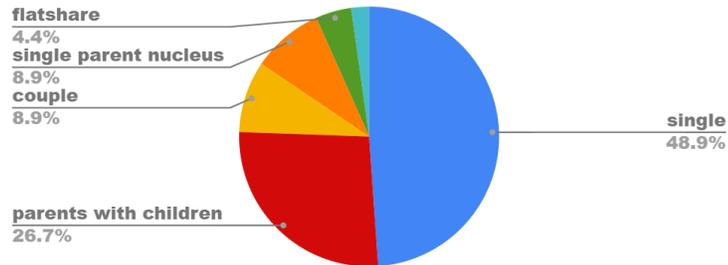


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### Family composition in the host country



It's interesting to underline that almost the total of refugees interviewed by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus are single in Italy; they represent 93% of the interviewees in Italy and 31% of the all refugees involved. On the other hand, the family composition of the interviewees from RB is more heterogeneous. Regarding ST's interviewees, many of them (47%) were parents with children, followed by singles (33%) and single parents (13%).

In the chart below it's available to consult the result of the survey regarding the time of permanence of the refugees interviewed in the host country. More than half of all the respondents stated that they

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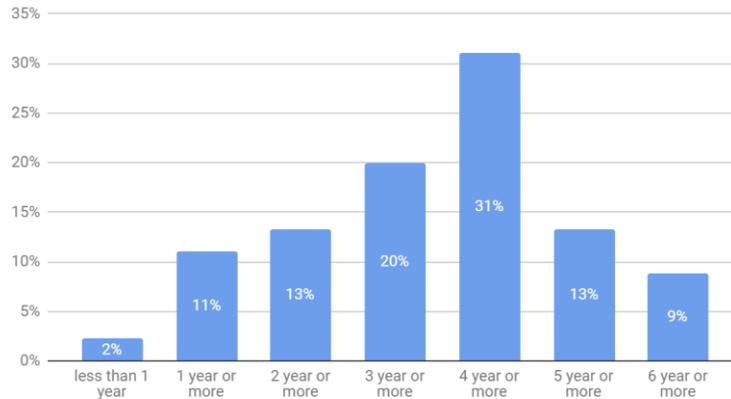
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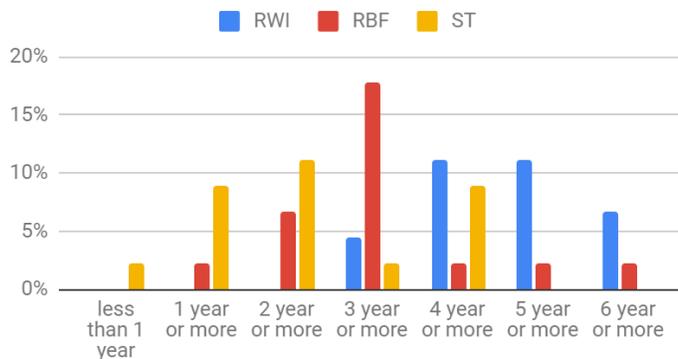
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have lived in the host country for four years or more. Only 2% of them have been in the host country for less than one year.

How long have you lived in Italy / France / Greece?



Time of permanence in the host country



Comparing the answers collected from the three organizations, the differences between the different targets come to light. All the refugees of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus lived in Italy for more than three years. Differently, the

respondents of ST referred to living in Greece for less time: more than

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half of them for less than two years; only 7% for three years or more and 27% for four years or more. Almost all respondents who lived in the host country less than three years were interviewed by ST. Lastly, in relation to the interviewees by RB they all resided in France for more than one year and 73% of them for more than three years.

Regarding the qualification, in their country of origin the majority of the refugees attended school: only 11% had no title. 7% got a diploma from Koranic school and 13% went to primary school. Moreover, 68% of the respondents had the chance to continue studies: 22% attended middle school, 24% went to high school and, lastly, 22% studied at university.

Many of the respondents declared that their qualifications haven't been recognized in the host country. Only 22,2% of them had recognized their qualifications and 4,4% (2 respondents) were in the process. Only 30% of those who studied at the university had recognized their qualifications and 20% were in the process. Similarly, 30% who attended high school and 36% of those who went to middle school have recognized their qualifications in the host country.

The interviewees have been asked if they attended a course during the experience: it has resulted that 63% of the respondents attended a vocational training programme or a course of study, while 37% not. Most of them attended a language class (18,6%) or middle school (18,6%). Others went to the senior secondary school (4,7%) or a course to become an aide (4,7%). The rest (16,7%) attended various training

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courses: mechanic, cooking, security, farming, physiotherapist. Almost all ST respondents said they had attended a language course (English and Greek).

Concerning the job situation, at time of the survey the 53,3% of the refugees interviewed were employed. For the rest: 17,8% were students, 22,2% were unemployed and only 4,4% were unoccupied. Half of those employed had permanent contracts. Whereas 29% of them were working with a fixed-term contract. At last, the others (21%) had different situations, as exemples: self-employed, seasonal contract, interim and also no regular contract.

The survey also examined how employed people found the job they were doing. The 32% have gotten it thanks to the help of friends from their country of origin, the 24% by refugees' programme and, in the same way, people helped by family's network or acquaintances from the host country were the 16%.

The rest of the respondents have found their job through the job agency or employment center or the job advertisements.

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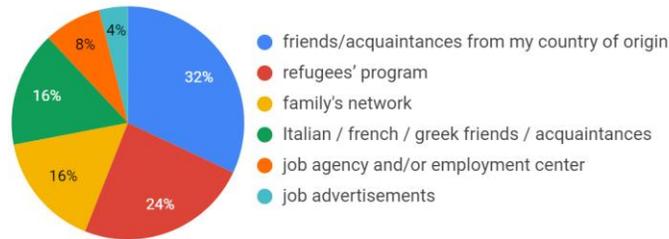


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### How did you find the job you are doing?



Most of the respondents (72%) were doing a job which has not anything to do with their

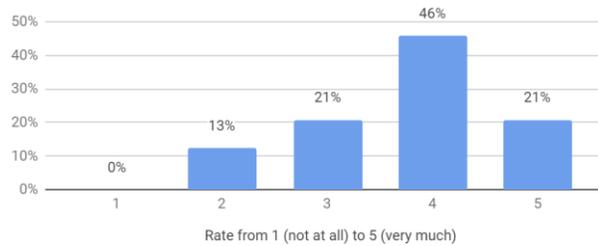
qualifications. Only 16% said that their job had something to do with their qualifications.

When asked "are you satisfied with your current job?" 21% of the refugees

employed gave the maximum rating. 46% of the respondents also replied

that they were very satisfied with their work. While, 21% expressed an intermediate rating. At last, only 13% didn't feel satisfied enough with their job.

### Are you satisfied with your current job?



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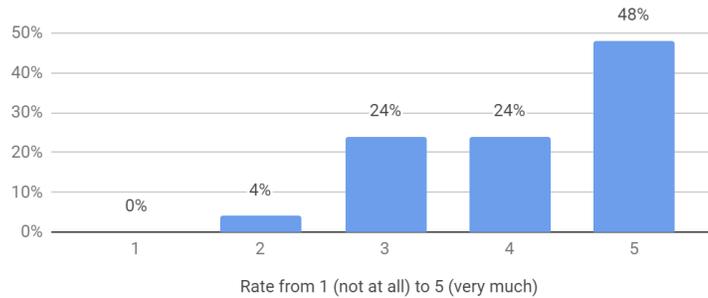
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Similarly, when asked "do you feel appreciated by your boss and your colleagues" almost half of the respondents replied they feel very much appreciated. The 24% expressed to feel quite esteemed, while the 24% gave an halfway evaluation. Lastly, only the 4% didn't feel appreciated in the workplace.

### Do you feel appreciated by your employer and your colleagues?



The survey also inquired if the refugees had been helped to find a job and who supported them. 65% of the respondents were supported in job searching, whilst 13% responded they don't. Instead, 22,5% hadn't needed any help.

Many of them said they had been helped by the hosting/supporting family (44,4% of the respondents) and its social network and by RW activists / ST project (40,7%). The 18,5% had received support from other organizations committed to help vulnerable people. 14,8% of the respondents have been supported by friends from their own countries,

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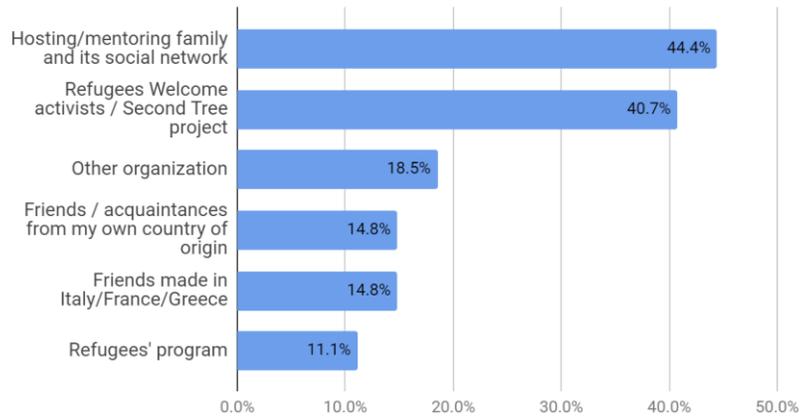
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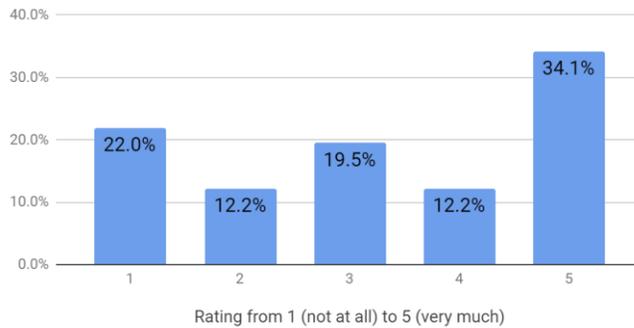
the 14,8% by friends made in the host country and the 11% by refugees' programs.

### Who gave you the support?



Concerning the experience with the hosting/supporting family, the interviewees were asked how much it has affected their working situation.

### How much the experience with the hosting/mentoring family has helped refugees to improve their work situation?



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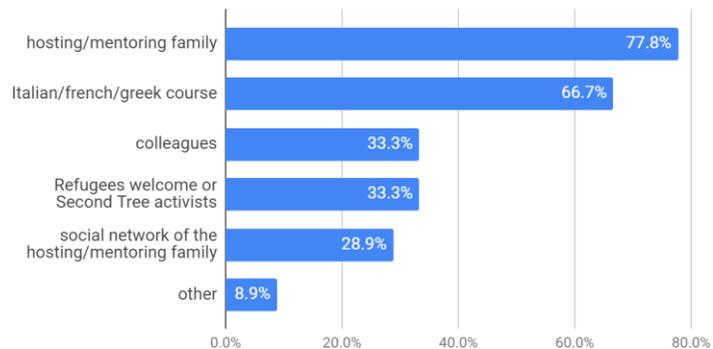
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22% of the respondents rated "not at all", while 12% gave 2 points rating. 19.5% gave an intermediate evaluation. Whilst, the rest gave a high rating: 12% said that the experience with the family had improved "enough" their job situation and 34% replied "very much".

Regarding the improvement of knowledge about culture and language of the host country, 68,2% of the respondents said that the experience with the hosting/supporting family had helped them "very much", while the 9,1% replied "enough". Only the 6,8% gave a negative rating and the 15,9% assigned a halfway evaluation.

According to what was stated by most of the interviewees, their knowledge about culture and language of the host country had improved thanks to the hosting/supporting family (77,8%).

### Knowledge of the Italian/French/Greek language and culture has improved thanks to:



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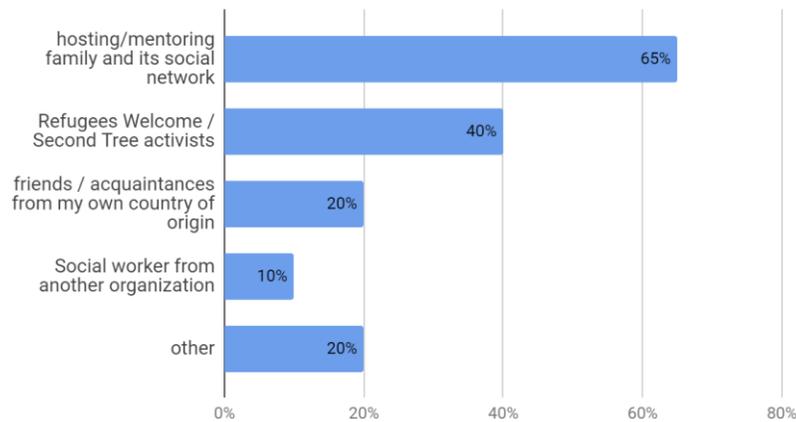
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As the chart shows, at second place of what refugees think has helped them there are the languages courses (66,7%). Following are the colleagues (33,3%), the RW or ST activists (33,3%), the social network of the hosting/supporting family (28,9%) and, at last, others such as social media, TV, other migrants, other organizations.

The survey also investigated the refugee housing situation. In particular, they were asked if they have received support in housing research. 44,4% of the interviewees have received help and the 13,3% have not; while 42,2% of them haven't needed support.

65% of refugees affirmed they have gotten support from the hosting/supporting family and its social network. At the second place there are the RW or ST activists (40%) and, afterwards, there are friends or acquaintances of their countries of origin (20%). 10% said they have

Who did you get support from?



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received support from social workers of other organizations and the rest (20%) of the respondents from others such as State, estate agency, friends made in the host country, and other associations.

Regarding the social life of the refugees interviewed, most of them affirmed they had “enough” or “very much” relationships with other people outside of their working environment. Not many said they didn't have (7%) or they had few relationships (7%). Lastly, 27,9% of the respondents gave an intermediate rating.

Investigating the composition of the social network of the refugees interviewed, it comes to light that the social network of many respondents was mainly composed of people from their own countries (68,9% of the respondents), migrants in the same situation as them (68,9%) and people from the host country (66,7%). At last, some interviewees specified they also had relationships with volunteers (20%) and the hosting family (11%).

Continuing with regard to the social network of the refugees interviewed, the survey asked to assess the involvement with the social network of the family. Most of them (60%) said they have developed a bond with the social network of the hosting/supporting family. Only

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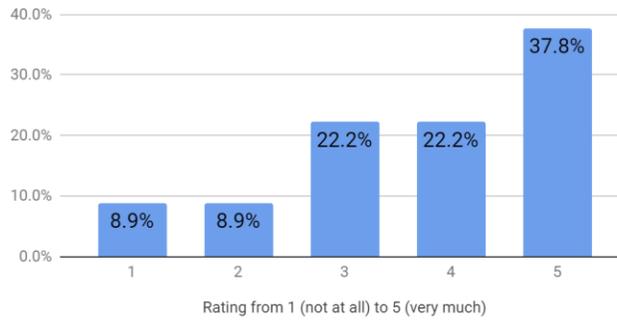
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17,8% have developed a bond “a little” or “not at all”. The rest (22,2%) gave a halfway rating.

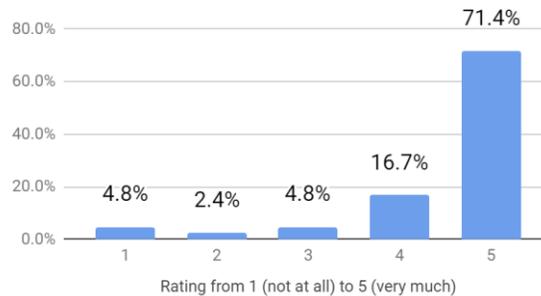
Have you developed a bond with the social network of the hosting/mentoring family?



Also regarding the involvement in events of hosting/supporting family, what comes to light it's similar. Almost half of the respondents have gotten involved and also the 18,2% said they have taken part. Only the 15,9% gave a low rating: 13,6% have never participated in events while 10% have done little. 18,2% of the interviewees rated with 3 points.

It's interesting to underline that most of those who have taken part in these events said they have felt comfortable “very

If you take part in these events, do you feel comfortable?



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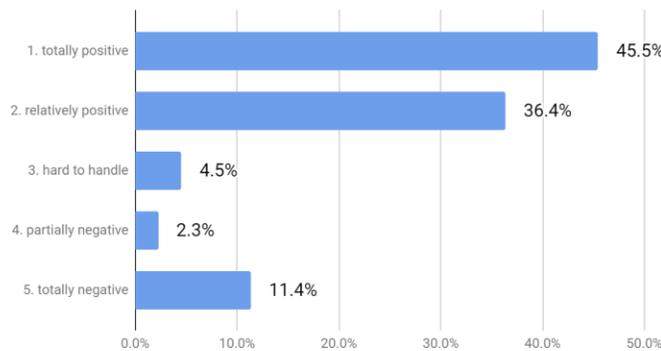


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much" (71,4%). Only 4,8% haven't felt comfortable and 2,4% not very comfortable.

In general, we can argue that respondents rated their experience with Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus or Réfugiés Bienvenue France or

How do you rate your experience with RW/Second Tree?



Second Tree in a positive way.

In fact, more than 80% of respondents said their experience has been "totally positive" (45,5%) or "relatively positive" (36,4%).

4,5% of them said it has been "hard to handle". Whilst, as the chart illustrates, the rest rated a negative evaluation: 2,3% "partially negative" and 11,4% "totally negative".

Interviewees were also asked if they felt satisfied with their personal life. More than half of the respondents said they were "very happy and satisfied" (33,3%) or "almost always very happy" (28,9%). While, 28,9% felt "sometimes quite happy, sometimes quite unhappy". At last, only a few respondents gave a negative evaluation: 2 respondents (4,4%)

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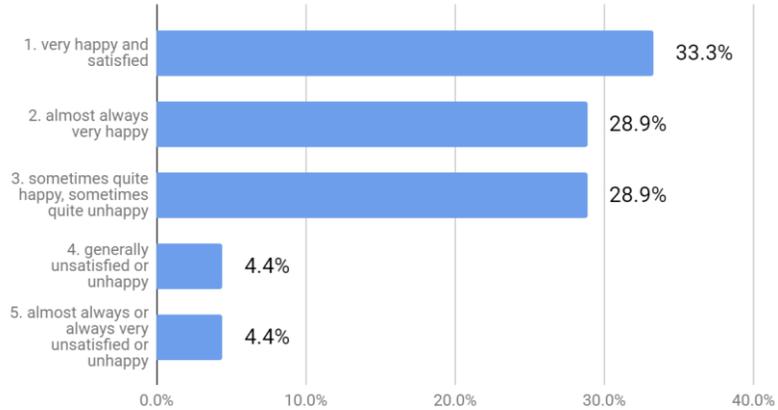
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were “generally unsatisfied or unhappy” and, alike, only 4,4% felt “almost always very unsatisfied or unhappy”.

### Do you feel happy and satisfied with your personal life?



### FAMILIES’ SURVEY: profiles, qualifications, past experiences and motivations, hosting or supporting experience, challenges and fears.

About 45 hosting/supporting family members who were involved, almost half of (44,4%) were over 50 years old. While, the under 30 were 22,2% of the total. Lastly, the other interviewees (33,4%) were aged between 31 and 50 years old.

If we look at the age of the respondents of each association, we can see that almost half of the Second Tree's interviewees were under 30 (47%) and only 6% were over 50. While Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus

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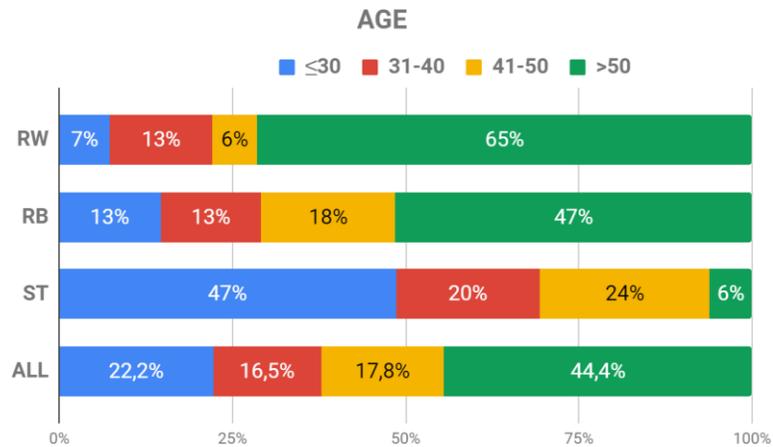


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has interviewed more people who were over 50 (65%) than those under 30 years old (7%). Neither the less, the age of the Réfugiés Bienvenue's respondents was high: 47% of them were over 50 and only the 13% was under 30.



Major part of the hosts/mentors interviewed were female 73,3% and male were 26,7%. Second Tree has interviewed more females than males: women were 93% against 7% of men. Réfugiés Bienvenue's interviewees were also more female (73%) than male (27%). Lastly, Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus's sample was mixed about gender: 53% female and 47% male.

Almost all the respondents were native from Italy (33%), France (31%) and Greece (29%). Only a few interviewees (7%) were from Spain, Albania and Switzerland. Regarding the place of residence, at the time

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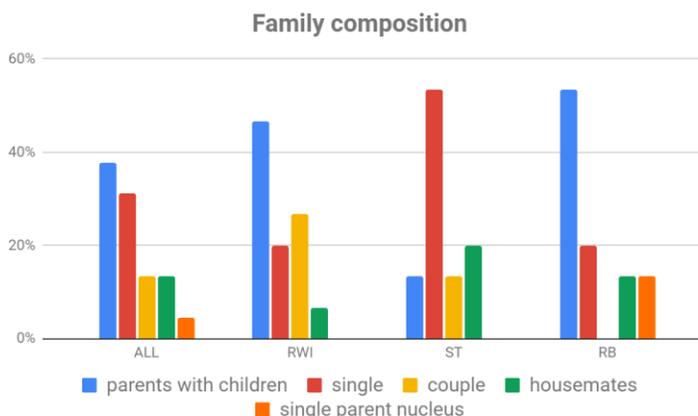


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of the survey, 33% of the respondents lived in Italy, 33% in France and 31% in Greece. Only one interviewee was in England.

Concerning the family composition, most of the respondents were parents with children (37,8%) or single (31,1%). The others were couples (13,3%), housemates (13,35) or single parents (4,4%).



As the chart shows, the majority of RB's interviewees were parents with children. 20% were single while the rest were single parents (13%) and housemates (13%). Also Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus's hosts were mostly parents with children (47% of their respondents); others were couples (27%), singles (20%) and, in a small part, housemates(only one person). Instead, half of ST's respondents were single (53%), followed by those who lived in a shared flat (20%), couples (13%) and parents with children (13%).



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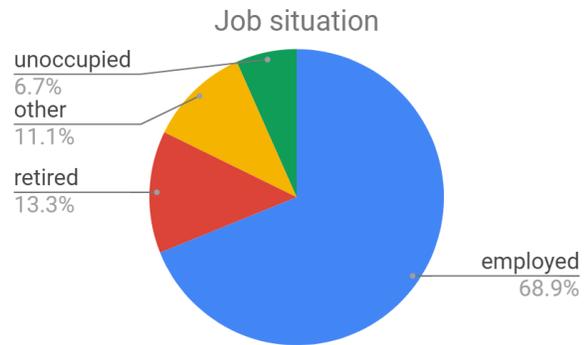
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The great majority of the hosts interviewed have completed the university studies (84%), while a small part has attended the senior secondary school (7%) or the middle school (7%). One person had a professional diploma.

Regarding the job situation, the respondents were mainly employed (69%). 13% of them were retired and 7% were unoccupied. The others (11%) had different work situations such as: self-employed, student, freelance entertainment worker, author, actress.



Respondents were asked if they had any experiences of social/political activism. 64% of them said they had been activists, while 36% had never done it. If we look at the responses of each association, we observe that fewer people interviewed by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus had experience than those interviewed by ST and RB: only 47% of the respondents of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus against 73% for both ST and RB. 19% of those who have had experience said they have been involved in activities related to immigration, while 16% in environment protection, 10% with minors and 10% in health associations. Others have

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volunteered in various activism fields such as: culture, social exclusion, teaching, human rights, animals and syndicalism.

The survey also asked hosts/mentors what motivated them to engage with Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus or Réfugiés Bienvenue or Second Tree and the challenges they encountered. Most of the respondents said they were motivated by the need to do something concrete. They wanted to be part of the solution to the "problem" and to give their contribution to help. They were interested about refugees situation, migration affairs and, in general, discrimination issues. Someone decided to get involved after hearing about the program from an interview on TV, from an information session made by volunteers of the association. Someone else motivated by a family member, friends and acquaintances or a refugee they wanted to help. Then again, somebody got in touch with the association after starting to host a refugee or they have already had some experiences. Finally, other respondents were motivated by the immigration experience of a family member.

Concerning what were the challenges encountered, many hosts/mentors said there were no challenges. For some it was all simple and normal, while others talked about opportunities rather than challenges. Instead, for other interviewees the challenge was to better understand the immigration issue more and let the other people know about it, trying to face the big ignorance of people about the refugee situation.

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Other respondents said that the biggest challenge was to deal with different mentalities, cultures and religions. They had to overcome huge cultural differences that there were in some aspects. Many others talked about the daily challenges they faced in supporting the refugee, finding a way to communicate that was mutually beneficial, making them understand each other and, in particular, who hosted, sharing rules and spaces. In some cases also the interaction with institutions and their administrative procedures were a challenge.

Some hosts experienced the lack of constant presence from activists as a challenge: the challenge of having to go through this experience alone, with no one to advise and support them. On the other hand, some of them said that there were no particular challenges thanks to the support of the volunteer team.

The survey inquired about the degree of knowledge of the hosts/mentors regarding the refugee situation. 20% of them said they knew "little" or "not at all". 42% replied with an intermediate rating, while 38% gave an high evaluation.

Considering that a good number of people said they knew something or more about refugees, it's interesting to underline that 58% of respondents said that the hosting/mentoring experience improved "very much" their knowledge of refugees. In general, as it can be seen from the chart, the interviewees mostly stated that their knowledge of

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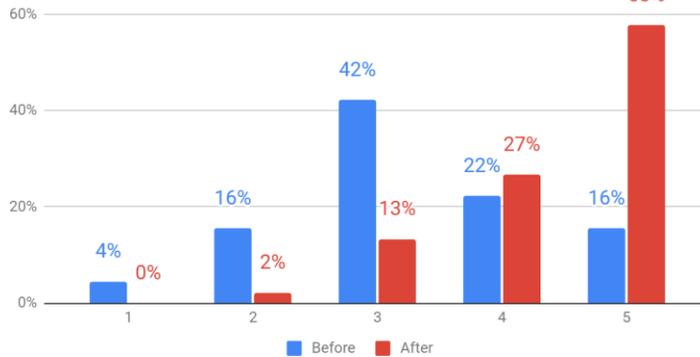


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the issue has improved. Only 2% of them said that after the experience their knowledge has improved “little”.

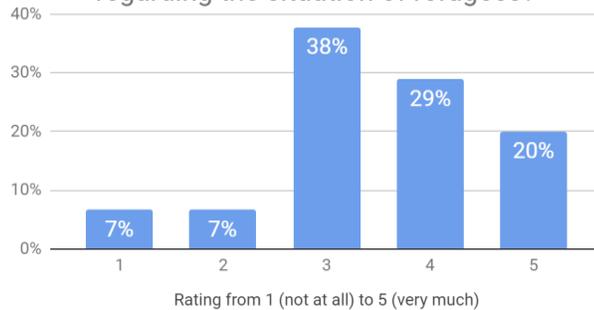
### How much did you know regarding the refugees situation?

Rating from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much)



With reference to the social impact produced, it was asked how much this experience has influenced the knowledge that the social network of the hosts/mentors have had about the refugee situation. Most of them said that it has had an elevated impact (49%). 38% were uncertain, while only 7%

### How much do you think this experience has improved the knowledge of your social network regarding the situation of refugees?



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stated the knowledge of their social network has improved “little” and the other 7% said “not at all”.

The survey also probed how children, family members, friends, colleagues and neighbors have accepted or not the presence of the refugee.

In reference to the children of the people interviewed, most of them accepted with serenity (75%) and optimism (85%) the presence of the refugee. Some have had a gradual acceptance (45%) but only a few have been initially skeptical and then more open (20%). Finally, almost all of them haven't had a distrustful attitude (only 5% has been) while the totality of them haven't shown hostile or aggressive behavior.

More than half of the respondents stated that their family members accepted the presence of the refugee with serenity (69%), optimism (69%) and also with gradual acceptance (51%). Only 18% have not accepted with serenity. On the other hand, very few were family members who have been distrustful (16%), hostile (6%) or even aggressive (2%).

Regarding close friends and colleagues, most respondents said that their network has accepted with serenity (71%) and optimism (57%) the presence of the refugee. Only 18% haven't been happy and 16% haven't accepted with optimism. Respondents also said their friends and colleagues have had no distrust attitudes (76%). Likewise, the majority haven't been hostile (91%) or aggressive (95%) behavior.

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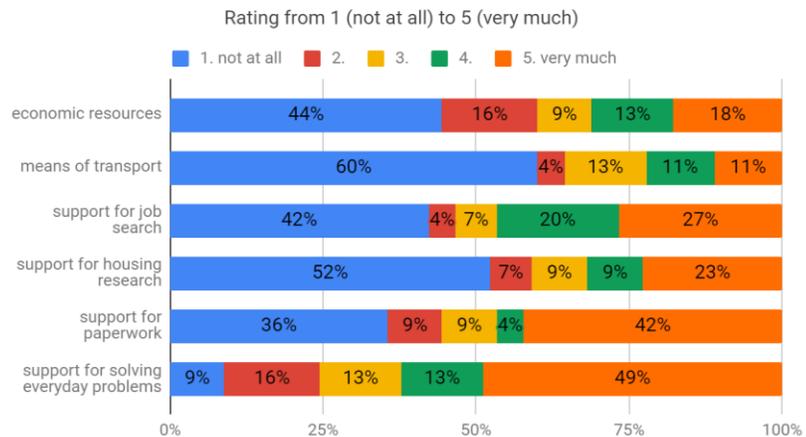


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At last, the judgment of the respondents regarding their neighbors was mixed. Many of them said they were uncertain about the neighborhood's acceptance. Only few stated that the refugee has been not accepted with serenity (12%) and optimism (17%). On the other hand, the majority said there have been no episodes of distrust (52%), hostility (64%) or aggression (67%).

The interviewees were asked how much they have supported the refugee in various areas. As the chart shows, many respondents have helped refugees "not at all" or "little" with means of transport (64%), with economic resources (64%) and in housing research (59%). Instead, interviewees said they have given "enough" or "very much" support for solving everyday problems. While, about support for job search and for paperwork they replied in different ways.

### How much did you support the refugee you helped/hosted in the following areas?



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This is the general result but if we look at the individual associations, what emerges it's a bit different. Regarding Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus, more than half of their interviewees gave an high rating (4 or 5 points) to job search (60% of them) and support for paperwork (67% only who gave 5 points); lastly, they have supported "enough" (27%) or "very much" (60%) the refugee hosted for face everyday problems. About the other areas, they gave different responses. Continuing with the sample of Réfugiés Bienvenue, also they stated to support "enough" or "very much" the refugees hosted in job search (73% of them), administrative support (60%) and solving daily problems (60%). Whilst, about the house research, they responded in different ways. Instead, they have given help "not at all" or "little" with financial resources (60%) and transportations. Finally, concerning the Second Tree's respondents, they have given support for "not at all" with economics resources (67%), with means of transport (73%), in job search (86%) and in house research (87%). On the contrary, they have supported "enough" or "very much" for solving everyday problems (60%). These results are closely related to the type of experience that for ST was different than for Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus / RB.

In reference to the achievement of personal independence and autonomy, the interviewees were asked how much they had been supportive for the refugee. More than half of the respondents of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue said they have helped the hosted refugee to reach independence in searching for

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accommodation (53% each other) and looking for a job (67% of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and of 53% RB). About the driving license, 34% of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus's interviewees have played a role while 60% haven't done or little. Whereas, 97% of the RB's interviewees said they have helped the refugees to get the driver license "not at all". Regarding Second Tree, the great majority of their respondents said they haven't played a role in the following things: accommodation research (92% of them replied "not at all"), job search (85%) and getting driving license (85%).

Another topic that the survey investigated was about how much the hosting/supporting families have shared their social and family network with the refugees. In general, the respondents have shared a lot of their social network (64% said "enough" or "very much"). Whilst, they gave different answers about the family network: 37% of them gave a low rating, while 48% assigned a high rating and 16% gave 3 points.

If we look at the data of the individual associations, some differences come to light. More than half of respondents of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus (60%) and Réfugiés Bienvenue (67%) said they have shared "very much" their social network with the refugees. On the other hand, only 27% of RB's respondents and 7% of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus's answered "not at all" or "little". Instead, the interviewees by Second Tree gave a various rating: only 14% of them said to have

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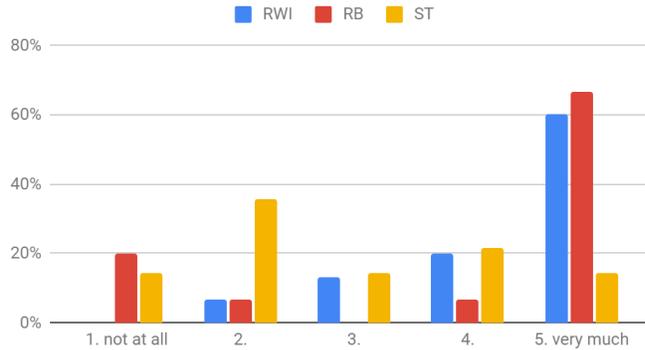
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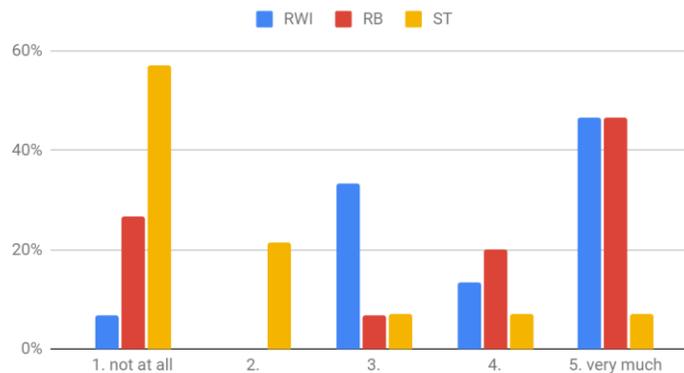
shared "very much" their social network, while 50% of them replied "not at all" or "little".

### How much did you share your social network?



Concerning the family network, as the chart shows, the position of the respondents of Second Tree is even more clear. 57% of them said they have shared their family network "not at all" and 21% said "little". About

### How much did you share your family network?



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Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue, nearly half of both of their interviewees (47%) replied they have shared “very much” their family network with the refugees. 27% of RB respondents claimed to have done it “not at all” against 7% of the Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus’s respondents.

Therefore, we can affirm that, in general, Second Tree respondents have shared their social and family networks less than the respondents of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue.

Relating to the spare time that the hosting/supporting family members have spent with the refugees, 48% of the respondents said they have done it “very much” or “enough”, while 39% gave a intermediate rating. Only 14% have shared spare time “little” or “ not at all” with the refugees. We can say that the general data approximately reflect also what the respondents of RW and ST answered. In fact, almost all of them have

### How much did you share your free time/spare time?



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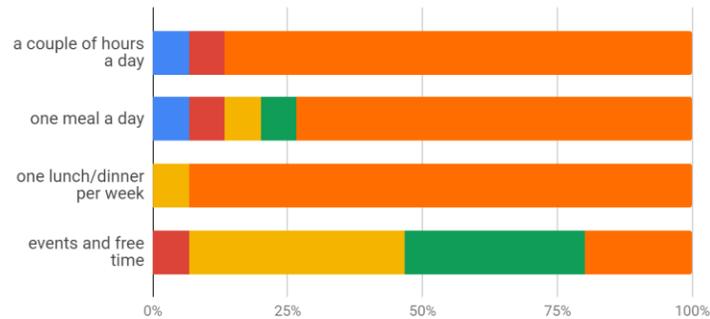
assigned a score greater than or equal to 3. Instead, only 21% of Second Tree's respondents said they have shared free time with the refugees "enough" or "very much". While, 28% of them replied "little" or "not at all". And 50% gave an intermediate rating.

As regards how much time the respondents have shared with refugees, they gave different answers. Half of them (51%) said they have shared a couple of hours a day "very much" or "enough", while almost the other half (44%) said they have done it "not at all" or "little". Rather than one meal a day, more than half of respondents (62%) have shared "very much" or "enough" one meal a week.

### How much of your time have you shared with the refugee?

Rate from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.



Instead, 45% of them have spent free time and gone to events with the refugee hosted/supported "very much" or "enough"; while, 43% gave 3 points and the rest said they have done it "not at all" or "little".

Regarding the Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus interviewees, as the chart shows, the great majority of them claimed they have shared "very

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much" a couple of hours a day (87%), one meal a day (73%) and one meal a week (93%).

Whilst, they have spent a bit less spare time and participated in events with the hosted refugee: 20% of them replied "very much", 33% said "enough" and 40% gave an intermediate rating.

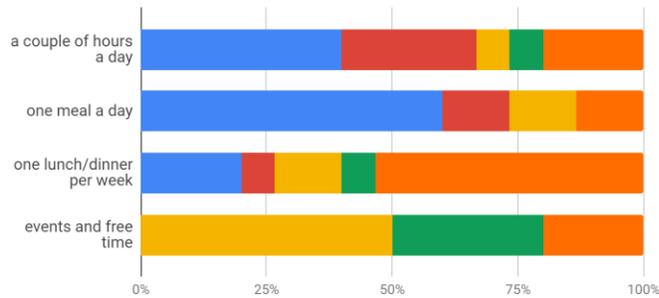
Most of the Réfugiés Bienvenue respondents have shared "little" or "not at all" a couple of hours a day (67%) and one meal a day (73%). Instead, 60% have had dinner or lunch at least once in a week with the hosted refugee.

Concerning the events and spare time, they gave a similar rating to that of the Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus's respondents: 20% said "very much", 30% answered "enough" and 50% gave an intermediate rating.

### How much of your time have you shared with the refugee?

Rate from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.



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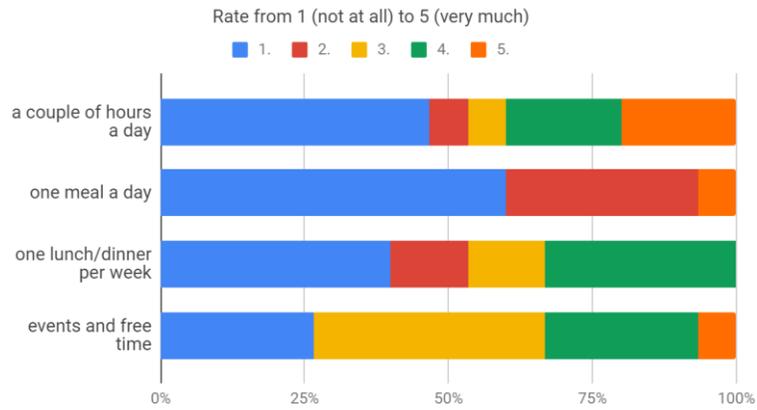
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Lastly, from the answers of the ST's interviewees, it emerges that they have shared less time than the other respondents. Indeed, 93% of them said they haven't shared a meal a day or they have done it less. 53% have had one meal per week with the refugee, against 33% that have had it "enough" or "very much". About sharing a couple of hours a day, 54% answered "not at all" or "little" while 40% replied "enough" or "very

### How much of your time have you shared with the refugee?



much". Instead, regarding events and free time, only 27% said "not at all", 40% gave 3 points and the rest (30%) replied "very much" or "enough".

Hosts/mentors were also asked if anything has changed in themselves after the hosting/mentoring experience. 82% replied "Yes" and only 18% have had no changes in their person.

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Many of those who answered in the affirmative said they have changed their ways of thinking and approaching life thanks to the encounter with other cultures. This has led them to have greater openness and acceptance of others. This experience has allowed them to get to know new perspectives and changed their way of approaching things. Getting to know other people from very different socio-cultural backgrounds also showed them that they had so many things in common. For someone discovering and sharing the culture of the other has been the experience that most enriched him as a person. Some people said that this experience taught them to be more optimistic, ironic and open minded. Moreover, they had learned to not make drama about the little things that go wrong and to stand strong in the face of adversity. This experience also helped the hosts interviewed to be more open and empathic with people. Also their sensitivity and patience have increased a lot. They felt more confident and aware about their ideas and their commitment to immigration issue. Reading refugees' situations differently has made the hosts/mentors able to share their experience and their understanding with the outside, in their different living environments (such as family, friends, work). Finally, with regard to daily life, someone also said that the experience of hospitality has changed his way of managing schedules and organizing his everyday life.

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## Qualitative open questions

### Pleasant and difficult situations during the experience.

All interviewees were asked to describe a pleasant situation they went through during the experience. Everyone, both hosts/mentors and refugees, talked about moments spent together and with their family and social networks: cooking, eating, chatting and staying together, holidays spent together, religious and non-religious parties, etc. In general, what everyone remembered with pleasure were the moments of exchange and, in particular, the cultural one: discovering and sharing each other's cultures has been the most pleasant thing.

One pleasant thing, that many of the refugees interviewed remembered, was the unexpected things, attention and support received from the hosting/supporting family. Someone said they have found another family who cared about him and supported him: "having someone ask me how I am makes me very happy." "It was really touching because it showed that they thought of me, they really took the time to do something thoughtful."

Someone of the hosts/mentors also said that, after years of experience, seeing the positive results that the person hosted/helped has achieved was a gratification.

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They were also asked to talk about difficult moments. Regarding the hosts of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue, the difficulties were various. Someone said that the first period of hosting was a bit more difficult because there was not sufficient mutual understanding. First effort was understanding how to communicate and how to approach each other. It also depended on the character of the person. Difficult moments and misunderstandings arose due to misinterpretations of the other's behavior. For somebody, it was not easy to confront with speeches in which they had different points of view (for example homosexuality). Even the rules of cohabitation were a difficult part for someone: work together in the house and respect the timetable; personal hygiene and housework; at the end, the rules of cohabitation with a family (such as to have dinner all together, to warn if you don't return home, etc). Other difficult moments concerned the obstacles encountered during the path to independence: job search, getting driver license, bureaucratic problems with documents and also evaluating how much the person was working to get out and be independent. For some else, the moment in which the hosted person got out was a delicate moment due to the lack of communication. Somebody pointed out how the support of a psychologist would help all to face difficult times, frustrations and the feeling of powerlessness and incapacity to help the other.

For many of Second Tree hosts/mentors, the greatest difficulties were linked to cultural, religious, child and family management differences

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and also the conception of the role of women. Another aspect that negatively affected and made communication difficult was the language of conversation. In addition, someone spoke of the problems related to management in refugee camps in Greece.

According to what the hosts/mentors said, difficult moments have mainly been caused by communication problems (54% said “enough” or “very much”), cultural differences (38%) and unstable work situations (28%). Instead, they have been caused almost nothing by age difference (70% replied “not at all” or “little”) and personal situation (70%). Furthermore, some of them identified other aspects that have a negative impact: unexpressed or too high expectations of the refugee; character of the person; having no real and clear future plan; constant fear; insecurity.

Fifteen out of thirty refugees Welcome Refugees Italy and Réfugiés Bienvenue respondents said they haven't had any difficult moments. The difficulties were related to work situations, bureaucratic problems, health situations or other things, nothing that depended on the hosting family. For someone else, at the beginning it was a bit difficult to adapt to a different way of living and to roles of cohabitation. Somebody else had difficulties establishing a good relation with the host: the matching between them was not fine. Many of them said they have faced the obstacles with the passing of time and thanks to the help of the family and the activists of the association. Being patient and respecting people. Trying to know what people love and what not. In this way there

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can be no difficulties. Someone also said that the presence of a person who worked with foreigners helped him because he understood him more easily than others.

Even for many Second Tree's refugees there were no difficult experiences. Most of the others said that the main problem was the language of communication. Many refugees and Greeks didn't speak English and it was difficult to find translators, therefore it was hard to have a clear conversation and to talk about interesting topics. They also mentioned other few things that they didn't depend on the hosting/supporting family members (difficult situation at the refugees' camp). Some of the respondents didn't overcome the obstacles, while others said they have faced hard moments with patience and perseverance, self studying every day and focusing on today and the future goals.

**What did the respondents think about the refugees' integration model based on family hosting or community engagement?**

The survey also probed the opinion that the interviewees had regarding the refugees' integration model based on family hosting or on community engagement. Almost all the hosting family members that Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus interviewed (87%) said this refugees'

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integration model is “totally positive”, while the rest replied “relatively positive”. The Second Tree’s respondents divided in half: 47% of them replied that it’s “totally positive” and 53% that it’s “relatively positive”. At last, most of the Réfugiés Bienvenue hosts gave a positive rating: more than half said that this type of integration model is “totally positive” and “enriching and supportive”. Concerning the refugees’ answers they also gave a positive rating. More than 80% of Second Tree’s refugees replied that this inclusion model is “totally positive” as well 73% of Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus’s refugees respondents. Lastly, about 70% of the refugees interviewed by Réfugiés Bienvenue said that this kind of model is “enriching and supportive” and “relatively positive”.

### What effects does this model of integration have on society's perception of refugees?

Interviewees were also asked: “Do you think due to the refugees’ integration model based on family hosting of RW or on community engagement of Second Tree project, prejudicial barriers regarding the refugees could be reduced or eradicated?”. 91% of the hosts/mentors replied “yes” as well 96% of the refugees. Only four hosts (9%) and two refugees (4%) said that the prejudices can’t be reduced or eradicated.

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The majority of the refugees who replied in the affirmative said it will take a long time. Most said that getting to know each other helps to reduce prejudices and the mutual understanding will change something because people can change their minds. Indeed, hosting/supporting families and their networks can change their ideas about refugees and vice versa refugees can change their thoughts. Some refugees also said that thanks to the program they have gone around to tell their experience and about some immigration issues. In this way can create a culture of tolerance and acceptance. People are different, some are more open and others less. It's more difficult to deal with more closed people, but if everyone does their part, it can be done.

Someone underlined that the point of view that refugees have on the host country can also change for the better and, staying with local people, help them to learn the language better, get to know the culture, find their way better and to understand how to best behave in some situations outside. There are foreigners who misbehave because they don't know anyone that directed them to the right path.

Somebody also pointed out that participating in activities together is something that is difficult that would happen naturally. So thanks to the refugees' integration model based on family hosting or on community engagement they had the opportunity to meet and understand each other. That's especially good for people who are less social.

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Refugees who replied in the negative were interviewed by Refugees Welcome Italia Onlus and Réfugiés Bienvenue. They said that the experience with the family will not necessarily have a positive effect on people who do not know you. Furthermore, it is not certain that the matching with the family is successful and this can still creates discrimination.

Most of the hosting/supporting family members, who said that this type of integration model can reduce the prejudicial barriers, were convinced that mutual understanding makes the difference. Prejudices can be eradicated because people come into direct contact and they have human beings in question, not numbers.

Some other respondents thought that this integration model can tell a different idea of the immigration, differently from the negative one given by the mass media. By telling their story, many people understand the real situation. It helps to sensitize families and their social network. In this way refugees were also accepted by people who were initially distrustful and fearful. Especially for people who don't know a sense of welcome, for people who haven't traveled or who don't live in large and multicultural cities. Someone also pointed out that to be introduced by a family, it's a support that helps to reduce prejudices and to decrease the level of intolerance.

Then again, for some this type of inclusion model will reduce the prejudices because it helps refugees to integrate in the society. Hosts

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and mentors give them the means necessary to learn the culture, the language, not to be exploited. Hosting and supporting brings so much to persons hosted: security, discovery of culture and codes of the host country; but also it gives more to hosts/mentors. In this way refugees can learn faster all the cultural codes and that helps them integrate and be accepted by the rest of the population.

Someone spoke of both negative and positive prejudices. Hosting a refugee reduces your positive prejudices. Some people see migrants as someone who just needs help. Living with a refugee makes people know the person well and beyond the idea of the migrant. You can see that the refugee is a person who not only has a migratory experience but that there is something even before and something that came after. It helps to reduce negative and also positive preconceptions.

Finally, an interviewee talked about potentials of this integration model but also about its challenges. In his opinion, on one hand this model is really useful because it brings new cultures together, it shows there aren't many differences as people thought. On the other hand, the problem could potentially increase if people aren't prepared to handle and overcome situations like that. For example to come in contact with strong opinions on religions, women etc.

Hosts and mentors who answered in the negative were not convinced that this model of integration could eradicate prejudicial barriers. They were not very optimistic about reducing or eliminating discrimination.

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According to some, the discrimination barriers (administrative, punitive, institutional...) will always be there. However, this model of integration does help people to better understand these barriers and their ways of working. They thought it can't change the outside people being mean, but it can change inside the refugee. Because it makes the refugees to be more confident and each other to feel not stranger. Some respondents thought that the people who hosted or helped refugees already had an idea of what was happening and they were not discriminatory. As a result, even if their friends might not have been informed of the refugee situation, they were not racist anyway.

### Lesson Learned and conclusion

The evidence collected through the interviews and further supported by the experience of the organizations involved shows the positive impact of the role of hosting/supporting families in relation to refugees / asylum seekers integration process (especially within the "Social Links" as per the conceptual framework provided by the IOI Framework developed by Anger and Strang back in 2008<sup>5</sup>). Furthermore, according to the majority of respondents the family-based integration process can also represent a way to reduce prejudices and barriers.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/ager-and-strang-2008-understanding-integration-conceptual-framework>

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Despite the different approach and different target groups (as highlighted above), it is therefore fair to draw the following conclusions:

Supporting/Hosting families represent an important resources when it comes to support/help refugees/asylum seekers in adapting to the host country

The overall experience of hosting/supporting families can be regarded as learning experience for both refugees and families as it increase mutual understanding and the awareness of the overall refugees issue

Family based integration practices cannot be regard as standalone experiences but need to be supported by trained volunteers/operators as well as to be integrated by dedicated services (such as psychological support) to fully exploit their potential

In terms of target groups it seems to work better with beneficiaries that have already spent some time in the host country (the language gap, for instance, was highlighted as one the problems experienced in the interviews conducted by Second Tree in Greece where beneficiaries where at the very beginning of their inclusion process).

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