

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP THROUGH DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT: INSIGHTS FROM THE RISE PROJECT

RISE Thematic Brief

Executive Summary

Community Sponsorship (CS) has emerged as a powerful model to advance refugee integration, strengthen social cohesion, and expand complementary pathways in Europe. While the RISE project is carried across Belgium, Italy, and Lithuania; this thematic brief is primarily informed by evidence from the Belgian Community Sponsorship pilot led by **IOM Belgium and Luxembourg**. This evidence shows that diaspora engagement substantially strengthens sponsorship outcomes by contributing to cultural mediation, trust-building, housing support, and targeted outreach to refugee communities. Yet, despite this critical added value, diaspora organizations remain under-recognised, under-funded, and insufficiently integrated into formal Community Sponsorship systems.

The RISE webinar **“Strengthening Community Sponsorship through Diaspora Engagement”** brought together policymakers, diaspora leaders, CS practitioners, researchers, and volunteers. Key findings highlighted: **(1)** diaspora organizations are indispensable as bridges between host societies and newcomers; **(2)** diaspora-led outreach drastically improves trust, data reliability, and the reach of sponsorship initiatives; **(3)** housing remains a central challenge where diaspora actors play an essential but undervalued role; **(4)** CS schemes still mobilise diaspora informally, limiting long-term system sustainability; and **(5)** structural barriers - administrative complexity, limited funding, and lack of formal recognition - continue to constrain diaspora participation.

Diaspora actors from Afghan, Somali, Cameroonian, and Palestinian communities provided compelling testimonies showing how they contribute to housing access, social inclusion, administrative support, and community building. Additional perspectives were brought in through the participation of the Umbrella Refugee Committee, ensuring that insights from a broader range of refugee communities were also reflected.

RISE research further demonstrated that enumerators from diaspora groups significantly improved survey participation among forced migrants¹, reinforcing the importance of trust and cultural proximity.

To strengthen Community Sponsorship as a complementary legal pathway aligned with EU priorities, this brief recommends formally integrating diaspora actors into CS governance and design; strengthening awareness and visibility of diaspora contributions; systematically engaging women-led diaspora organizations; investing in capacity-building and sustainable funding streams; simplifying administrative procedures; leveraging diaspora-led training, cultural orientation, and country-of-origin expertise; and establishing a dedicated “diaspora community mentor and housing liaison” function to support both integration and housing pathways.

Embedding diaspora at the centre of CS systems is not only a strategic investment—it is essential to building communities of belonging and ensuring durable integration outcomes.

Introduction

On 12 November 2025, the RISE project team organised a webinar titled **“Strengthening Community Sponsorship through Diaspora Engagement”**. Moderated by **Audrey Bety, RISE Project Manager at IOM Belgium and Luxembourg**, and supported by **Daisy Van de Vorst (RISE Project Assistant)** and

¹ The RISE Assessment Report used the broader term ‘forced migrants’ to encompass both beneficiaries of international protection and beneficiaries from temporary protection. As defined by the European Migration Network, a ‘force migrant’ is: “a person subject to a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes.” Source: EMN. (2024b). EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary—European Commission. https://homeaffairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en

Chaïma El Aisaoui (RISE Project trainee), the session explored how diaspora organizations can be meaningfully and structurally engaged to reinforce Community Sponsorship (CS) systems and similar citizen-based integration mechanisms.

Across the EU, Community Sponsorship is increasingly recognised as an important complementary pathway enabling safe, legal, and community-led refugee integration. While models differ across Member States, Community Sponsorship generally mobilises volunteers, civil society organizations, local authorities, and diaspora groups to support refugee inclusion. In Belgium, the sponsorship framework is structured around a twelve-month support trajectory, during which sponsor groups provide holistic assistance to newcomers, including housing, social orientation, and tailored integration support. Within the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF 2021–2027), the European Commission strongly promotes such approaches as part of a broader strategy to expand legal pathways, strengthen integration systems, and foster inclusive communities across EU Member States.

The RISE Project - Reinforcing Integration through Sponsorship Enhancement - implemented by IOM in Belgium and Luxembourg, Italy and Lithuania with partners in these respective countries, contributes to this agenda by strengthening sponsorship systems, improving housing pathways, enhancing outreach strategies, and enabling cross-border policy dialogue. A core pillar of RISE in Belgium, is the recognition of diaspora actors as strategic partners in sponsorship. Their lived experience, cultural proximity, linguistic skills, and transnational networks offer forms of support that cannot be replicated by institutions alone.

This webinar brought together **84 participants** from more than **38 organizations** active across **15 countries**. These included EU Member States - Belgium, Italy, Lithuania, Austria, Finland, France, Poland, and Ireland - as well as non-EU countries such as the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Lebanon, Cabo Verde, Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Armenia.

The event featured eight speakers representing diverse expertise, including

migration governance, Community Sponsorship practice, diaspora leadership, applied research, cultural mediation, and lived-experience advocacy. Discussions centred on the added value of diaspora expertise in sponsorship - including in housing mediation, sponsor mobilisation, cultural orientation, trust-building and data collection - and highlighted lessons from RISE outreach activities with 10 diaspora organizations.

By combining evidence, practice-based insights, and first-hand testimonies, the webinar generated actionable messages for policymakers and practitioners.

This thematic policy brief synthesises those insights for UN agencies, the European Commission, and national authorities to support the next generation of Community Sponsorship models in Europe.

Key findings and analysis

The key findings presented in this section are drawn from the thematic webinar “Strengthening Community Sponsorship through Diaspora Engagement”. The insights shared by speakers - including lived-experience perspectives, practitioner expertise, and research contributions - reflect both operational realities and community-level knowledge gathered through the RISE Project. Several themes raised during the discussion also align with evidence from the RISE Assessment Report, reinforcing a set of recurring challenges and opportunities across implementation contexts. Taken together, these findings illustrate where and how Community Sponsorship systems can be strengthened through the meaningful engagement of diaspora organizations.

1. Diaspora organizations are structural partners, not optional actors

Speakers repeatedly emphasised that diaspora groups sit at the intersection of newcomers and host societies. Their lived experiences of displacement, integration, and identity navigation enable them to provide:

- Cultural and linguistic mediation
- Trust-building between refugees, sponsors, and institutions

- Accurate, contextual country-of-origin information – delivered in a sensitive manner
- Social network access that accelerates inclusion
- Support for navigating complex administrative procedures

Despite this, most CS programmes involve diaspora in an informal and inconsistent manner - typically during crisis moments or arrival phases. This limits their strategic influence and reduces system resilience.

2. Housing is a core challenge where diaspora contributions are essential, but undervalued

Housing remains one of the most significant barriers to effective sponsorship. Testimonies from Somali and Cameroonian diaspora organizations highlighted:

- Diaspora-mediated trust between landlords and newcomers
- Peer support for understanding leases and tenancy obligations
- Diaspora-led networks supporting the identification of housing opportunities
- Temporary accommodation within diaspora households
- Conflict mediation with landlords and neighbours

Yet the RISE field research found that only 1% of forced-migrant survey respondents reported receiving housing support from diaspora organizations, revealing a gap between diaspora's actual contributions and their visibility or formal recognition within CS programmes.

3. Diaspora-led outreach strengthens trust, participation and data quality

Enumerators from Afghan, Palestinian, and Ukrainian diasporas drastically improved response rates to the RISE surveys targeting forced migrants in the earlier phase of the project. Forced-migrant respondents engaged more openly when surveyed by someone sharing their linguistic or/and cultural background.

Key insights:

- Over 170 forced-migrant respondents were reached with the support of diaspora-based survey agents ('enumerators')
- Respondents perceived enumerators as trusted community members
- Cultural familiarity reduced hesitancy and fear
- Diaspora-led surveys provided more nuanced, accurate data

This demonstrates the importance of embedding diaspora in research, monitoring, and programme design, not only in service delivery.

4. Administrative and institutional barriers limit meaningful diaspora participation

Diaspora organizations - particularly small, volunteer-run, and women-led groups - face persistent structural barriers that limit their ability to participate meaningfully in Community Sponsorship systems. These barriers discourage long-term engagement and result in missed opportunities for CS programmes to benefit from diaspora expertise. Speakers noted that women in diaspora leadership roles often shoulder disproportionate care responsibilities, face greater structural discrimination, and have fewer pathways to participate in formal consultations or funding processes:

- Limited access to stable and predictable funding, especially for small or women-led diaspora organizations that operate without paid staff
- Administrative burdens that are disproportionately heavy for grassroots groups, including complex grant applications, financial reporting, and compliance requirements
- Insufficient formal consultation: diaspora organizations—particularly women-led initiatives—are rarely included in co-design processes or policy discussions
- Gendered stereotypes and biases (e.g., assumptions that diaspora groups are fragmented, politicised, or “informal”), which obscure their professionalism and community expertise
- Inflexible training and engagement formats that exclude women balancing work, family, and community responsibilities

- Limited visibility of women leaders, despite their critical role in integration navigation, emergency response, and community stability
- These barriers reduce the sustainability of diaspora engagement and undervalue their contributions

5. Community Sponsorship is strengthened when outreach is tailored, local, and trust-based

RISE findings and SHARE Network experience both underscored:

- One-size-fits-all mobilisation strategies do not work
- Word-of-mouth, personal contact, and storytelling are highly effective
- Engagement is stronger when local champions, diaspora ambassadors, and intercultural mediators lead outreach
- Outreach in the native language of community members enhances connection and engagement
- Use of familiar community spaces/events/communication platforms for personal contact can strengthen engagement
- Volunteer mobilisation is significantly stronger when outreach is grounded in human-centred narratives that present forced migrants as individuals with talents, goals, and agency
- Named-sponsorship models facilitate organic mobilisation through family and community links

Diaspora-led mobilisation thus substantially enriches CS recruitment strategies.

6. Diaspora communities enhance social cohesion and belonging

Examples from Somali, Cameroonian, and Palestinian diaspora leaders demonstrated how diaspora-origin volunteers:

- Foster meaningful relationships between sponsors and newcomers
- Provide culturally resonant guidance and mentorship
- Challenge misperceptions about refugee populations
- Host intercultural community-building events

- Facilitate integration through sports, cultural exchange, and community service

These contributions build both horizontal (community-to-community) and vertical (community-to-institution) trust.

Recommendations

Aligned with IOM's 3E Strategy for Diaspora Mobilisation

The following recommendations are structured around IOM's 3E Strategy for Diaspora Mobilisation - Engage, Enable, and Empower - to guide policymakers and practitioners in strengthening the role of diaspora actors within Community Sponsorship schemes. Each recommendation reflects evidence from the thematic webinar and broader insights from the RISE project, demonstrating how diaspora organizations can be meaningfully integrated as strategic partners. By systematically engaging diaspora communities, enabling their operational capacities, and empowering them to take on sustained leadership roles, Community Sponsorship models can become more inclusive, resilient, and responsive to the needs of both newcomers and host societies.

ENGAGE

STRENGTHEN STRUCTURAL PARTICIPATION AND VISIBILITY OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: Formally integrate diaspora organizations into CS governance structures

Target audience: National authorities, EU institutions, IOM

Actions:

- Elaborate a mapping of diaspora organizations with potential or existing roles in Community Sponsorship, including refugee-led, women-led, youth-led, and regional associations.
- Facilitate connections between diaspora organizations, civil society groups, and local authorities to foster coordinated participation in CS pathways.
- Create standing advisory roles for diaspora representatives within national and EU-level CS platforms.
- Establish multi-stakeholder governance bodies in which diaspora actors co-design CS frameworks and contribute to strategic decision-making.

Outcome: Greater legitimacy of programmes, increased trust, and sponsorship models that reflect the cultural realities of the communities they support.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Increase Awareness on and Visibility of Diaspora Organizations' Roles in Integration Pathways

Target audience: EU institutions, national governments, communications teams

Actions:

- Conduct targeted awareness-raising sessions for policymakers, integration actors, and CS practitioners on the roles and contributions of diaspora organizations in navigating integration systems.
- Feature diaspora organizations and ambassadors in national CS outreach campaigns.
- Engage diaspora leaders in media, community events, and public dialogues to normalise diaspora leadership in sponsorship and integration.
- Recognise diaspora contributions through financial support, certification and other in-kind support.

Outcome: Improved recognition of diaspora expertise and stronger social cohesion through visible, representative role models.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Systematically Engage Women-led Diaspora Organizations in CS Governance and Outreach

Target audience: EU institutions, national authorities, local governments, CS-implementing partners

Actions:

- Invite women-led diaspora groups into CS advisory bodies, working groups, and consultation platforms.
- Develop structured dialogue sessions that centre women's integration experiences and expertise.

- Recognise women diaspora leaders as ambassadors in national CS awareness campaigns.

Outcome: Women-led diaspora groups become fully recognised and resource partners within Community Sponsorship schemes, strengthening gender-responsive outreach, community trust, and integration outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Raise awareness among stakeholders on the role of diaspora women in integration

Target audience: Municipalities, Community Sponsorship coordinators, reception and integration caseworkers, NGO partners, and national authorities

Actions:

- Conduct targeted awareness-raising for municipalities, CS coordinators, caseworkers, and volunteers on the contributions of women-led diaspora organizations in administrative navigation, cultural mediation, and psychosocial support.
- Include gender-sensitive diaspora perspectives in CS policy briefs, training material, and communication tools.

Outcome: Greater institutional recognition of women-led diaspora organizations, resulting in more inclusive, gender-responsive Community Sponsorship initiatives and stronger collaboration between diaspora actors and formal structures.

ENABLE

REDUCE BARRIERS AND CREATE FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR DIASPORA PARTICIPATION

RECOMMENDATION 5: Establish sustainable and accessible funding mechanisms for diaspora-led support

Target audience: European Commission, national and local governments, AMIF programme managers, CS practitioners

Actions:

- Introduce micro-grants and multi-year funding streams that enable diaspora organizations to sustain their contributions to housing facilitation, mentorship, cultural orientation, and community mediation.
- Leverage collaboration with umbrella organizations supporting diaspora-led groups to overcome administrative and financial barriers.
- Prioritise funding for women-led diaspora organizations, which often serve as community anchors and provide critical social support.
- Simplify administrative and reporting requirements for small diaspora organizations by streamlining application procedures and ensuring proportionate compliance obligations.
- Provide technical assistance and financial management support to help diaspora groups meet AMIF and national funding standards.

Outcome: More stable, skilled, and long-term diaspora participation in Community Sponsorship ecosystems, with reduced administrative barriers and more equitable access to partnership opportunities.

EMPOWER

BUILD DIASPORA ROLES, SKILLS, AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN SPONSORSHIP SYSTEMS

RECOMMENDATION 6: Integrate diaspora-led training, orientation, and country-of-origin expertise into sponsor preparation

Target audience: Implementing agencies, CS coordinators

Actions:

- Commission diaspora trainers and cultural mediators to lead preparation modules on cultural norms, daily life, communication styles, socio-political background, history and expectations.
- Invite diaspora speakers to share lived-experience perspectives during sponsor onboarding sessions, including insights on cultural background, displacement, and early integration needs.

- Incorporate diaspora-authored country-of-origin briefs, videos, and testimonies into sponsor's onboarding material.
- Develop practical scenario-based exercises (e.g. communication misunderstandings, administrative hurdles, cultural norms) co-designed with diaspora organizations to enhance sponsors' intercultural problem-solving skills.
- Offer advanced thematic modules for sponsors (e.g., navigating education or healthcare systems, trauma-informed support, housing mediation) delivered with diaspora expertise.

Outcome: Better-prepared sponsors with higher cultural competence, stronger trust-building capacities, and reduced risks of misunderstanding or failed sponsorship trajectories.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Develop a new hybrid function of 'Diaspora Role Models' acting both as mentors while providing housing support

Target audience: Implementing organizations, municipalities

Actions:

- Train diaspora-based sponsors to support both integration and housing navigation.
- Establish continuous learning and peer support systems for sponsors and diaspora partners.
- Offer Community Sponsorship and integration-related training in flexible formats (e.g., evening sessions, hybrid/online modules, modular content) to accommodate diverse schedules and responsibilities.
- Ensure training approaches are accessible and responsive to the needs of women-led diaspora organizations, who may require time-adapted formats or culturally sensitive delivery methods.
- Utilise their mediation skills in landlord engagement and administrative procedures.

Outcome: Accelerated integration, improved housing stability, enhanced newcomer confidence.

Conclusion

The evidence gathered through the RISE Project confirms that diaspora engagement is not an optional addition to Community Sponsorship—it is foundational to its success. Diaspora communities provide trust, cultural fluency, and social networks that enable newcomers not only to survive, but to belong. Integrating diaspora actors into the heart of CS systems strengthens legal pathways, improves housing outcomes, and builds the social cohesion necessary for long-term integration.

To scale Community Sponsorship across Europe, policymakers and practitioners must embed diaspora engagement structurally—not informally—within CS frameworks. With the right support, diaspora actors will continue to serve as catalysts of inclusion, solidarity, and community-driven integration across the EU. Because after all ‘It Takes a Community to Build a Home.’”

Appendices

RISE COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS' VIDEO



A dedicated RISE outreach video was presented during the webinar, featuring testimonies and activities from 10 diaspora organizations partnering as Community Ambassadors with IOM Belgium & Luxembourg within the project. Through personal stories and concrete examples, the video illustrated how diaspora actors support newcomers with housing, orientation, and local networking, while also mobilizing their communities to foster a sense of belonging. The visual narrative reinforced the webinar's central message: diaspora organizations are indispensable partners in delivering meaningful and culturally sensitive sponsorship support.

Discover more about our Community Ambassadors and watch the 10 Community Ambassador videos



RISE ONE-STOP SHOP

To learn more about the RISE Project, visit www.rise-integration.be to explore opportunities to learn, connect, and take action in support of refugee integration. The online platform offers accessible information on Community Sponsorship, opportunities to register as a Sponsor Group, and a wide range of practical tools including reports, videos, and toolkits. Users can also explore an interactive map featuring over 500 services that support the social inclusion of refugees across Belgium. Whether someone is seeking a meaningful volunteering opportunity, interested in renting property to refugee families, or simply curious about how community-led welcome works, the platform provides resources for all who are committed to helping newcomers feel at home. To discover more about how RISE works with diaspora engagement, the dedicated Community Ambassadors page is also available at <https://rise-integration.be/community-ambassadors>



Discover the website



Webinar Agenda



Welcome & Opening Remarks

by Marise Habib,
Chief of Mission at IOM Belgium and Luxembourg

Keynote: The Role of Diaspora in Community Sponsorship

by Shagofah Ghafari,
Senior Network Coordinator at the Network of
Afghanistan Diaspora Organisations in Europe (NADOE)



Insights and Recommendations on Diaspora Engagement: Findings from the RISE Field Research

by Rosalie Reyntjens,
Data and Research Associate at IOM Belgium and
Luxembourg

Strategies for Engaging, Recruiting, and Selecting Community Sponsors

by Anna Coulibaly, Program Manager at ICMC/Share Network, and
Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar, Outreach & Engagement Coordinator at
Share Network, Secretary-general of NADOE and President of the
Umbrella Refugee Committee (URC)



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Webinar Agenda

REGISTER



Diaspora in the Integration Trajectory

by Abdurahman Fiqi, President at South West Somali Community in Belgium (SWSC),
and Chilion Tanyi Eyabi, Pioneer Member and Patron at Cameroon for Flanders (CUF)

Training 'for and with' Diaspora Communities-based Sponsors

by Ghassan Bardawil,
Community Organizer at WeDecolonize, Rihla Project,
De Rinck and Collective Aid



Interactive Discussion and Q&A

moderated by IOM Belgium and Luxembourg

Closing Remarks & Next Steps

by IOM Belgium and Luxembourg



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SPEAKERS PROFILES AND THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Marise Habib - Welcome Remarks

As Chief of Mission of IOM Belgium and Luxembourg, Marise Habib opened the webinar by situating Community Sponsorship within broader EU approaches to protection, inclusion, and ethical mobility pathways. Drawing on 15 years of experience in humanitarian and development contexts, she emphasised that integration “begins with community” and noted how the citizen-led response to the invasion of Ukraine demonstrated the transformative power of local solidarity. She highlighted that diaspora engagement has long been a cornerstone of IOM Belgium’s work and remains essential to building credible, people-centred sponsorship systems. Marise stressed that sponsorship models succeed not only because of institutional frameworks but because of people—local authorities, civil society, volunteers, and critically, diaspora actors who contribute cultural knowledge, administrative guidance, and a sense of belonging. She underscored that housing remains a persistent challenge in Belgium and praised diaspora organizations for their ability to mediate trust between landlords, sponsors, and newcomers. Her remarks set the tone for the webinar by reaffirming that diaspora partnership is central to sustainable and inclusive sponsorship systems.

Shagofah Ghafari - Keynote: The Role of Diaspora in Community Sponsorship

Shagofah Ghafari, Senior Network Coordinator at the Network of Afghan Diaspora Organisations in Europe (NADOE) and RISE Community Ambassador, delivered a powerful keynote illustrating why diaspora actors must be treated as structural partners within Community Sponsorship systems. She emphasised that diaspora communities hold unique assets institutions cannot replicate multilingual capacity, cultural mediation, lived experiences of displacement, and trust-based networks. She highlighted persistent gaps—diaspora groups remain under-recognised, inconsistently engaged, and face administrative and financial barriers. She advocated for the integration of women-led diaspora organizations, simplified procedures, and hybrid mentorship models combining cultural orientation and housing guidance.

Rosalie Reyntjens - Insights and Recommendations on Diaspora Engagement: Findings from the RISE Field Research

Presenting insights from the RISE field study carried out a year earlier under the coordination of Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Rosalie Reyntjens, [Data and Research Associate at IOM Belgium & Luxembourg](#), demonstrated that diaspora-led enumeration increased the reliability and depth of data collection by fostering trust and cultural proximity with participants. Rosalie noted that several findings remain pertinent, including concerns related to sustainability, housing, and the need for flexible sponsorship pathways. She stressed that the research confirms the complementary roles of diaspora organizations and institutional actors in strengthening sponsorship ecosystems. Her presentation reinforced the importance of embedding diaspora expertise in programme design, monitoring, and outreach.

RISE Community Ambassadors Video

A dedicated RISE outreach video was presented during the webinar, featuring testimonies and activities from 10 diaspora organizations partnering with IOM Belgium & Luxembourg within the project. Through personal stories and concrete examples, the video illustrated how diaspora actors support newcomers with housing, orientation, and local networking, while also mobilising their communities to foster a sense of belonging. The visual narrative reinforced the webinar's central message: diaspora organizations are indispensable partners in delivering meaningful and culturally grounded sponsorship support.

Anna Coulibaly & Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar - Strategies for Engaging, Recruiting and Selecting Community Sponsors

In a joint thematic presentation, Anna Coulibaly ([ICMC/Share Network](#)) and Ahmad Wali Ahmad Yar ([VUB researcher, President of the Umbrella Refugee Committee, Secretary-General of the Network of Afghan Diaspora Organisations in Europe \(NADOE\), ShareNetwork's Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator and RISE Community Ambassador](#)) offered practical strategies on sponsor mobilisation and recruitment. They argued that outreach must be tailored, trust-based, and rooted in both civil-society and diaspora networks.

Anna presented cross-country mobilisation strategies such as word-of-mouth storytelling, solidarity events, and targeted campaigns. Wali stressed that civil-society and diaspora groups are complementary actors and addressed housing shortages as a central challenge. Their session presented actionable models for enhancing sponsor engagement.

Abdurahman Farah Fiqi - Diaspora in the Integration Trajectory (Somali Diaspora Testimony)

Abdurahman Farah Fiqi, [President of the Southwest Somali Community in Belgium and RISE Community Ambassador](#), provided lived-experience insights on how Somali diaspora organizations support newcomers. He highlighted the role of diaspora communities in housing mediation, administrative navigation, and trust-building with newcomers and landlords. His testimony showed how community-based networks fill gaps left by overstretched institutional systems and create a sense of stability for newly arrived families.

Chillion Eyabi - Diaspora in the Integration Trajectory (Cameroonian Diaspora Testimony)

Chilion Eyabi, [Senior management consultant and long-standing member of the Cameroon Union for Flanders](#), shared insights on community engagement, career orientation, and administrative support. He described how diaspora organizations help newcomers understand job markets, validate credentials, and navigate digital and administrative procedures. His contribution highlighted how diaspora mentorship fosters stability, autonomy, and social cohesion.

Ghassan Bardawil - Training ‘For and With’ Diaspora Community-based Sponsors

Ghassan Bardawil, a [Palestinian activist and RISE Community Ambassador](#), concluded with a compelling presentation on the value of reliable country-of-origin information for sponsors. He demonstrated how diaspora expertise bridges cultural gaps, strengthens empathy, and enriches sponsor preparation. Drawing on personal narratives, he illustrated how culturally informed storytelling deepens mutual understanding and improves the quality of sponsorship support.

Moderation, Q&A and Closing Remarks - Audrey Bety, Daisy Van de Vorst and Chaïma El Aisaoui

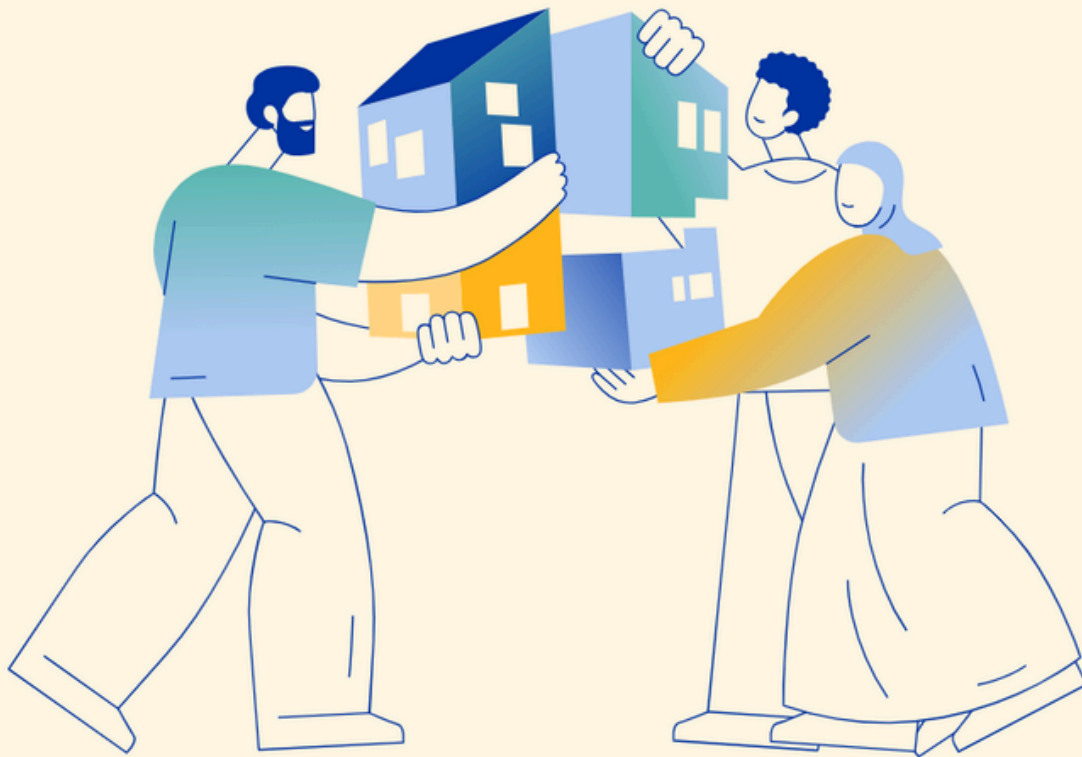
The webinar was moderated by Audrey Bety, [RISE Project Manager at IOM Belgium & Luxembourg](#), supported by Chaïma El Aisaoui ([RISE trainee](#)) and Daisy Van de Vorst ([RISE Project Assistant](#)). Audrey ensured coherence across sessions, guided discussions, and facilitated engagement. Chaïma moderated the Q&A and collected participant inputs, while Daisy closed the event by summarising the webinar's key takeaways and reaffirming the importance of cross-sector collaboration in strengthening sponsorship innovation.



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