**Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects of Community Sponsorship
– Multidisciplinary, Multimethod and Multiperspective Analysis (COPOCS)**

Abstract for the general public

This project will endeavour to address the lack of a theoretical and methodological framework to research community sponsorship (CS in short) and its implications for admitting and supporting refugees. Thus, the overall aim of the project is to develop such a framework, and conduct a comprehensive analysis of the challenges, opportunities and prospects of CS in Europe, especially in a country with a limited number of refugees, such as Poland. CS relies on the public-private partnership, i.e. the cooperation between the state and private actors, including civic society organisations (often faith-based). The state takes responsibility for the legal admission of refugees, while private actors support them in their reception and integration after their arrival. The project will adopt a broad approach to CS by investigating cases of CS and initiatives which can be seen as some partial forms of CS, and looking into the prospects for its introduction in new countries. It will analyse existing CS models in different countries across the world and how and why they have been shaped in a certain way. Particular focus will be placed on Canada (a pioneer country), the United Kingdom, Germany and Poland.

The emergence of CS in Europe can be linked to the 2015 'migration crisis' related to increased refugee migration into Europe and the challenges of receiving and supporting asylum seekers. With the lack of effective mechanisms of admitting and assisting larger numbers of refugees, new solutions seem needed more than ever, especially in the context of the shrinkage of the welfare state. As a consequence, the dominant paradigm of admitting and supporting refugees has been called into question with different considerations and solutions being discussed. This has been accompanied by the growing acknowledgement of the welfare mix approach, according to which to be sustained, welfare production requires the combination of inputs from government, market, formal civil society organisations and informal networks consisting of families, friends and neighbours. The project will provide a comprehensive, multiperspective and in-depth understanding of CS, and will aim to develop a framework for CS research and a model which can inform policy and facilitate evidence-based solutions. Moreover, it will help to understand social attitudes towards CS and other forms of support for refugees in Poland.

The study will be underpinned by social policy, sociology and psychology and use a combination of different data and methods. The following research methods will be employed: (1) legal and institutional analysis based on desk research; (2) interviews with stakeholders (experts, policymakers, practitioners, representatives of groups involved in CS) conducted in Canada, the UK, Germany and Poland, (3) the analysis of (planned) six selected case studies of initiatives involving elements of CS in Poland, including interviews with sponsors and refugees and observation (partially participatory); (4) an experiment on the impact of knowledge about CS on social attitudes and (5) a representative survey in Poland on social attitudes towards CS and other types of assistance for refugees. The research will be based on the principle of co-production where knowledge will be co-produced with a steering group representing voices of stakeholders, including those involved in CS (with a special role of refugees co-delivering fieldwork research), as well as academic partners from Canada, the UK and Germany.

The research results of the project will allow us to: (1) understand how the idea of CS spreads and what are the possibilities of introduction and wider use of CS in European countries, especially in countries where CS is not present or only partially exists, as in Poland; (2) improve our knowledge on which political and social factors contribute to the implementation and success of CS; (3) determine how the sponsoring potential of countries can be defined and measured; (4) diagnose the prospects for CS to influence attitudes towards refugees; (5) acquire in-depth knowledge on the attitudes towards solutions related to CS and other forms of admitting and supporting refugees in Poland.