



# Accompaniment

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# Definitions



- + ●
- **Asylum-seeker:** A person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right.



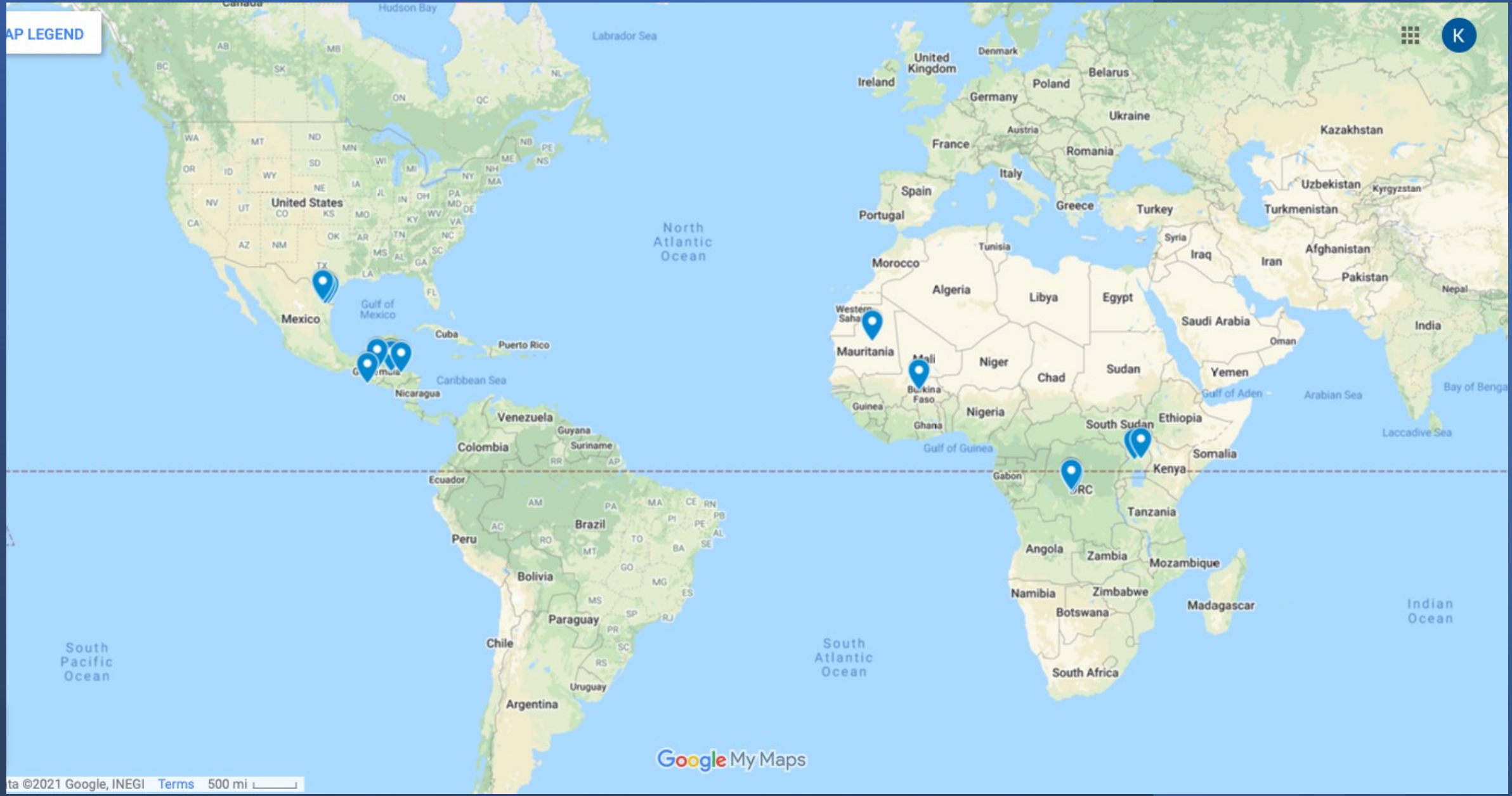
**Refugee:** A person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecutions there. The risks to their safety are so great that they felt that they had no choice to leave and seek safety outside their own country because their own government cannot or will not protect them. Refugees have a right to international protection.



**Migrant:** There is no legal definition of a migrant. Amnesty International defines migrants as people staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum seekers or refugees.

Some migrants leave their country because they want to work, study or join family, for example. Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there.

Lots of people don't fit the legal definition of a refugee but could nevertheless be in danger if they went home.



# What does sponsorship involve?

- Providing housing and basic needs for up to one year, when work permits are secured
- Supporting independence
- Cultivating community
- Familiarizing with resources
- Connecting with legal, language, and medical resources\*
- Serving as a cultural liaison



# Community Sponsorship Model



- Team of sponsors
- Provide wrap-around services
- Strong relationships and understanding of social services



# What sponsorship is:

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- A way out of detention or shelter for those seeking asylum
- An opportunity to put a WELCOMING COMMUNITY INTO PRACTICE
- A way to accompany someone on their journey
- A way for us to push back against injustices and inhumane immigration policies
- A time to celebrate victories and face challenges alongside of others
- A way for us to use our privilege, voice, and wealth to benefit others



# Sponsorship is also:

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- Providing transportation, translation, food boxes, bus passes
- Inviting newcomers to dinner or to a community event
- Educating your community groups about asylum
- Taking newcomers shopping at thrifty stores
- Reading to children
- Advocating for pro bono/low bono legal services
- Teaching newcomers to ride the bus or use the library
- Exchanging food/labor/housing/gift cards



What  
sponsorship  
is not:

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White saviorism

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An automatic friendship

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An opportunity for us to tell someone's  
story

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A time for us to make decisions for  
someone else

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A chance for us to parent someone

# Lessons Learned



- "The American Dream" isn't real for everyone
- Everyone is on their own journey
- People will move away, and that's okay
- Communication is essential – even the most basic household customs can differ significantly
- Race, class and power must always be considered
- The legal system is complicated and frustrating
- Take a break, lean on your community
- There are as many unique situations as there are people in the world
- People WANT to help and often don't know how

# Scenarios

- A family of 5 from the Democratic Republic of Congo lives in an apartment above a social justice organization and receives support from the community through community sponsorship
- A family of 4 from Guatemala lives with a retired couple in a small town until they feel comfortable moving to Columbus
- A single man from Burkina Faso lives in a cabin and shares common living space with a family
- A couple from Honduras lives with a family and participates in daily activities with them
- A family of 4 lives in a church basement and receives support from neighbors and the community





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