

Public Governance students make Oxfam Novib Clinic a real success

“The Governance Clinic was very interesting because it showed the practical side of Public Governance. To be able to work with a huge NGO like Oxfam Novib in the first year of study was extraordinary and also very enjoyable. Working on a real-life case added so much value to the project because it was not a hypothetical one, and our research could actually have some impact on the future development of a Private Sponsorship Schemes in the Netherlands.

Annemeike, first-year student of Public Governance

Between April and June 2018, the first-year students of the **Bachelor of Public Governance** participated in the first Governance Clinic, which is a course where the students participate in real-world commissioned research. The course originates from one of the driving ambitions of the Bachelor of Public Governance, which is to teach students how to identify and negotiate real-world governance challenges. This is because having an understanding of the day-to-day practice of public governance is a crucial asset for students in their later career. In addition, this setup allows students to develop 21st-century public-governance skills.



This year, the assignment was provided by **Oxfam Novib**, a Dutch NGO that works towards tackling the injustices that cause and perpetuate poverty.

On 9 April, the students visited the Oxfam office in The Hague, where Evelien van Roemburg, Acting EU Migration Campaign Manager, introduced the assignment. Our students were asked to develop and conduct a research project into **Private Sponsorship Schemes (PSS)**, where refugees can resettle in a country with the support and funding from a private or joint government-private sponsorship. The assignment communicated a **genuine learning need** of Oxfam Novib, since the organization was looking for ways to increase its knowledge on PSS as it explored the opportunities to introduce a private or community sponsorship scheme in the Netherlands. In particular, Oxfam asked our students to make an inventory of PSS initiatives in other countries and to analyze European policies in this field.



In response, four groups of students developed and conducted studies into (a) the upcoming changes in the Common European Asylum System, (b) PSS in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina, (c) PSS in Canada and the UK, and (d) the feasibility of introducing PSS in the Netherlands. For their research, our students conducted a comparative desk study and a series of interviews with Dutch stakeholders. The results of their efforts, presented to Oxfam in The Hague on May 31st, were very well perceived.

” It has been my pleasure to work with Tilburg University's School of Governance and its students on the project 'private sponsorship schemes'. The students came across as eager and excited to work on this 'real-life' issue. During the two meetings I had with them, they were well-prepared, articulate and fully engaged. Their enthusiasm, and that of their lecturer, was contagious. The papers that the students have produced are indeed quite useful for the work we're doing at Oxfam Novib. All in all, I look back on a very useful and pleasant cooperation with Tilburg University, and I look forward to working with its students again next year.

Evelien van Roemburg, Acting EU Migration Campaign Manager, Oxfam Novib

Much to our surprise, a tweet about the event was soon picked up by Gerald Coulombe, First Secretary of Political and Economic Affairs at **the Embassy of Canada to the Netherlands**, who showed great interest in the student reports in preparation for the roundtable on the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI).

The GRSI, which was organized on June 19th, seeks to build on Canada's proven model to promote the successful integration of refugees through the development of new community-based sponsorship programs around the world. The event was attended by 50+ stakeholders in migration and integration, including GRSI representatives, government representatives from Canada, the UK and Ireland, UNHCR, national and municipal Netherlands government officials, Dutch Cabinet Ministers, Dutch Members of Parliament, Dutch civil society organizations.



Niels Karsten
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Yesterday, first-year students in the Bachelor of [#PublicGovernance](#) presented the results of their commissioned research on Private Sponsorship Schemes for refugees to [@oxfamnovib](#) in The Hague - what a great opportunity this was! Very proud of them! [@TIG_Tilburg](#) [@TilburgU](#)

As a result of their efforts in the Governance Clinic, **two of our students were invited to the June 19th roundtable event** and asked to share their results. We think this is a great honor which demonstrates the timeliness and real-world relevance of the Clinic. In preparation for the event, the **students created a policy paper** entitled 'Helping Hands: Community Engagement in Refugee Protection - A Comparative Study of Private Sponsorship Schemes in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Canada and the United Kingdom'. This document neatly summarized their comparative analysis of PSS in eight countries and it was shared with both Oxfam Novib and the Embassy of Canada.



Helping Hands: Community Engagement in Refugee Protection

A Comparative Study of Private Sponsorship Schemes in Germany, Ireland, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Canada, and the United Kingdom

This policy paper summarizes research conducted by students in the Public Governance Bachelor program at Tilburg University.¹

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I. A Background to Private Sponsorship

The great increase in migrant influx into European countries since 2015 has arguably been one of the most challenging developments the continent has seen in past years. Due to the political and geographical scope and nature of this phenomenon that has become known as the 'refugee crisis', the European Union (EU) and its member states are crucial policy actors in this situation, facing considerable challenges to the very foundations of the EU. While international obligations, political pressures from all sides, and its declared core values force the EU to assume responsibility in coordinating solutions and engaging in efforts to protect refugees, policies focused on solving the migration crisis touch upon the core of the sovereignty of the member states. In spite of wide disagreement between member states and European institutions as to the extent and nature of migration policies, there seems to be broad consensus on one point:

"People who are in genuine need of protection should not have to risk their lives on dangerous irregular journeys to Europe or put themselves in the hands of smugglers. Resettlement should become the preferred way for refugees to receive protection. With over 25,000 persons resettled since 2015, the EU has collectively delivered on its promise to provide safe pathways for the most vulnerable refugees. I encourage Member States to be even more ambitious and step up our collective resettlement efforts, in particular along the Central Mediterranean route." (European Commission, 2017).

Resettlement entails that vulnerable refugees are selected and transferred, usually from third states granting them temporary protection, to another state which will admit them as refugees with permanent residence status (UNHCR, 2011). However, this process does not have to be a purely public activity executed by the state. The responsibility can also be shared with private individuals, groups, corporations, etc. in form of private sponsorship arrangements. A considerable number of private actors seem to possess the motivation and the resources to sponsor one or multiple refugees (Ahrens, 2015). This support can take on multiple forms, from regular meetings and conversations with the sponsored individual up to the refugee becoming an apprentice in a specific sponsoring business. As a result, there is no uniformly endorsed definition of private sponsorship, with different applications of the term in different countries. Fratzke (2017, 1-2) distinguishes between three types of private sponsorship:

¹ For access to the full paper, please contact the authors.



” Since we arrived early, we had the opportunity to get in touch with some of the participants beforehand. Specifically, we talked to the head of the Canadian private sponsorship program and a lady who was working at the British immigration office also in a leadership position in private sponsorship. They both seemed quite knowledgeable and accessible and we shared some ideas and thoughts, leaving them with copies of our paper. Both of us were very intrigued by the information presented, the goodwill and positive spirit that came across the discussions with often perceived ‘cold-hearted’, pragmatic bureaucrats. The focus laid more on information sharing than political discussion. In general, the atmosphere was quite consensual and biased towards the implementation of private sponsorship programs. It was a fascinating and enriching experience to see policy-making and shaping in action, and we can proudly state that we were well-able to follow and engage in the conversations on the basis of the knowledge we gained in the governance clinic. We believe that the experience of such event may be very valuable for our future.

Amy and Daniel, first-year Public Governance students

All in all, this was an excellent and unexpected outcome of the Governance Clinic, which fits really well the ambitions of the **Bachelor of Public Governance**. We also take it as a tremendous compliment for the work all of our students have put into the clinic!